RELATING TO DIAPERS.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

SECTION 1. The legislature finds that a family's need for diapers is not simply a material hardship, but a factor that can actually contribute to the perpetuation of the cycle of poverty.

One in three families nationwide face challenges in acquiring enough diapers to keep their children clean, dry, and healthy. Infants can require up to twelve diapers a day and toddlers up to eight. This can cost an average of approximately one thousand dollars per year for the parent or caregiver, or as much as fourteen per cent of the after tax income of a struggling household.

The legislature further finds that more than half of the parents identified as having a need for diapers have also missed work or school because they were unable to take their children to daycare due to the lack of diapers and diaper wipes. A sufficient diaper supply offers valuable relief to families who are already struggling to meet basic needs such as rent, utilities, and food. This would enable them to better support
the overall healthy development of their child or children as well. Furthermore, it can also help reduce the incidence of maternal depression and stress.

The legislature further finds that the only federal assistance that can be spent on diapers is the temporary assistance to needy families program. Families use temporary assistance to needy families to cover a wide range of fundamental necessities. Often there is not enough left over to also cover diapers.

The purpose of this Act is to establish a pilot diaper benefit program for parents who participate in the first to work program. The diaper benefit shall be used by the participant to purchase diapers for the child. The diaper benefit shall be issued to qualifying parents through an electronic benefits transfer system. The diaper benefit shall not be considered income for the purposes of determining eligibility for any other public benefits.

SECTION 2. There is established a pilot diaper benefit program within the first to work program administered by the department of human services. A diaper benefit of fifty dollars per month for each child aged thirty-six months or less shall be
paid to any parent who participates in the first to work
program.

SECTION 3. The department of human services may adopt
rules pursuant to chapter 91 necessary to carry out the purposes
of this Act.

SECTION 4. There is appropriated out of the general
revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of $ or so
much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2020-2021 for
the pilot diaper benefit program.

The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of
human services for the purposes of this Act.

SECTION 5. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2020.
Report Title:
Keiki Caucus; Human Services; Pilot Diaper Benefit Program

Description:
Establishes a pilot diaper benefit program for parents who participate in the first to work program administered by the department of human services.

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