

LaPlante, Jill

From: Greg Poliquin <greg@poliquinmachinery.com>
Sent: Friday, April 21, 2017 7:29 AM
To: Hamann, Scott
Cc: Eric Brakey; Katz, Roger; Chipman, Benjamin; Hymanson, Patricia; Perry, Anne; Madigan, Colleen; Denno, Dale; Parker, Jennifer; Sanderson, Deborah; Head, Frances; Malaby, Richard; Chace, Paul; LaPlante, Jill
Subject: Re: Please Support LD 33

Dear Scott,

Glad to see you recognize that Federal dollars still come from taxpayer's pockets. Problem is, once those dollars are confiscated from the private sector they can no longer be donated nor spent to make work for the less fortunate. I've seldom seen money spent more wisely or efficiently by the government than by the individuals who produced it in the first place.

Now pardon me while I go produce a few hundred dollars to help myself and others in need. And then a few hundred more so that I can pay my taxes to help others, who need those dollars to help others, so they may feel productive.

Regards,
Greg Poliquin
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The Spirit Tool Arbor System, The best way to hold your side-milling cutter or splitter saw.
<http://spirittool.com>

On Apr 21, 2017, at 7:01 AM, Hamann, Scott <Scott.Hamann@legislature.maine.gov> wrote:

Thanks Greg. Volunteering is a requirement of the ASPIRE program for people who are unable to find work, and something no one disputes as beneficial to help people achieve self reliance because it reinforces responsibility. However, I agree with you that it isn't exactly volunteering if you're doing it for a few hundred dollars a month when you and your child need way more to stay afloat.

6. You're correct that it is a government program. It's funded with taxpayer dollars, and is cash assistance for needy families. Like I said previously, it's almost entirely single moms with young children/toddlers/infants at home. Very few people would suggest we should not take care of these families and kids. And of course, these moms have paid taxes in the past, are likely paying taxes while participating in ASPIRE, and/or will pay taxes through future employment. That goes double for their kids once they reach employment age. I think it's fair that they should be able to access the temporary assistance program they pay into.

Finally, 100% of TANF funds come from the federal government, and the amount Maine receives is set regardless of how many people participate. In other words, it will not impact your taxes if a family is removed from the program. Likewise, it will not impact your taxes if the program helps an additional family. Conversely, leaving families in poverty vulnerable has an array of society costs — costs to our economy, to our education system, and to our healthcare system since poverty status is a leading indicator of metabolic illnesses like obesity and type 2 diabetes both of which cost Maine taxpayers tens of millions of dollars per year. Of course you pay federal taxes too, which do go toward the TANF program. But again, since it is a block grant the amount in the program (and the impact on your federal taxes) will not change based on how many Mainers are able to participate. State allocations are determined at the federal level.

I hope that cleared up some misperceptions you may have about the program. Thank you for writing the committee. It's important that we hear all viewpoints as we consider legislation.

Scott

Scott Hamann

State Representative | District 32
South Portland, (part of) Cape Elizabeth
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Scott.Hamann@legislature.maine.gov

NOTE that legislative correspondence is considered a public record and may be subject to a request under the Maine Freedom of Access Act. Information that you wish to keep confidential should not be included in email correspondence.

On Apr 21, 2017, at 6:19 AM, Greg Poliquin <greg@poliquinmachinery.com> wrote:

Dear Scott,

Volunteering is something most productive people do once they have provided for their own families. Learning a marketable skill or sweeping streets is fine. Save the volunteering for a time when you can provide for yourself. If your doing it for a handout it ain't volunteering.

And if you're doing good works with other peoples money that wasn't voluntarily given, that's not good works, that's a government program.

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On Apr 20, 2017, at 10:16 PM, Hamann, Scott
<Scott.Hamann@legislature.maine.gov> wrote:

Hi Greg, thanks for writing. I understand your concern.

100% of TANF families have a child in the home, so the recipient is either a parent or their child. Most are single moms. In fact, to receive TANF these single moms must participate in the ASPIRE program 20 hours a week (if their child is under 6yo) or 30 hours a week (if their child is over 6yo). Either way they're participating in the ASPIRE program 20-30 hours a week, and I would not consider that a hammock.

There are many factors that make it difficult for these single moms to work their way out of poverty, and cutting them off from resources would solve nothing except to ensure children are raised in a more vulnerable household.

That said, very few families even reach 60 months. Hell, if they do then the ASPIRE program has failed them, but it's rare because the program has an amazing staff to help families achieve independence. OFI Director Beth Hamm is making some great changes to ASPIRE, so I look forward to these new innovations which I anticipate will make the 60 month time limit irrelevant. I think that's everyone's goal!

And finally, I have to say that in my opinion by nature of raising a child while either working, looking for work, or volunteering (i.e. ASPIRE) I would consider them productive human beings. What they really need is our support.

Thanks again for writing Greg.

Scott

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On Apr 20, 2017, at 5:06 PM, Greg Poliquin
<greg@poliquinmachinery.com> wrote:

Dear Committee,

I was astonished to learn that TANF benefits last 60 months. This isn't a hand up, it isn't a hammock, it's an incubator. An incubator that can produce but dependency! Not a healthy productive human being. Shame on us.

Regards,
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