



New Hampshire Senate

## News Release

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### Morse, Sanborn seek answers on TANF spending

Concord, NH -Today, the Joint Fiscal Committee voted to keep the Governor's Gateway to Work program on the table, due to new questions about available funding following a recent NH Supreme Court Decision on providing increased Temporary Assistance to Needy Families [TANF] benefits.

"Earlier this week the NH Supreme Court issued an opinion that ruled the way New Hampshire calculates TANF benefits runs afoul of the federal program. Based on our understanding of the TANF program, this ruling could significantly increase benefit payments at an unknown cost. It is possible that complying with this ruling and instituting Gateway to Work would result in the TANF Trust Fund running at a deficit. We have yet to fully understand the potential implications for additional spending in the TANF fund and I would caution spending any TANF reserve dollars at this time because it would be fiscally irresponsible, even for a good cause," said Senate President Chuck Morse (R-Salem).

"I am a strong supporter of providing resources to remove barriers for people so that they can sharpen their skills, better their education and find good paying jobs, however, spending on programs like Gateway to Work should not be done when it puts at risk those who depend on TANF dollars to take care of their families and make ends meet. Although there are signs of a growing economy, we must make sure our reserve balance is not running at a deficit so we can continue to provide benefits, should our economic outlook change," added Morse. "I hope to learn more information related to the potential impacts of the recent court ruling before making any additional spending commitments in this fund."

"Putting people back to work in good jobs is something Senate Republicans strive to do every day, but not when the state is unable to afford the price tag associated with Governor Hassan's Gateway to Work program," said Senator Andy Sanborn (R-Bedford). "Pushing for a new program using TANF funds at this time could require our state to engage in deficit spending which I would strongly caution against."

"I think we should consider this an opportunity to re-evaluate the effectiveness numerous programs that already exist in the State of New Hampshire which serve to assist low wage earners with the education and training they need to find good jobs in our state. This Governor is far too quick to push for more spending before taking a measured approach and evaluating the tools and resources already deployed for the same goal," added Sanborn.

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