

CHRISTINE O. GREGOIRE
Governor



STATE OF WASHINGTON
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

P.O. Box 40002 • Olympia, Washington 98504-0002 • (360) 753-6780 • www.governor.wa.gov

December 21, 2006

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
United States Senate
717 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Cantwell:

The Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 was a missed opportunity for Congress to reauthorize the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Block Grant in ways that would make it an even better tool for moving families from welfare to work. As a result, Washington and states across the country are now struggling to balance the needs of the families we are trying to help with the requirement to comply with a more rigid set of federal rules.

I firmly believe that TANF's success to date is primarily due to its focus on preparing families for work and on the flexibility that states have had in developing strategies and programs that fit local needs. I have serious concerns that states are losing this focus and flexibility under the Deficit Reduction Act and its resulting regulations. That said, the 110th Congress has an excellent opportunity to correct these problems and get states back on track in moving families toward self-sufficiency.

The enclosed recommendations address an array of issues, reflecting Washington's experience under the new law and regulations. Our most important recommendations to improve TANF are:

- Eliminate the separate 90 percent two-parent participation rate;
- Repeal work verification requirements and penalties that force states to focus on process, rather than outcomes;
- Repeal the unfunded mandate which prohibits states from using child support incentive dollars toward federal Title IV-D match;
- Give states credit against their participation rate targets for successfully moving families off TANF and into jobs;
- Address new regulations that make it more difficult for states to get participation credit for helping families address barriers to employment such as mental illness or domestic violence;
- Add Adult Basic Education, including English as a Second Language instruction, as a core countable TANF activity, and expanding the one year limit on vocational education to two years.

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
December 21, 2006
Page 2

Thank you for the opportunity to communicate my views on TANF and the Deficit Reduction Act. I appreciate your careful review of the enclosed recommendations, and I hope that Congress will make these critical improvements to one of our most important social programs.

Sincerely,

Christine O. Gregoire
Governor

Enclosure

NOTE: Original letter and enclosure sent to each member of Washington State Delegation

CHRISTINE O. GREGOIRE
Governor



STATE OF WASHINGTON
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

P.O. Box 40002 • Olympia, Washington 98504-0002 • (360) 753-6780 • www.governor.wa.gov

December 21, 2006

The Honorable Patty Murray
United States Senate
173 Russell Senate Office Building 2
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Murray:

The Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 was a missed opportunity for Congress to reauthorize the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Block Grant in ways that would make it an even better tool for moving families from welfare to work. As a result, Washington and states across the country are now struggling to balance the needs of the families we are trying to help with the requirement to comply with a more rigid set of federal rules.

I firmly believe that TANF's success to date is primarily due to its focus on preparing families for work and on the flexibility that states have had in developing strategies and programs that fit local needs. I have serious concerns that states are losing this focus and flexibility under the Deficit Reduction Act and the resulting regulations. That said, the 110th Congress has an excellent opportunity to correct these problems and get states back on track in moving families toward self-sufficiency.

The enclosed recommendations address an array of issues, reflecting Washington's experience under the new law and regulations. Our most important recommendations to improve TANF are:

- Eliminate the separate 90 percent two-parent participation rate;
- Repeal work verification requirements and penalties that force states to focus on process, rather than outcomes;
- Repeal the unfunded mandate which prohibits states from using child support incentive dollars toward federal Title IV-D match;
- Give states credit against their participation rate targets for successfully moving families off TANF and into jobs;
- Address new regulations that make it more difficult for states to get participation credit for helping families address barriers to employment such as mental illness or domestic violence;
- Add Adult Basic Education, including English as a Second Language instruction, as a core countable TANF activity, and expanding the one year limit on vocational education to two years.

The Honorable Patty Murray
December 21, 2006
Page 2

Thank you for the opportunity to communicate my views on TANF and the Deficit Reduction Act. I appreciate your careful review of the enclosed recommendations, and I hope that Congress will make these critical improvements to one of our most important social programs.

Sincerely,

Christine O. Gregoire
Governor

Enclosure

NOTE: Original letter and enclosure sent to each member of Washington State Delegation

CHRISTINE O. GREGOIRE
Governor



STATE OF WASHINGTON
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

P.O. Box 40002 • Olympia, Washington 98504-0002 • (360) 753-6780 • www.governor.wa.gov

December 21, 2006

The Honorable Jay Inslee
United States House of Representatives
403 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Inslee:

The Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 was a missed opportunity for Congress to reauthorize the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Block Grant in ways that would make it an even better tool for moving families from welfare to work. As a result, Washington and states across the country are now struggling to balance the needs of the families we are trying to help with the requirement to comply with a more rigid set of federal rules.

