



## Legislation Summary:

(Lift Our Kids) An Act to lift kids out of deep poverty

Bill numbers: H.144/S.75

Sponsors: Rep. Marjorie Decker, Sen. Sal N. DiDomenico

Summary: These identical bills amend the programs for assistance to families with children and to elderly and disabled persons with children to gradually increase monthly benefits until the payments equal 50 percent of the federal poverty level for household size. This would barely exceed the standard for *deep poverty*. Each year on July 1 the payment level would be increased 20 percent until it reaches the target level of 50 percent of the poverty level. For TAFDC (Transitional Assistance For Dependent Children) families, the payment would also be increased by a clothing allowance and a rental allowance for families not residing in public or subsidized housing.

Current assistance levels in Massachusetts keep recipients in *deep poverty*. The maximum TAFDC grant for a 3-person family is \$783 per month in Fiscal year 2023, while half the poverty level is \$1,036 per month for a family of three. The results for children often include chronic or periodic hunger, health problems and impaired school performance. Families have an increased risk of homelessness and housing instability. Without a plan to consistently raise benefit levels, recent high increases of inflation result in families falling further and further behind meeting their basic needs.

League Position: LWVMA supports these bills based on its national Meeting Basic Human Needs position. From [Impact on Issues 2022-2024](#): “Persons who are unable to work, whose earnings are inadequate, or for whom jobs are not available have the right to an income and/or services sufficient to meet their basic needs for food, shelter, and access to health care. ... State and local governments, as well as the private sector, should have a secondary role in financing food, housing, and health care programs.” (p.146) Also, “Benefit levels should be sufficient enough to provide decent, adequate standards for food, clothing, and shelter. Minimum income standards should be adjusted for regional differences in the cost of living and should be revised periodically to take into account changes in the purchasing value of the dollar. Until a federal welfare program achieves an adequate level of benefits, some states will need to supplement federal payments.” (p.146)