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March 5, 2009

MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable Marcus R. Oshiro, Chair
House Committee on Finance

FROM: Lillian B. Koller, Director

SUBJECT: **H. B. 1097, H.D. 1 - RELATING TO ASSISTANCE FOR AGED,
BLIND, AND PERMANENTLY AND TOTALLY DISABLED
PERSONS**

Hearing: Thursday, March 5, 2009, 2:30 p.m.
Conference Room 308, State Capitol

PURPOSE: This bill proposes to change the State-funded Assistance for Aged, Blind, and Permanently and Totally Disabled public assistance program from an entitlement program to a block grant program. The assistance amount will be based upon the total amount appropriated by the Legislature.

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports this Administration-sponsored bill.

This bill proposes to determine the assistance amount for the State-funded Assistance for Aged, Blind, and Permanently and Totally Disabled public assistance program based on the caseload and the total amount appropriated by the Legislature which is currently provided by statute not to exceed 62.5% of the standard of need.

This bill will allow the Legislature greater flexibility to control the funding for this program depending on the State's financial status. It will also increase transparency and improve the State's ability to track and reliably project costs for this program. Assistance will be provided within the limits of the Legislature's authorized appropriation.

The maximum assistance amount for this program will remain at the current 62.5% of the standard of need. The Department's ability to provide the maximum assistance will depend on the program caseload and the funding authorized by the Legislature for this program.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this bill.