

By Mr. Olver, petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 542) of John W. Olver, Robert A. Durand, Michael J. Barrett and Frederick E. Berry for legislation to create the nutrition outreach and public education program and to make appropriations therefor. Human Services and Elderly Affairs.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year One Thousand Nine Hundred and Ninety-One.

AN ACT CREATING THE NUTRITION OUTREACH AND PUBLIC EDUCATION PROGRAM AND MAKING APPROPRIATIONS THEREFOR.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 182 of Chapter 6 of the General Laws,
2 as added by chapter 833 of the acts of 1974, is hereby amended
3 by inserting the following subsection: — (IX) advise the secretary
4 of human services on the establishment, administration and
5 evaluation of a coordinated program of nutrition outreach.

1 SECTION 2. Chapter 6 of the General Laws is hereby
2 amended by inserting after section 182 the following sections: —
3 Section 182A. Definitions. As used in sections 182B, 182C,
4 182D and 182E:

5 1. "At risk populations" means populations including but not
6 limited to families with children eligible to receive aid to families
7 with dependent children payments, households eligible to receive
8 federal supplemental security income payments, households with
9 incomes at or below one hundred eighty-five percent of the
10 poverty level, recipients of emergency food, elderly or disabled
11 persons, homeless persons, unemployed persons, and families and
12 persons residing in rural households who are at risk of nutritional
13 deficiencies.

14 2. "Community-based organization" means an organization
15 under local direction which uses input from its community to
16 establish goals and objectives, and utilizes the community in an
17 ongoing way to achieve desired results.

18 3. "Food assistance programs" means programs including but
19 not limited to food stamp programs, school breakfast and lunch
20 programs, special supplemental programs for women, infants and
21 children, congregate meal programs and home delivered meal
22 programs.

23 4. "High risk areas" means any community where a significant
24 percentage or number of those potentially eligible for food
25 assistance programs are not participating in such programs.

26 5. "Outreach" means planned efforts to facilitate participation
27 in multiple nutrition and food assistance programs, such as:
28 disseminating information on programs and eligibility require-
29 ments; identifying high risk communities; documenting and
30 resolving barriers; client case management/advocacy; monitoring
31 program participation rates; assisting clients with application
32 problems; and providing training and education to health care,
33 social service and area agency staff about all nutrition and food
34 program benefits.

35 Section 182B. Nutrition outreach and public education
36 program establishment. The nutrition outreach and public
37 education program is established within the executive office of
38 human services. Such program is established to ensure maximum
39 participation by eligible persons in federal and state food
40 assistance programs. The program shall be structured so as to
41 increase participation statewide but with particular attention to
42 high risk areas with a focus on certain at risk populations.

43 Section 182C. Responsibilities of the secretary. The secretary
44 of human services, in consultation with the nutrition board, shall
45 establish, administer and evaluate the nutrition outreach and
46 public education program that shall include but not be limited
47 to:

48 1. information as to the availability of, eligibility criteria for,
49 and application procedure for food assistance programs;

50 2. coordination of efforts among state and community-based
51 agencies involved in food assistance programs;

52 3. compilation of statistical data from state and local agencies
53 and dissemination to community-based organizations;

54 4. evaluation of coordinated state and community-based
55 outreach; and

56 5. develop and implement plans to address identified barriers
57 to participation.

58 Section 182D. Grants to community-based organizations. The
59 secretary shall make grants to community-based organizations in
60 high risk areas for outreach activities. Such outreach activities
61 shall include but not be limited to:

- 62 1. identification of barriers to participation in food assistance
63 programs including the unavailability of such programs;
- 64 2. information as to program availability, individual or
65 household eligibility, and application procedure;
- 66 3. identification of at risk populations and individuals within
67 the at risk populations who are not participating;
- 68 4. assistance with eligibility requirements including verification
69 and enrollment; and
- 70 5. dissemination of information to and conducting training
71 sessions for local groups.

72 Section 182E. Selection of high risk areas. In selecting those
73 areas which would be determined to be high risk and therefore
74 eligible for a grant, the secretary may consider factors including,
75 but not limited to:

- 76 1. high concentration of at risk populations;
- 77 2. significant number of those potentially eligible are not
78 participating in the food stamp program;
- 79 3. significant number of those potentially eligible for free or
80 reduced price meals within the school breakfast and lunch
81 programs are not participating;
- 82 4. unavailability of food assistance programs in the
83 community;
- 84 5. infant mortality or morbidity rates; and
- 85 6. economic indicators including, but not limited to, the
86 unemployment rate, prevailing wages, and recent loss of job base;

1 SECTION 3. An interim report by the secretary shall be submitted
2 to the Governor and the General Court on or before September fif-
3 teenth, nineteen hundred ninety-one and an annual report shall be
4 submitted on or before January first of each year thereafter. Such
5 reports shall include information as to community-based
6 organizations funded through the grants, the effects on
7 participation in food assistance programs, and recommendations
8 regarding increased utilization of food assistance programs.

