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**TO: ALL SENATORS**

**FROM: Senator Jane C. Orie**

**DATE: January 3, 2011**

**RE: Welfare Reform**

I plan on re-introducing Senate Bill 1130, along with Senators Rafferty and Browne, from last session to address concerns with the Department of Public Welfare's Special Allowance Program. A report by the Auditor General made several recommendations to address lax oversight of this program and the potential for fraud.

The Special Allowance Program allows for the payment of supportive services for those in DPW's education and training program to assist them as they prepare for, seek, accept, or maintain education, training or employment. While there is a new administration coming into office later this month, and reforms of the program were adopted through regulations this past year, I feel that the requirements to participate in the Special Allowance Program should be adopted legislatively.

Additionally, Senate Bill 1130 included the following provisions to help reform and address cases of fraud and misuse of welfare benefits:

- Require DPW to place the photo of a welfare recipient on their electronic benefits transfer card.
- Require that a person may only apply for welfare benefits at the nearest County Assistance Office in their county. If a person lives in a county with only one CAO, they may apply at a CAO in a neighboring county only if the neighboring county's CAO is geographically closer than the CAO in that individual's county of residence.
- Clarify that residency, a requirement for receiving assistance, is established when an individual resides in the Commonwealth for at least 90 days (mirrors PACE/PACENET requirement).
- Establish the requirement that adult family members shall be required to be employed or enrolled in an educational program for at least 20 hour/week in order to be eligible for subsidized child care.
- Statutorily provide that any case-worker can make a report of suspected fraud directly to the Office of Inspector General without having to run the report through DPW management.

Last session Senate Bill 1130 was co-sponsored by Senators RAFFERTY, BROWNE, PILEGGI, ERICKSON, BAKER, WARD, WAUGH, ROBBINS, BOSCOLA, BRUBAKER, ARGALL, GORDNER, FOLMER, YAW, D. WHITE, SMUCKER, MENSCH and SCARNATI.

Should you wish to co-sponsor this bill, please contact Kacie Morrell at 787-6538 or by email at [kmorrell@pasen.gov](mailto:kmorrell@pasen.gov).