I firmly believe that TANF's success to date is primarily due to its focus on preparing families for work and on the flexibility that states have had in developing strategies and programs that fit local needs. I have serious concerns that states are losing this focus and flexibility under the Deficit Reduction Act and the resulting regulations. That said, the 110th Congress has an excellent opportunity to correct these problems and get states back on track in moving families toward self-sufficiency.

The enclosed recommendations address an array of issues, reflecting Washington's experience under the new law and regulations. Our most important recommendations to improve TANF are:

- Eliminate the separate 90 percent two-parent participation rate;
- Repeal work verification requirements and penalties that force states to focus on process, rather than outcomes;
- Repeal the unfunded mandate which prohibits states from using child support incentive dollars toward federal Title IV-D match;
- Give states credit against their participation rate targets for successfully moving families off TANF and into jobs;
- Address new regulations that make it more difficult for states to get participation credit for helping families address barriers to employment such as mental illness or domestic violence;
- Add Adult Basic Education, including English as a Second Language instruction, as a core countable TANF activity, and expanding the one year limit on vocational education to two years.

The Honorable Jay Inslee
December 21, 2006
Page 2

Thank you for the opportunity to communicate my views on TANF and the Deficit Reduction Act. I appreciate your careful review of the enclosed recommendations, and I hope that Congress will make these critical improvements to one of our most important social programs.

Sincerely,

Christine O. Gregoire
Governor

Enclosure

NOTE: Original letter and enclosure sent to each member of Washington State Delegation

CHRISTINE O. GREGOIRE
Governor



STATE OF WASHINGTON
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

P.O. Box 40002 • Olympia, Washington 98504-0002 • (360) 753-6780 • www.governor.wa.gov

December 21, 2006

The Honorable Rick Larsen
United States House of Representatives
107 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Larsen:

The Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 was a missed opportunity for Congress to reauthorize the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Block Grant in ways that would make it an even better tool for moving families from welfare to work. As a result, Washington and states across the country are now struggling to balance the needs of the families we are trying to help with the requirement to comply with a more rigid set of federal rules.

I firmly believe that TANF's success to date is primarily due to its focus on preparing families for work and on the flexibility that states have had in developing strategies and programs that fit local needs. I have serious concerns that states are losing this focus and flexibility under the Deficit Reduction Act and the resulting regulations. That said, the 110th Congress has an excellent opportunity to correct these problems and get states back on track in moving families toward self-sufficiency.

The enclosed recommendations address an array of issues, reflecting Washington's experience under the new law and regulations. Our most important recommendations to improve TANF are:

- Eliminate the separate 90 percent two-parent participation rate;
- Repeal work verification requirements and penalties that force states to focus on process, rather than outcomes;
- Repeal the unfunded mandate which prohibits states from using child support incentive dollars toward federal Title IV-D match;
- Give states credit against their participation rate targets for successfully moving families off TANF and into jobs;
- Address new regulations that make it more difficult for states to get participation credit for helping families address barriers to employment such as mental illness or domestic violence;
- Add Adult Basic Education, including English as a Second Language instruction, as a core countable TANF activity, and expanding the one year limit on vocational education to two years.

The Honorable Rick Larsen
December 21, 2006
Page 2

Thank you for the opportunity to communicate my views on TANF and the Deficit Reduction Act. I appreciate your careful review of the enclosed recommendations, and I hope that Congress will make these critical improvements to one of our most important social programs.

Sincerely,

Christine O. Gregoire
Governor

Enclosure

NOTE: Original letter and enclosure sent to each member of Washington State Delegation

CHRISTINE O. GREGOIRE
Governor



STATE OF WASHINGTON
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

P.O. Box 40002 • Olympia, Washington 98504-0002 • (360) 753-6780 • www.governor.wa.gov

December 21, 2006

The Honorable Brian Baird
United States House of Representatives
1421 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Baird:

The Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 was a missed opportunity for Congress to reauthorize the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Block Grant in ways that would make it an even better tool for moving families from welfare to work. As a result, Washington and states across the country are now struggling to balance the needs of the families we are trying to help with the requirement to comply with a more rigid set of federal rules.

I firmly believe that TANF's success to date is primarily due to its focus on preparing families for work and on the flexibility that states have had in developing strategies and programs that fit local needs. I have serious concerns that states are losing this focus and flexibility under the Deficit Reduction Act and the resulting regulations. That said, the 110th Congress has an excellent opportunity to correct these problems and get states back on track in moving families toward self-sufficiency.

