

Texas Workforce Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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To the editor:

I read with dismay recent editorial comments regarding welfare reform and the 10th anniversary of the landmark laws that set this nation on a new course. Who would know by reading these commentaries that welfare reform has been one of the most successful social reforms of the last 50 years?

What better way to bring dignity to families than to have them led by working parents? One of the successes that cannot be fully measured is breaking the multigenerational dependence on welfare. What better way to do that, than for a child to see mom or dad go to work each day. And finally, it strengthens our economy when we add productive wage earners in our communities.

Here are the facts regarding welfare reform and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) in Texas:

- From April 1996 through April 2006, adult welfare cases in Texas fell from 176,000 to 29,500 cases, a reduction of 83 percent.
- Able bodied adult welfare recipients must participate in an employment and training program designed to assist them to find and keep a job.
- 74 percent of those participants do find a job.
- 71 percent are still employed six months later.
- Wages average slightly more than \$7.19 per hour.

In Texas, we have proven that working is a better option than just being on welfare. The average TANF family (one parent and two children) receives \$228 per month in cash assistance. Even with Medicaid and Food Stamp benefits, that is only \$14,544 per year. However, when that adult goes to work for \$7.19 per hour, the family receives four months of TANF cash, since their income is disregarded for the first four months of employment. Further, the family still has access to Medicaid for a year, plus Food Stamps, the Earned Income Tax Credit, and child care assistance. Full-time employment, plus these benefits, raises the family's income to over \$34,000 per year – more than double the resources the family had access to while on TANF.

Texas has been a leader in getting people off the welfare rolls and into work. In fact, Texas has received \$78 million in high performance bonuses for helping welfare recipients obtain and retain employment. Welfare reform is a win-win situation for all Texans, and I am proud of the part we have played at the Texas Workforce Commission to help people get connected to the workforce and on the path to independence.



Diane Rath
Chair and Commissioner Representing the Public, Texas Workforce Commission

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The Texas Workforce Commission is a state agency dedicated to helping Texas employers, workers and communities prosper economically. For details on TWC and the programs it offers in unison with its network of local workforce development boards call (512) 463-8556 or visit www.texasworkforce.org.
