

Submitter: Robert Hart
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Housing and Development
Measure: SB603
SB 603

This is a demonstration project to try to help homeless or near homeless people by gifting them \$1000 a month for 12 months. The bill also requires a study of “long term cash assistance.” Finally the bill requires the creation of legislative concepts to create long term cash assistance for introduction in the 2025 legislative session. Thus it can be concluded that this bill is the first step in the creation of cash giveaways to the homeless or near homeless or persons with low incomes.

The proposed cash assistance can be spent on what the recipient desires. Specifically the bill states the “cash assistance may be used for utilities, telephones, cable plans, student loans, medical expenses, auto loans, auto repairs, transportation or any other goods or services needed as basic human necessities.” While the money can be used for most anything, there is no requirement to work, or perform tasks in exchange for the monetary assistance or any oversight to assure that the money is spent for basic needs. I question that “cable plans” can be considered a basic human necessity. Would marijuana be considered a basic human necessity or cigarettes or alcohol? There are limitations to what can be purchased for SNAP benefits. Why is there no proposal in this bill for specific limitations for use of the benefits. This program also seems like a “back door” method to forgive student loans without legal authority. Further in the bill, there is a requirement to study the ability to include persons without a social security number. It would appear that this would authorize the program to be available to persons not legally in this country. Under no circumstance should benefits be provided to persons not legally in this country. Another concern without a social security number is how the benefits would be distributed. Without a social security number a person cannot open a bank account. Would benefits be by an electronic benefit card or would it be a check or would it be cash? Is the state going to create a bank to distribute these benefits? What method is used to verify identities for persons in the program since they are considered “homeless?” Can recipients make application in different locations using factitious names? There is no permanent address for some of the persons targeted for this program. This program is ripe for fraud. Additionally the creation of this program will create a magnet to draw people here for the benefits creating even more demand for this “benefit.” The increase in spendable “income” will also cause inflation to increase more than the current excessive levels.

The proposed budget of \$500,000,000 is an excessive amount for a pilot program to test how this would work. If the administration of the program is 10%, the money for

recipients is \$450,000,000 with \$50,000,000 used to administer the program. If the payout is \$12,000 for a year, the number of people to receive the cash is 37,500 which is 8% of the entire population of the state. This is not a pilot program, this is a change to the entire economy of the state. Add this amount of cash to people together with the additional programs that the bill states would be maintained and not reduced because of this program and there is no reason for people to work as happened when the Covid Cash was given away and people stopped working. The amount of fraud that is now coming to light is astonishing. This proposed cash assistance idea must be stopped before it goes any further. I ask in the strongest terms that you vote against this bill.