The enclosed recommendations address an array of issues, reflecting Washington's experience under the new law and regulations. Our most important recommendations to improve TANF are:

- Eliminate the separate 90 percent two-parent participation rate;
- Repeal work verification requirements and penalties that force states to focus on process, rather than outcomes;
- Repeal the unfunded mandate which prohibits states from using child support incentive dollars toward federal Title IV-D match;
- Give states credit against their participation rate targets for successfully moving families off TANF and into jobs;
- Address new regulations that make it more difficult for states to get participation credit for helping families address barriers to employment such as mental illness or domestic violence;
- Add Adult Basic Education, including English as a Second Language instruction, as a core countable TANF activity, and expanding the one year limit on vocational education to two years.

The Honorable Brian Baird
December 21, 2006
Page 2

Thank you for the opportunity to communicate my views on TANF and the Deficit Reduction Act. I appreciate your careful review of the enclosed recommendations, and I hope that Congress will make these critical improvements to one of our most important social programs.

Sincerely,

Christine O. Gregoire
Governor

Enclosure

NOTE: Original letter and enclosure sent to each member of Washington State Delegation

CHRISTINE O. GREGOIRE
Governor



STATE OF WASHINGTON
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

P.O. Box 40002 • Olympia, Washington 98504-0002 • (360) 753-6780 • www.governor.wa.gov

December 21, 2006

The Honorable Richard “Doc” Hastings
United States House of Representatives
1323 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Hastings:

The Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 was a missed opportunity for Congress to reauthorize the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Block Grant in ways that would make it an even better tool for moving families from welfare to work. As a result, Washington and states across the country are now struggling to balance the needs of the families we are trying to help with the requirement to comply with a more rigid set of federal rules.

I firmly believe that TANF’s success to date is primarily due to its focus on preparing families for work and on the flexibility that states have had in developing strategies and programs that fit local needs. I have serious concerns that states are losing this focus and flexibility under the Deficit Reduction Act and the resulting regulations. That said, the 110th Congress has an excellent opportunity to correct these problems and get states back on track in moving families toward self-sufficiency.

The enclosed recommendations address an array of issues, reflecting Washington’s experience under the new law and regulations. Our most important recommendations to improve TANF are:

- Eliminate the separate 90 percent two-parent participation rate;
- Repeal work verification requirements and penalties that force states to focus on process, rather than outcomes;
- Repeal the unfunded mandate which prohibits states from using child support incentive dollars toward federal Title IV-D match;
- Give states credit against their participation rate targets for successfully moving families off TANF and into jobs;
- Address new regulations that make it more difficult for states to get participation credit for helping families address barriers to employment such as mental illness or domestic violence;
- Add Adult Basic Education, including English as a Second Language instruction, as a core countable TANF activity, and expanding the one year limit on vocational education to two years.

The Honorable Richard "Doc" Hastings
December 21, 2006
Page 2

Thank you for the opportunity to communicate my views on TANF and the Deficit Reduction Act. I appreciate your careful review of the enclosed recommendations, and I hope that Congress will make these critical improvements to one of our most important social programs.

Sincerely,

Christine O. Gregoire
Governor

Enclosure

NOTE: Original letter and enclosure sent to each member of Washington State Delegation

CHRISTINE O. GREGOIRE
Governor



STATE OF WASHINGTON
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

P.O. Box 40002 • Olympia, Washington 98504-0002 • (360) 753-6780 • www.governor.wa.gov

December 21, 2006

The Honorable Cathy McMorris
United States House of Representatives
1708 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman McMorris:

The Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 was a missed opportunity for Congress to reauthorize the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Block Grant in ways that would make it an even better tool for moving families from welfare to work. As a result, Washington and states across the country are now struggling to balance the needs of the families we are trying to help with the requirement to comply with a more rigid set of federal rules.

I firmly believe that TANF's success to date is primarily due to its focus on preparing families for work and on the flexibility that states have had in developing strategies and programs that fit local needs. I have serious concerns that states are losing this focus and flexibility under the Deficit Reduction Act and the resulting regulations. That said, the 110th Congress has an excellent opportunity to correct these problems and get states back on track in moving families toward self-sufficiency.

