

Date of Hearing: April 21, 2021

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Lorena Gonzalez, Chair

AB 1004 (Calderon) – As Amended March 30, 2021

Policy Committee: Human Services Vote: 8 - 0

Urgency: Yes State Mandated Local Program: Yes Reimbursable: Yes

**SUMMARY:**

This bill exempts income paid for temporary work related to the decennial census for purposes of California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CaWORKs) eligibility, and deletes current law that specifies census-related income is exempt only if it is earned during the year preceding and the year of the decennial census. This bill is an urgency measure and is retroactive to the most recent decennial census. Specifically, this bill:

- 1) Deletes the condition that any income or stipend paid by the United States Census Bureau, a governmental entity or a nonprofit organization for temporary work related to the decennial census is not considered income for purposes of determining eligibility and aid amount under CaWORKs only if earned during the year preceding a decennial census and during the year of the decennial census, and instead exempts the income or stipend if the temporary work is related to the decennial census.
- 2) Requires the exemption to be retroactive and to apply to the most recent decennial census.
- 3) Authorizes the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) to implement these provisions through all-county letters until regulations can be adopted.

**FISCAL EFFECT:**

- 1) Minor and absorbable state costs. CDSS indicates the population affected by this bill is very small and any increase in CaWORKs benefits resulting from this bill is absorbable within existing CaWORKs funding.
- 2) State mandated costs to counties, unknown but likely less than \$150,000 statewide, for administering the changes to CaWORKs eligibility and aid amount determinations resulting from this bill. These costs are potentially reimbursable by the state, subject to a determination by the Commission on State Mandates, should a county choose to file a claim.

**COMMENTS:**

- 1) **Purpose.** This bill seeks to allow income earned by a temporary worker in 2021 for work performed on the 2020 decennial census, to be exempted for purposes of CaWORKs eligibility and grant determination. Existing law allows census-related work conducted in the year prior to and the year of the census (2019 and 2020) to be exempt. Because of delays in 2020 census work due to the COVID-19 pandemic, some census work continued into 2021.

- 2) **CalWORKs Income Exemptions.** Under existing law, certain types of income are exempt from determining grant eligibility and aid amount in the CalWORKs program, including income that is received too infrequently, income from college work-study programs, a college scholarship provided by a public or private entity, federal pandemic unemployment compensation and income or a stipend paid by the United States Census Bureau or qualified others for certain temporary work related to the decennial census. This bill deletes the requirement that, to be exempt, census income must be earned in the year preceding a decennial census or during the year of the decennial census.

By removing the specific year requirements, this bill has the practical effect of allowing temporary income earned in the year after the decennial census to be exempted from CalWORKs considerations as well.

- 3) **CalWORKs.** The CalWORKs program provides eligible low-income families with cash grants and supportive services aimed at helping them secure education, training, and employment. In fiscal year 2020-21, the maximum monthly grant for a family of three on CalWORKs (one parent and two children), if the family has no other income and lives in a high cost-of-living county, is \$878. Approximately 482,400 families are expected to receive CalWORKs benefits in fiscal year 2021-22.
- 4) **Prior Legislation.** AB 81 (Ting), Chapter 5, Statutes of 2021, made statutory changes related to the budget to align state program requirements with COVID-19 federal relief provisions, including exempting federal pandemic unemployment compensation from eligibility and grant determination for the CalWORKs program.

**Analysis Prepared by:** Jennifer Swenson / APPR. / (916) 319-2081