

## HOUSE MESSAGE SUMMARY

BILL: CS/CS/SB 256 [S0256.HMS]  
SPONSOR: Fiscal Policy Committee, Commerce and Economic Opportunities Committee, and Senator Kirkpatrick  
SUBJECT: Work and Gain Economic Self-sufficiency  
PREPARED BY: Senate Committee on Commerce and Economic Opportunities  
DATE: April 28, 1999

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### I. Amendments Contained in Message

House Amendment - 353505 to Senate Bill CS/CS/SB 256, 1st Eng. (body with title)

### II. Summary of Amendments Contained in Message

This strike everything amendment to CS/CS/SB 256, 1st Eng., is predominantly the same as the Senate Bill which passed the Senate with the following substantive exceptions:

#### Provisions included in the House Amendment, but *not* included in the Senate Bill

- Requires local WAGES coalition funds to be provided by contract with the *Department of Management Services*.
- Includes *subcontractors* toward percentage of funds which must be dedicated to local contracts.
- Allows for literacy instruction and appropriate language instruction to be included in job skills training.
- Provides penalties for failure to comply with alternative requirement plans.
- Provides for notification of transitional benefits and waives sanctions for good cause, and provides sanctions for recipients of food stamps, consistent with federal law.
- Requires certain vocational assessments and work evaluations conducted by the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation to be performed by contract with the local WAGES coalitions.
- Allows residential treatment for substance abuse or mental illness for WAGES participants, and waives work requirements for a limited period of time. Furthermore, creates a diversion program for families at risk of welfare dependency due to substance abuse and mental illness.
- Provides for development of procedures to assure that families losing eligibility for cash assistance receive transitional benefits to include contact by a case manager prior to the loss of benefits, and further provides for maximizing utilization of transitional Medicaid.
- Provides that certain time periods relating to the relocation assistance program will be determined by the department *by rule*.
- Allows the department to adopt rules if federal regulations require a determination of needy families or needy parents to be based on financial criteria for families receiving services.
- Expands transitional education and training to WAGES participants actively seeking employment. Expands transitional transportation to WAGES participants to sustain educational opportunities.

- Provides language relating to the transfer of the administrative authority for TANF funds.

Provisions included in the Senate Bill as Passed, but *not* included in the House Amendment

- Authorizes the WAGES Program State Board of Directors to contract with a fiscal agent to administer its financial affairs.
- Authorizes WAGES Program Employment Project Coordinators to commit and coordinate those resources applicable to the organization that the coordinator represents, including suspending program criteria, agency requirements, procedures, practices, guidelines, rules, fees, charges, and other ministerial requirements to successfully assist distressed areas. Working with the Office of Tourism, Trade, and Economic Development, coordinators are further authorized to waive any criteria, requirement, or similar provision of certain economic development incentives.
- Provides that under certain circumstances, the Governor may, by executive order, declare a WAGES employment emergency and may use only the necessary powers enumerated under s. 252.36, F.S., as well as all other powers of the Governor in law, to coordinate, focus, intensify, and maximize successful WAGES employment efforts.
- Appropriates, for Fiscal Year 1999-2000, \$25 million for Retention Incentive Training Accounts (RITAs), and \$25 million for WAGES Employment Projects from funds designated for WAGES under Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.
- Creates a “Road Fund” for WAGES, by authorizing the Office of Tourism, Trade, and Economic Development to contract with governmental bodies for transportation projects for new and expanding businesses that employ WAGES participants.
- Provides that funds associated with future Welfare-to-Work grants from the U.S. Department of Labor are reserved for RITAs if the participating educational institutions provide the required state match for that federal grant program.
- Repeals s. 414.25, F.S., relating to exemptions from leased real property requirements, and s. 414.55, F.S., relating to the implementation of the WAGES Program.