The enclosed recommendations address an array of issues, reflecting Washington's experience under the new law and regulations. Our most important recommendations to improve TANF are:

- Eliminate the separate 90 percent two-parent participation rate;
- Repeal work verification requirements and penalties that force states to focus on process, rather than outcomes;
- Repeal the unfunded mandate which prohibits states from using child support incentive dollars toward federal Title IV-D match;
- Give states credit against their participation rate targets for successfully moving families off TANF and into jobs;
- Address new regulations that make it more difficult for states to get participation credit for helping families address barriers to employment such as mental illness or domestic violence;
- Add Adult Basic Education, including English as a Second Language instruction, as a core countable TANF activity, and expanding the one year limit on vocational education to two years.

The Honorable Cathy McMorris
December 21, 2006
Page 2

Thank you for the opportunity to communicate my views on TANF and the Deficit Reduction Act. I appreciate your careful review of the enclosed recommendations, and I hope that Congress will make these critical improvements to one of our most important social programs.

Sincerely,

Christine O. Gregoire
Governor

Enclosure

NOTE: Original letter and enclosure sent to each member of Washington State Delegation

CHRISTINE O. GREGOIRE
Governor



STATE OF WASHINGTON
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

P.O. Box 40002 • Olympia, Washington 98504-0002 • (360) 753-6780 • www.governor.wa.gov

December 21, 2006

The Honorable Norm Dicks
United States House of Representatives
2467 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Dicks:

The Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 was a missed opportunity for Congress to reauthorize the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Block Grant in ways that would make it an even better tool for moving families from welfare to work. As a result, Washington and states across the country are now struggling to balance the needs of the families we are trying to help with the requirement to comply with a more rigid set of federal rules.

I firmly believe that TANF's success to date is primarily due to its focus on preparing families for work and on the flexibility that states have had in developing strategies and programs that fit local needs. I have serious concerns that states are losing this focus and flexibility under the Deficit Reduction Act and the resulting regulations. That said, the 110th Congress has an excellent opportunity to correct these problems and get states back on track in moving families toward self-sufficiency.

The enclosed recommendations address an array of issues, reflecting Washington's experience under the new law and regulations. Our most important recommendations to improve TANF are:

- Eliminate the separate 90 percent two-parent participation rate;
- Repeal work verification requirements and penalties that force states to focus on process, rather than outcomes;
- Repeal the unfunded mandate which prohibits states from using child support incentive dollars toward federal Title IV-D match;
- Give states credit against their participation rate targets for successfully moving families off TANF and into jobs;
- Address new regulations that make it more difficult for states to get participation credit for helping families address barriers to employment such as mental illness or domestic violence;
- Add Adult Basic Education, including English as a Second Language instruction, as a core countable TANF activity, and expanding the one year limit on vocational education to two years.

The Honorable Norm Dicks
December 21, 2006
Page 2

Thank you for the opportunity to communicate my views on TANF and the Deficit Reduction Act. I appreciate your careful review of the enclosed recommendations, and I hope that Congress will make these critical improvements to one of our most important social programs.

Sincerely,

Christine O. Gregoire
Governor

Enclosure

NOTE: Original letter and enclosure sent to each member of Washington State Delegation

CHRISTINE O. GREGOIRE
Governor



STATE OF WASHINGTON
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

P.O. Box 40002 • Olympia, Washington 98504-0002 • (360) 753-6780 • www.governor.wa.gov

December 21, 2006

The Honorable Jim McDermott
United States House of Representatives
1035 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman McDermott:

The Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 was a missed opportunity for Congress to reauthorize the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Block Grant in ways that would make it an even better tool for moving families from welfare to work. As a result, Washington and states across the country are now struggling to balance the needs of the families we are trying to help with the requirement to comply with a more rigid set of federal rules.

I firmly believe that TANF's success to date is primarily due to its focus on preparing families for work and on the flexibility that states have had in developing strategies and programs that fit local needs. I have serious concerns that states are losing this focus and flexibility under the Deficit Reduction Act and the resulting regulations. That said, the 110th Congress has an excellent opportunity to correct these problems and get states back on track in moving families toward self-sufficiency.

The enclosed recommendations address an array of issues, reflecting Washington's experience under the new law and regulations. Our most important recommendations to improve TANF are:

- Eliminate the separate 90 percent two-parent participation rate;
- Repeal work verification requirements and penalties that force states to focus on process, rather than outcomes;
- Repeal the unfunded mandate which prohibits states from using child support incentive dollars toward federal Title IV-D match;
- Give states credit against their participation rate targets for successfully moving families off TANF and into jobs;
- Address new regulations that make it more difficult for states to get participation credit for helping families address barriers to employment such as mental illness or domestic violence;
- Add Adult Basic Education, including English as a Second Language instruction, as a core countable TANF activity, and expanding the one year limit on vocational education to two years.

