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**LD 1017 An Act to Strengthen Work Participation in the
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program**

Senator Brakey, Representative Hymanson, members of the Health and Human Services Committee, I present for you today LD 1017 AN Act to Strengthen Work Participation in the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program.

LD 1017 seeks to increase work participation by narrowing the "Good Cause" exemptions that prevent a person from being sanctioned while receiving public benefits under the TANF program. While I agree that public funded benefits are important to lending a helping hand to those in need or folks who have fallen on hard times, we should have parameters that ensure not only compliance in programming but also, prove a sincere attempt on the part of the recipient to help themselves reach their potential.

Current exemptions Include:

1. Illness or incapacitation.
2. Sexual harassment
3. Court-required appearance;
4. Lack of supportive services.
5. Inclement weather.
6. Assignment to another activity.
7. Remoteness.
8. Crisis or special circumstance.
9. Good cause.
10. Caretakers of children under 6 years of age.
11. Net loss of cash income.
12. Other good cause.
13. Domestic violence. Inability to participate due to domestic violence when the individual is unable to participate because of physical injuries or the psychological effects of abuse; because of legal proceedings, counseling or other activities related to abuse; because the abuser actively interferes with the individual's participation; because the location puts the individual at risk; or for other good cause related to domestic violence.

I know there is resistance to changing these exemptions; the conversation will surround how removing them will hurt people, cause people to lose their benefits and a whole host of other excuses however, I must point out what happened under the SNAP program when work requirements were put in place. Yes, a large percentage of prior recipients dropped off the program but, having followed these folks through MRS, information shows that the large majority are now in the work force earning 114% more income than they received. This shows that having strict criteria in our public benefit programs works. Thank you for your time and I'd be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Deb Sanderson

1. Illness or incapacitation. The individual's illness, incapacity or advanced age, or the illness or incapacity of a household member, that requires the individual to provide care in the home;

[1993, c. 385, §18 (AMD) .]

2. Sexual harassment. Sexual harassment at a program-approved component;

[1993, c. 385, §18 (AMD) .]

3. Court-required appearance; incarceration. Court-required appearance or incarceration;

[1987, c. 856, §7 (NEW) .]

4. Lack of supportive services. Lack or breakdown of necessary supportive services such as child care or transportation with no appropriate alternatives available;

[1993, c. 385, §18 (AMD) .]

5. Inclement weather. Inclement weather that prevents the individual from traveling to an activity when the weather is severe enough to prevent other individuals from traveling to the same activity;

[1993, c. 385, §18 (AMD) .]

6. Assignment to another activity. Assignment by the department to an activity or component that has not been made part of the family contract;

[1997, c. 530, Pt. A, §21 (AMD) .]

7. Remoteness. Participation that requires the individual to travel outside the individual's immediate geographic area, defined as an area within a 2-hour round trip commute;

[1993, c. 385, §18 (AMD) .]

8. Crisis or special circumstance. A crisis or special circumstance that causes an individual to be absent from or discontinue a department activity about which the department has been advised and has determined to constitute good cause;

[1997, c. 530, Pt. A, §22 (AMD) .]

9. Good cause.

[1989, c. 839, §8 (RP) .]

10. Caretakers of children under 6 years of age.

[1995, c. 418, Pt. A, §28 (RP) .]

11. Net loss of cash income.

[1995, c. 418, Pt. A, §28 (RP) .]

12. Other good cause. Any other reason resulting in failure to participate that is beyond the control of the individual or that a reasonable person would determine to be good cause; or

[1997, c. 530, Pt. A, §23 (AMD) .]

13. Domestic violence. Inability to participate due to domestic violence when the individual is unable to participate because of physical injuries or the psychological effects of abuse; because of legal proceedings, counseling or other activities related to abuse; because the abuser actively interferes with the individual's participation; because the location puts the individual at risk; or for other good cause related to domestic violence. For the purposes of this subsection, reasonable and verifiable evidence may include but is not limited to the following: