



Fact Sheet: More hurt for Michigan families

Cash assistance time limits misguided during tough times

Who is affected by time limits?

On Oct. 1, 2011, 11,162 families, with 29,700 children, will be cut from the cash assistance caseload. This program is known as the Michigan Family Independence Program. This will disproportionately affect Wayne County where 6,500 cases are to be cut.

- The total number of families to be cut from FIP during FY 2012: 14,062

Why?

House Bills 4409 and 4410 were signed into law in September 2011 by Gov. Rick Snyder enacting strict 48-month time limits and the Snyder administration internally decided to enforce federal 60-month lifetime limits. Former Gov. John Engler and Gov. Jennifer Granholm did not cut support to families as long as parents were working or looking for work. FIP for families reaching a 60-month limit was paid with state funds.

How do we compare?

The 48-month limit makes Michigan the harshest in the Midwest. Indiana has a 24-month limit but only for adults. The family will get a reduced grant to recognize children in the family.

Won't this hurt the kids?

Yes.

Why is this bad timing?

The August 2011 unemployment rate was 11.2 percent, making Michigan the third-highest in the country. Until recently, Michigan had the highest unemployment for four years running. Michigan families have been suffering during this recession. Most of those working part time want full-time work but cannot find any.

Why is this bad public policy?

We need to be lifting families up during tough times, not blaming them for the recession. Research shows that the more we can help children in poverty, especially young children, the better chance they have of becoming productive citizens.

The retroactive nature of the limits – applying new rules to months that have already passed -- raises the question of fairness. In addition, even small amounts of help are included in the time limits.

