

Emily Barney  
Frankfort  
LD 943

Senator Ingwerseni, Representative Meyer, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services: my name is Emily Barney, I live in Frankfort and I am testifying today in favor of LD 943.

I had the experience of TANF both pre- and post-FEDCAP.

For the record, I was a teen parent and high-school dropout (on my own) the first time around. Without TANF, I would not be sitting here today with a college degree, working in a field that allows me to support both my family and my community.

This is what I have observed and experienced.

Pre-FEDCAP, I had one worker through DHHS who knew me, which was so valuable, because how else do you assist someone through a journey like that? Relationship building is a huge part of social work. Her name was Tabatha. She was a central point of contact, I did not get shuffled around from person to person and worker to worker who may or may not know what they are doing or what you are doing. Documentation was much more matter-of-fact, and she was a great support for me during college as a single mom with little family support of my own. Without that program, I would not have been able to go to college, much less graduate.

It was much less, one size fits all, and much more tailored to my actual needs, therefore, it was much more effective in helping me succeed.

FEDCAP will tell you to go to Intro to Employment classes when you already have a BA and 20 years of work experience behind you. They lose documentation, they lose people, and they are not good at communication or making sure that their workers are informed. You tell them that you need money to live until you get your first paycheck, they say we can't help with that but here is a benefit for clothes, which completely misses the point and turns it into a punitive system as people are going to do what they need to do survive, which makes sense, however you are punished for using the resource for what you actually need. Again, that doesn't make sense to me.

For context, the second time I was on TANF was years later due to a medical issue that put me out of work, this was within the past few years.

FEDCAP put more on my plate, the time commitment to what you actually get out of it is pretty nil, and given both experiences, I much preferred the first.

So. If the state is going to spend the money, they should spend it in a way that is going to help people the most, and be most effective. FEDCAP is not it.

Thank you.