

By the Committee on Commerce and Economic Opportunities; and  
Senators Lee, Miller, Sebesta and Crist

310-1636-01

1                                   A bill to be entitled  
2           An act relating to welfare transition;  
3           providing a short title; providing legislative  
4           intent; authorizing the Passport to Economic  
5           Progress demonstration program in specified  
6           areas; requiring Workforce Florida, Inc., and  
7           the Department of Children and Family Services  
8           to pursue federal-government waivers as  
9           necessary; increasing the amount of income that  
10          may be disregarded in determining eligibility  
11          for temporary cash assistance for families  
12          residing in the demonstration areas;  
13          authorizing an extended period of time for the  
14          receipt of welfare-transition benefits by  
15          families residing in the demonstration areas;  
16          providing legislative findings; directing  
17          Workforce Florida, Inc., to create a  
18          transitional wage supplementation program;  
19          authorizing wage supplementation payments to  
20          certain individuals; requiring an evaluation  
21          and reports on the demonstration program;  
22          providing for conflicts of laws; providing  
23          appropriations; providing an effective date.

24  
25           WHEREAS, the state has achieved dramatic success in  
26          reforms to the welfare system, with more than 200,000 families  
27          leaving the welfare rolls since such reforms were enacted in  
28          1996, and

29           WHEREAS, the majority of those who have left the  
30          welfare rolls have done so because of employment and have held  
31          no more than two different jobs since leaving welfare, and

1           WHEREAS, however, many of those who have left the  
2 welfare rolls are generating incomes below the federal poverty  
3 level, leaving them vulnerable to falling back into the  
4 welfare system, and

5           WHEREAS, there also are families that remain within the  
6 welfare system who are at risk of exhausting their eligibility  
7 for assistance and who would benefit from greater incentives  
8 to increase their earnings, and

9           WHEREAS, a strategy that encourages employment,  
10 training, and education represents the best approach for  
11 increasing family incomes and promoting economic  
12 self-sufficiency, and

13           WHEREAS, the Workforce Innovation Act of 2000  
14 restructured the state's workforce system to provide  
15 individuals with enhanced opportunities to develop skills to  
16 secure, maintain, and advance in employment through training  
17 and education, and

18           WHEREAS, the expansion of incentives for employment,  
19 the extension of transitional support services, and the  
20 provision of wage supplements will further enhance the ability  
21 of families who are participants in the welfare system or who  
22 are leaving the welfare system to raise their incomes and  
23 achieve economic progress, NOW, THEREFORE,

24

25 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

26

27           Section 1. Short title.--This act may be cited as the  
28 "Passport to Economic Progress Act."

29           Section 2. Legislative intent.--The purpose of the  
30 Passport to Economic Progress Act is to provide incentives and  
31 services designed to assist individuals who are recipients of

1 temporary cash assistance or who are former recipients of  
2 temporary cash assistance generate family income levels that  
3 help foster the achievement and maintenance of economic  
4 self-sufficiency. It is the intent of the Legislature to  
5 create through this act a demonstration program for the  
6 provision of such incentives and services, with the goal of  
7 developing a model for the continued evolution and enhancement  
8 of the welfare-reform efforts of the state.

9 Section 3. Passport to Economic Progress demonstration  
10 program.--

11 (1) AUTHORIZATION.--Notwithstanding any law to the  
12 contrary, Workforce Florida, Inc., in conjunction with the  
13 Department of Children and Family Services and the Agency for  
14 Workforce Innovation, shall implement a Passport to Economic  
15 Progress demonstration program by November 1, 2001, consistent  
16 with the provisions of this section in Hillsborough, Manatee,  
17 and Miami-Dade counties. Workforce Florida, Inc., must consult  
18 with the applicable regional workforce boards and the  
19 applicable local offices of the department which serve the  
20 demonstration areas and must encourage community input into  
21 the implementation process.

22 (2) WAIVERS.--If Workforce Florida, Inc., in  
23 consultation with the Department of Children and Family  
24 Services, finds that federal waivers would facilitate  
25 implementation of the demonstration program, the department  
26 shall immediately request such waivers, and Workforce Florida,  
27 Inc., shall report to the Governor, the President of the  
28 Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives if any  
29 refusal of the federal government to grant such waivers  
30 prevents the implementation of the demonstration program. If  
31 Workforce Florida, Inc., finds that federal waivers to

1 provisions of the Food Stamp Program would facilitate  
2 implementation of the demonstration program, the Department of  
3 Children and Family Services shall immediately request such  
4 waivers in accordance with section 414.175, Florida Statutes.

5 (3) INCOME DISREGARD.--In order to provide an  
6 additional incentive for employment, and notwithstanding the  
7 amount specified in section 414.095(12), Florida Statutes, for  
8 individuals residing in the areas designated for this  
9 demonstration program, the first \$300 plus one-half of the  
10 remainder of earned income shall be disregarded in determining  
11 eligibility for temporary cash assistance. All other  
12 conditions and requirements of section 414.095(12), Florida  
13 Statutes, shall continue to apply to such individuals.

14 (4) TRANSITIONAL BENEFITS AND SERVICES.--In order to  
15 assist them in making the transition to economic  
16 self-sufficiency, former recipients of temporary cash  
17 assistance residing within the areas designated for this  
18 demonstration program shall be eligible for the following  
19 benefits and services:

20 (a) Notwithstanding the time period specified in  
21 section 445.030, Florida Statutes, transitional education and  
22 training support services as specified in section 445.030,  
23 Florida Statutes, for up to 4 years after the family is no  
24 longer receiving temporary cash assistance;

25 (b) Notwithstanding the time period specified in  
26 section 445.031, Florida Statutes, transitional transportation  
27 support services as specified in section 445.031, Florida  
28 Statutes, for up to 4 years after the family is no longer  
29 receiving temporary cash assistance; and

30 (c) Notwithstanding the time period specified in  
31 section 445.032, Florida Statutes, transitional child care as

1 specified in section 445.032, Florida Statutes, for up to 4  
2 years after the family is no longer receiving temporary cash  
3 assistance.

4  
5 All other provisions of sections 445.030, 445.031, and  
6 445.032, Florida Statutes, shall apply to such individuals, as  
7 appropriate. This subsection does not constitute an  
8 entitlement to transitional benefits and services. If funds  
9 are insufficient to provide benefits and services under this  
10 subsection, the board of directors of Workforce Florida, Inc.,  
11 may limit such benefits and services or otherwise establish  
12 priorities for the provisions of such benefits and services.

13 (5) WAGE SUPPLEMENTATION.--

14 (a) The Legislature finds that:

15 1. There are former recipients of temporary cash  
16 assistance who are working full time but whose incomes are  
17 below the federal poverty level.

18 2. Having incomes below the federal poverty level  
19 makes such individuals particularly vulnerable to reliance on  
20 public assistance despite their best efforts to achieve or  
21 maintain economic independence through employment.

22 3. It is necessary to supplement the wages of such  
23 individuals for a limited period of time in order to assist  
24 them in fulfilling the transition to economic  
25 self-sufficiency.

26 (b) Workforce Florida, Inc., in cooperation with the  
27 Department of Children and Family Services and the Agency for  
28 Workforce Innovation, shall create a transitional wage  
29 supplementation program by November 1, 2001, as a component of  
30 the Passport to Economic Progress demonstration program in the  
31 areas designated for the demonstration program. This wage

1 supplementation program does not constitute an entitlement to  
2 wage supplementation. If funds appropriated are insufficient  
3 to provide wage supplementation, the board of directors of  
4 Workforce Florida, Inc., may limit wage supplementation or  
5 otherwise establish priorities for wage supplementation.

6 (c) To be eligible for wage supplementation under this  
7 subsection, an individual must:

8 1. Be a former recipient of temporary cash assistance  
9 who last received such assistance on or after January 1, 2000;

10 2. Be employed full time, which for the purposes of  
11 this subsection means employment averaging at least 32 hours  
12 per week; and

13 3. Have an average family income for the 6 months  
14 preceding the date of application for wage supplementation  
15 which is less than 100 percent of the federal poverty level.

16 (d) Workforce Florida, Inc., shall determine the  
17 schedule for the payment of wage supplementation under this  
18 subsection. An individual eligible for wage supplementation  
19 under this subsection may receive a payment that equals the  
20 amount necessary to bring the individual's total family income  
21 for the period covered by the payment to 100 percent of the  
22 federal poverty level. An individual may not receive wage  
23 supplementation payments for more than a total of 12 months.

24 (e) The wage supplementation program authorized by  
25 this subsection shall be administered through the regional  
26 workforce boards and the one-stop delivery system, under  
27 policy guidelines, criteria, and applications developed by  
28 Workforce Florida, Inc., in cooperation with the Department of  
29 Children and Family Services and the Agency for Workforce  
30 Innovation. To the maximum extent possible, the regional

31

1 workforce boards shall use electronic debit card technologies  
2 to provide wage supplementation payments under this program.

3 (6) EVALUATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.--Workforce  
4 Florida, Inc., in conjunction with the Department of Children  
5 and Family Services, the Agency for Workforce Innovation, and  
6 the regional workforce boards in the areas designated for this  
7 demonstration program, shall conduct a comprehensive  
8 evaluation of the effectiveness of the demonstration program  
9 operated under this section. By January 1, 2003, Workforce  
10 Florida, Inc., shall submit a report on such evaluation to the  
11 Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the  
12 House of Representatives. The report must include  
13 recommendations as to whether the demonstration program should  
14 be expanded to other service areas or statewide and whether  
15 the program should be revised to enhance its administration or  
16 effectiveness.

17 (7) CONFLICTS.--If there is a conflict between the  
18 implementation procedures described in this section and  
19 federal requirements and regulations, federal requirements and  
20 regulations shall control.

21 Section 4. There is appropriated from the Federal  
22 Grants Trust Fund to the Department of Children and Family  
23 Services \$310,000 to provide funds for 9 months to implement  
24 the additional income disregard for fiscal year 2001-2002.  
25 There is appropriated from the Employment Security  
26 Administration Trust Fund to the Agency for Workforce  
27 Innovation \$3,222,500 to provide funds for 9 months to extend  
28 transitional benefits and services and to implement the wage  
29 supplementation program for fiscal year 2001-2001. The source  
30 of these funds is the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families  
31 block grant.

1           Section 5. This act shall take effect July 1, 2001.

2

3                   STATEMENT OF SUBSTANTIAL CHANGES CONTAINED IN  
4                               COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR  
5                                       SB 1672

6

6   The committee substitute expands the demonstration program to  
7   include Miami-Dade County. The committee substitute requires  
8   Workforce Florida, Inc., in consultation with the Department  
9   of Children and Family Services, to determine whether waivers  
10  are needed from the Federal Government to facilitate  
11  implementation of the demonstration program. The department  
12  must request the necessary federal waivers. The committee  
13  substitute requires Workforce Florida, Inc., to report to the  
14  Governor and the Legislature if the Federal Government  
15  prevents implementation of the demonstration program by  
16  refusing to grant a necessary waiver.

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

27

28

29

30

31