

# HOUSE . . . . . No. 171

---

## The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

---

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE,  
600 WASHINGTON STREET, BOSTON 02111, NOVEMBER 3, 1971.

The Honorable John F. X. Davoren, *Secretary of State*, State House, Boston,  
Massachusetts.

DEAR MR. SECRETARY: A copy of the recommendations of the State Welfare Advisory Board is submitted herewith together with drafts of bills embodying the legislation recommended.

Very truly yours,

DAVID M. AUSTIN,  
*Chairman, State Advisory Board*

## RECOMMENDATIONS.

1. AN ACT TO PROVIDE A COST OF LIVING ADJUSTMENT IN THE AID TO FAMILIES WITH DEPENDENT CHILDREN AND GENERAL RELIEF CATEGORIES.

Since there is no provision in Chapter 118 or Chapter 117 for a cost of living adjustment, recipients of AFDC and General Relief are required to lower their standard of living as the cost of living increases.

Failure to include a cost of living adjustment in AFDC and General Relief has not permitted its recipients to keep pace with inflation. It has resulted in increasing evictions, utility shut-offs, etc., as rents have increased and heating costs have been upped.

Federal regulations provide that the determination of need and the amount of assistance will be made on an objective basis. AFDC and General Relief recipients now receive less in assistance than the U.S. Department of Labor has determined to be necessary for even a low standard of living.

It is recommended that a cost of living adjustment provision be added to Chapter 118 and Chapter 117.

2. AN ACT TO PROVIDE A COST OF LIVING ADJUSTMENT IN THE DISABILITY ASSISTANCE CATEGORY.

Chapter 118A now provides a cost of living adjustment in Old Age Assistance. Eligibility for OAA begins at sixty-five years of age. Inflation places a burden upon individuals who have not yet reached their sixty-fifth birthday just as severe as for those who have. By setting the sixty-fifth birthday as the date upon which the amount of assistance a person receives can be increased is arbitrary and cannot be justified.

By not providing a cost of living adjustment in Disability Assistance, recipients of that category are being forced to lower their standard of living constantly since it is impossible for their grant to keep pace with their increasing expenses. Since they are disabled, these recipients cannot help themselves financially in any way. Since most are single adults between forty-five and sixty-four years of age, they do not have the family resources available as to OAA recipients who have had children.

It is recommended that a cost of living provision be included in Chapter 118D.