

Welfare tweak helps students

WASHINGTON (AP) - Welfare recipients who go to college can use up to a year of class work to meet the program's work requirements and no longer will need to have homework supervised for some of that time count as well.

The unsupervised homework provision, which also applies to vocational school and other educational activities, represents a change from rules put into place in 2006 for the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program, or TANF.

A copy of the final rule was obtained by The Associated Press. It is scheduled for release to the public when published in the Federal Register soon.

Governors had sought the changes. They said the requirement of supervised homework would increase state costs.

The Bush administration had wanted as much super-

vision as possible, but eventually acknowledged that most students are not monitored as they do their homework.

"Since we're trying to imitate what real life is like, we thought we were asking a little too much there," said Sidonie Squier, director of the Office of Family Assistance, part of the Health and Human Services Department.

Adults getting cash aid generally are required to work a minimum number of hours each week.

The 2006 rule more strictly defined what constitutes work. The new rule incorporates the feedback since then.

The earlier rule did not count getting a bachelor's degree as a work activity. The new rule will allow recipients to count one year of college as a work activity.

"Long-term success will depend upon people getting

better jobs, better skills, better wages," said Liz Schott, a senior fellow at the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, a liberal-leaning think tank.

The rules did not incorporate the governors' request for more leeway in setting the work requirements for people with disabilities, Schott said.

Some participants with disabilities simply cannot meet the minimum 20 or 30 hours per week that is required, but states should still get credit for helping them, the governors told the administration.

Half of the single-parent families participating in a state's TANF program must meet the work requirements or the state could lose some federal money.

"We recognize that many individuals with disabilities are capable of participating in productive work activities and encourage states to ex-

plore these capabilities, rather than focusing on their limitations" the final rule says.

The administration said it plans to expand its efforts to give states more technical assistance in helping them find full employment for disabled welfare recipients.

Squier rejected the notion that states could have more of an incentive to drop the disabled from the TANF rolls if their participation makes it harder for states to avoid financial penalties.

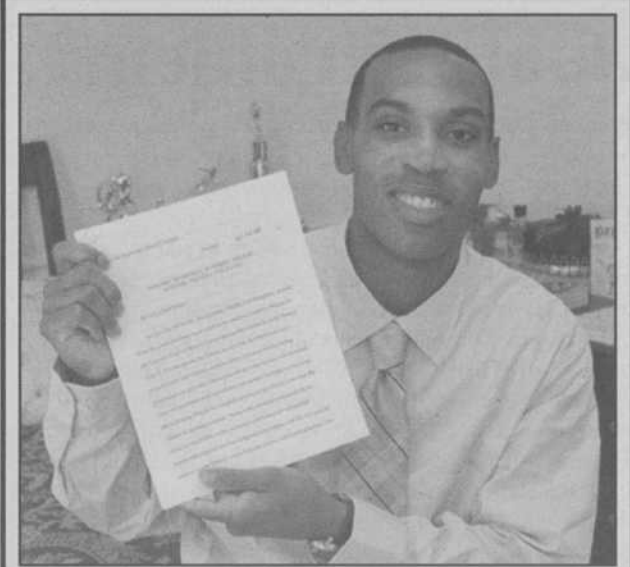
"States really have a nasty little tendency to shove folks with a disability to the side because they're harder to work with," Squier said. "When you move them aside, that's a not-so-subtle form of discrimination."

But Schott said that giving states more leeway in serving the disabled would increase their financial incentive to do so.

One of the biggest changes the administration made to the rules will make it easier for participants to engage in job searches or job training without running into the time limits set for those job categories.

Overall, Schott said the administration made several "small but not insignificant changes," allowing states to better help families in the program.

About 2 million families per month get cash assistance, down from 5 million families in the mid-1990s.



Genarlow Wilson has been accepted into Morehouse.

Radio host sends Wilson to school

Special to Sentinel-Voice

ATLANTA (NNPA) - Genarlow Wilson, whose case sparked protests after he was imprisoned for having consensual sex with a teen girlfriend, will attend Morehouse College with the help of the Tom Joyner Foundation, the organization's namesake has announced.

"He's going to be a Morehouse Man," Joyner said.

After Wilson, then 17, was sentenced to 10 years in prison for having sex with the under-aged girl at a New Year's Eve party in Douglas County, his case became a cause to highlight racial disparities in the criminal justice system.

The Georgia Supreme Court freed him on Oct. 26, after he had spent nearly three years in prison, calling his sentence "cruel and unusual punishment." Joyner, a syndicated urban radio host, said Wilson deserves a second chance.

"I asked him, 'Now that you're out, what are you going to do?'" Joyner said. "He said, 'I'd like to try to get my education.' So I said, 'Well, let me help you out, see if I can't get you into one of my beloved historically Black colleges.'"

Joyner's foundation has raised millions to help students attend Historically Black Colleges and University campuses across the country. The scholarship will pay for Wilson's tuition and room and board at the HBCU.

Ex-boot camp guard sues sheriff's office in Florida

PENSACOLA, Fla. (AP) - A former juvenile boot camp guard cleared in the beating death of a teenager sued the Bay County Sheriff's Office recently, claiming his due process rights were violated when he was fired.

Charles Helms Jr. wants the sheriff's office to give him a proper notice of the allegations against him and an opportunity to respond, said his lawyer, Danielle Joyner Kelley. She said he is not seeking reinstatement at this time.

Helms, 53, was among seven former guards and a nurse at the Bay County Juvenile Boot Camp acquitted in October in the 2006 death of Martin Lee Anderson, 14, of Panama City.

A video showed the guards slamming the teen on the ground and dragging his limp body around an exercise yard.

The nurse watched and did nothing during most of the 30-minute altercation.

Jurors agreed with defense attorneys that the teen died of complications from sickle cell trait, a previously undiagnosed blood disorder. Civil rights leaders have pushed for federal charges against the eight.

Sheriff Frank McKeithen did not immediately return

phone messages seeking comment about the lawsuit, filed in state Circuit Court in Panama City, about 100 miles east of Pensacola.

Helms said he sued because the case damaged his reputation and finances and caused his family emotional pain.

"I am really disappointed by the lack of support the sheriff has given us throughout this whole process," he said.

Helms said McKeithen opted to fire the eight employees instead of suspending them without pay, and did not give him an administrative hearing.

Unlike the others, Helms was a sheriff's department lieutenant and had the authority of a law enforcement officer. The status should have entitled him to an administrative hearing, Joyner Kelley said.

"Should this action be successful, he would be entitled not only to his job back but for additional relief for the stress he has suffered," Joyner Kelley said.

Helms, who had worked for the sheriff's department since 1994, now works as a laborer at a Panama City chemical plant.

He said he has been unable to seek another law enforcement job because of

publicity surrounding the Anderson case.

The case led to the demise of Florida's juvenile boot camps, and the jury verdict resulted in protest demonstrations and allegations of racism. Anderson was Black; the guards were Black, White and Asian. The jury was all White.

Beautifulizing the Faces of Las Vegas Loved Ones



When we speak of funerals and how our loved ones appear, we often say how beautiful or how peaceful they look. Well, here is a man behind that position. His name is Mr. Andre Crockett Sr., a talented, highly experienced, and very spiritual individual who has for over 30 years taken great pride in cosmetizing your loved ones for their final viewing. He has been in the Las Vegas area for over 40 years and has joined with Valley Funeral Home, located at 3919 Raymert Dr. in Las Vegas where he currently is assisting families in their time of need. For more information call (702) 257-2826.