



BRIAN MAIENSCHHEIN

ASSEMBLYMAN, SEVENTY-SEVENTH DISTRICT

Assembly Bill 960

CalWORKs Housing Assistance

Background

Homelessness continues to be a problem in our state and throughout the country. While often hidden, homelessness among families with children is at an all-time high. The California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) program works to alleviate the problem of child homelessness by providing temporary housing assistance to families with children.

Current Law

CalWORKs currently provides temporary housing assistance for only 16 consecutive days during one calendar year to homeless families with children. This inadvertently undermines the success of this benefit and support to homeless families if their temporary housing situation is interrupted for one or more of the consecutive 16 days, regardless of the reason. As a result, families may be refused or lose their temporary housing due to family emergencies, offers of temporary housing from family or friends, or even the pursuit of employment or housing opportunities elsewhere.

Current law and regulations require CalWORKs recipients who are homeless requesting permanent housing assistance through the program to secure housing with a commercial establishment or a person in the business of renting, or with experience renting properties. This excludes other innovative ways that CalWORKs families may secure housing, when California suffers from a shortage of affordable housing.

As a result, suitable shared-home living accommodations for families with children are unable to be used to prevent homelessness among CalWORKs households.

This Bill

AB 960 would:

- Allow CalWORKs recipients receiving permanent housing assistance to use their payment towards shared housing.
- Allow CalWORK's recipients to secure housing through a valid lease, sublease or shared housing agreement from an individual not in the business of renting properties.
- Allow counties to extend 16 cumulative days

By making these changes, AB 960 would increase options for our state's poorest families with children while also improving the effectiveness of the CalWORKs program's homelessness interventions.

Sponsors

Western Center on Law and Poverty
Coalition of California Welfare Rights Org.

Staff

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