The Honorable Jim McDermott
December 21, 2006
Page 2

Thank you for the opportunity to communicate my views on TANF and the Deficit Reduction Act. I appreciate your careful review of the enclosed recommendations, and I hope that Congress will make these critical improvements to one of our most important social programs.

Sincerely,

Christine O. Gregoire
Governor

Enclosure

NOTE: Original letter and enclosure sent to each member of Washington State Delegation

CHRISTINE O. GREGOIRE
Governor



STATE OF WASHINGTON
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

P.O. Box 40002 • Olympia, Washington 98504-0002 • (360) 753-6780 • www.governor.wa.gov

December 21, 2006

The Honorable Dave Reichert
United States House of Representatives
1223 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Reichert:

The Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 was a missed opportunity for Congress to reauthorize the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Block Grant in ways that would make it an even better tool for moving families from welfare to work. As a result, Washington and states across the country are now struggling to balance the needs of the families we are trying to help with the requirement to comply with a more rigid set of federal rules.

I firmly believe that TANF's success to date is primarily due to its focus on preparing families for work and on the flexibility that states have had in developing strategies and programs that fit local needs. I have serious concerns that states are losing this focus and flexibility under the Deficit Reduction Act and the resulting regulations. That said, the 110th Congress has an excellent opportunity to correct these problems and get states back on track in moving families toward self-sufficiency.

The enclosed recommendations address an array of issues, reflecting Washington's experience under the new law and regulations. Our most important recommendations to improve TANF are:

- Eliminate the separate 90 percent two-parent participation rate;
- Repeal work verification requirements and penalties that force states to focus on process, rather than outcomes;
- Repeal the unfunded mandate which prohibits states from using child support incentive dollars toward federal Title IV-D match;
- Give states credit against their participation rate targets for successfully moving families off TANF and into jobs;
- Address new regulations that make it more difficult for states to get participation credit for helping families address barriers to employment such as mental illness or domestic violence;
- Add Adult Basic Education, including English as a Second Language instruction, as a core countable TANF activity, and expanding the one year limit on vocational education to two years.

The Honorable Dave Reichert
December 21, 2006
Page 2

Thank you for the opportunity to communicate my views on TANF and the Deficit Reduction Act. I appreciate your careful review of the enclosed recommendations, and I hope that Congress will make these critical improvements to one of our most important social programs.

Sincerely,

Christine O. Gregoire
Governor

Enclosure

NOTE: Original letter and enclosure sent to each member of Washington State Delegation

CHRISTINE O. GREGOIRE
Governor



STATE OF WASHINGTON
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

P.O. Box 40002 • Olympia, Washington 98504-0002 • (360) 753-6780 • www.governor.wa.gov

December 21, 2006

The Honorable Adam Smith
United States House of Representatives
227 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Smith:

The Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 was a missed opportunity for Congress to reauthorize the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Block Grant in ways that would make it an even better tool for moving families from welfare to work. As a result, Washington and states across the country are now struggling to balance the needs of the families we are trying to help with the requirement to comply with a more rigid set of federal rules.

I firmly believe that TANF's success to date is primarily due to its focus on preparing families for work and on the flexibility that states have had in developing strategies and programs that fit local needs. I have serious concerns that states are losing this focus and flexibility under the Deficit Reduction Act and the resulting regulations. That said, the 110th Congress has an excellent opportunity to correct these problems and get states back on track in moving families toward self-sufficiency.

The enclosed recommendations address an array of issues, reflecting Washington's experience under the new law and regulations. Our most important recommendations to improve TANF are:

- Eliminate the separate 90 percent two-parent participation rate;
- Repeal work verification requirements and penalties that force states to focus on process, rather than outcomes;
- Repeal the unfunded mandate which prohibits states from using child support incentive dollars toward federal Title IV-D match;
- Give states credit against their participation rate targets for successfully moving families off TANF and into jobs;
- Address new regulations that make it more difficult for states to get participation credit for helping families address barriers to employment such as mental illness or domestic violence;
- Add Adult Basic Education, including English as a Second Language instruction, as a core countable TANF activity, and expanding the one year limit on vocational education to two years.

The Honorable Adam Smith
December 21, 2006
Page 2

Thank you for the opportunity to communicate my views on TANF and the Deficit Reduction Act. I appreciate your careful review of the enclosed recommendations, and I hope that Congress will make these critical improvements to one of our most important social programs.

Sincerely,

Christine O. Gregoire
Governor

Enclosure

NOTE: Original letter and enclosure sent to each member of Washington State Delegation