

Testimony in Support of SB 828
Hearing before the Senate Finance Committee, March 10, 2022

I, Erika Young, am writing this letter in support of Senate Bill 828.

Temporary cash assistance recipients have many responsibilities and expectations that they must meet in order to receive benefits. In this same tone, the Department of Social Services and third party work activity vendors should also have a responsibility to ensure that TCA recipients are learning skills and gaining experiences that will put them in a better position to have long term financial independence and stability. Senate Bill 828 addresses these concerns and offers a few ways of remedying these issues to garner a more successful outcome for participants.

I have received temporary cash assistance intermittently over the course of eight years. During those times I had the experiences of performing unpaid work and attending job readiness courses and specified training. Before being assigned to a work activity, participants go to an orientation and complete a large packet of paperwork. This intake is to assess the participants background, life goals and any barriers to their success. Unfortunately this information is often not taken into consideration when the time comes to place participants into an activity to satisfy the expectations of the program.

Too often, participants are performing unpaid work with the expectation of being hired by the employers. Yet they are rarely ever offered a position. Other participants may receive career training in so-called "high demand" positions. Unfortunately these positions don't typically offer a livable wage nor do they provide the ability for career growth and development. Being impoverished and needing assistance should not limit or prevent anyone from pursuing their dreams and passions. Nor should it hamper one's ability to perform their parenting duties because of restrictive scheduling and stringent expectations.

With more options and less restrictions, TCA recipients will be able to create long term success in a career that satisfies their passion and interests. Without this many people will cycle in and out of the temporary cash assistance program, such as I did. Yes, success is financial gain. Success is stability. Success is also happiness. Happiness is the total satisfaction with oneself. When a parent reaches that pinnacle the entire family is uplifted and made stronger as to break poverty's stronghold.