

ACT 280

S.B. NO. 1236

A Bill for an Act Relating to the University of Hawaii.

*Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Hawaii:*

SECTION 1. The Federal Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act of 1996 abolished the sixty-one-year-old Aid to Families with Dependent Children entitlement program and replaced it with a transitional aid program called the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program. TANF requires recipients who are able to work to secure employment at the earliest opportunity. The new law places a heavy burden on the states to meet strict work participation requirements.

The federal requirements have set a laudable goal. Work is the cornerstone of the community’s shared values of personal responsibility and self-sufficiency. In addition, work promotes self-discipline and self-esteem.

The vast majority of the recipients of public assistance value parental responsibility and a strong work ethic, and will accept financial responsibility for themselves and their children when given a real opportunity to achieve self-sufficiency. However, public assistance recipients are frustrated by barriers preventing them from joining the work force on a permanent basis. Moreover, strong competition for scarce jobs often leaves behind those with little experience or education.

Women are the head-of-household in over ninety per cent of financially assisted households. Approximately two-thirds of all women in Hawaii are working in sales, clerical, and service type jobs, receiving the lowest wages. It is unlikely that the majority of financially assisted households will be able to move out of poverty and be self-sufficient without adding to their knowledge and skills to increase their earning capacity.

The legislature finds that transitional benefits are needed to provide the necessary support to enable recipients to secure education and training beyond high school.

The purpose of this Act is to support the successful transition from public assistance to self-sufficiency through a transitional benefits program for public assistance recipients. The department of human services, through the financial assistance advisory committee, is encouraged to work in collaboration with the University of Hawaii to establish policies that encourage the pursuit and successful completion of higher education for single parents and their children to achieve a stable future.

SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$150,000, or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2001-2002, and the sum of \$150,000, or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2002-2003, for the bridge-to-hope program, including one position for outreach.

The sums appropriated shall be expended by the University of Hawaii for the purposes of this Act.

**SECTION 3.** This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2001.

(Approved June 25, 2001.)