

S 3091

EMPOWER Act of 2016

Congress: 114 (2015–2017, Ended)

Chamber: Senate

Policy Area: Social Welfare

Introduced: Jun 23, 2016

Current Status: Read twice and referred to the Committee on Finance.

Latest Action: Read twice and referred to the Committee on Finance. (Jun 23, 2016)

Official Text: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/senate-bill/3091>

Sponsor

Name: Sen. King, Angus S., Jr. [I-ME]

Party: Independent • State: ME • Chamber: Senate

Cosponsors (3 total)

Cosponsor	Party / State	Role	Date Joined
Sen. Ayotte, Kelly [R-NH]	R · NH		Jun 23, 2016
Sen. Brown, Sherrod [D-OH]	D · OH		Jun 23, 2016
Sen. Capito, Shelley Moore [R-WV]	R · WV		Jun 23, 2016

Committee Activity

Committee	Chamber	Activity	Date
Finance Committee	Senate	Referred To	Jun 23, 2016

Subjects & Policy Tags

Policy Area:

Social Welfare

Related Bills

Bill	Relationship	Last Action
114 HR 2959	Related bill	Jun 28, 2016: Placed on the Union Calendar, Calendar No. 496.
114 HR 2969	Related bill	Nov 16, 2015: Referred to the Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Training.
114 HR 2991	Related bill	Nov 16, 2015: Referred to the Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Training.

## **Enhancing and Modernizing Pathways to Opportunity through Work, Education, and Responsibility Act of 2016 or the EMPOWER Act of 2016**

This bill amends part A (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) (TANF) of title IV of the Social Security Act (SSAct) to reauthorize through FY2021: (1) state family assistance grants, (2) tribal family assistance grants, and (3) child care entitlement grants.

The purposes of the TANF program are amended to include: (1) reduction of child poverty, including the incidence of children living in families with incomes of less than 50% of the poverty line; and (2) encouragement of employment entry, retention, retention, and advancement.

The bill repeals the separate and higher participation rate for two-parent families (marriage penalty).

The bill renames individual responsibility plans as individualized employment plans (IDPs), and revises their requirements.

The bill revises mandatory work requirements to:

- limit the use of the caseload reduction credit in the formula for calculating a state's work participation rate,
- allow states to include subsidized employment in calculating participation rates,
- reformulate the penalty for failure to satisfy minimum participation rates,
- eliminate the distinction between core and non-core work activities,
- allow states to receive partial credit for families participating for less than the minimum hours required for work activities,
- allow states to request an alternative work participation rate calculation,
- count as a work activity certain job search activities,
- replace child care assistance to a community service participant as a separate work activity with job readiness assistance,
- eliminate the age 20 cap on participation in secondary school attendance,
- eliminate the limitation on the number of persons who may be treated as engaged in work because of participation in education activities,
- limit to six months (unless the IDP specifies otherwise) the period in which an individual shall be considered engaged in work because of participation in a job readiness activity, and
- count certain disabled individuals as engaged in work if participating in work activities according to the IDP.

A state shall not use federal TANF funds for families with income greater than 200% of the federal poverty line.

The bill establishes a minimum spending requirement on TANF core activities along with an associated penalty.

The bill replaces current pre-reauthorization state-by-state reports on engagement in additional work activities and expenditures for other benefits and services with requirements that each state:

- establish robust performance indicators and targets, and
- report annually on outcomes achieved.

In determining eligibility for TANF assistance or any other state program funded with qualified state expenditures, a state

to which a family assistance grant is made shall exclude from:

- a family's financial resources the value of any funds in a qualified tuition program or a Coverdell account; and
- a family's income and assets any income or resources of a dependent child receiving benefits under SSAct title XVI (Supplemental Security Income).

### **Actions Timeline**

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- **Jun 23, 2016:** Introduced in Senate
- **Jun 23, 2016:** Read twice and referred to the Committee on Finance.