

117TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 1773

To make the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands eligible for the program of block grants to States for temporary assistance for needy families, and for other purposes.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 10, 2021

Mr. SABLON introduced the following bill; which was referred to the  
Committee on Ways and Means

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## A BILL

To make the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands eligible for the program of block grants to States for temporary assistance for needy families, and for other purposes.

1       *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2       *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3       **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4       This Act may be cited as the “Northern Marianas  
5       Family Assistance Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. ELIGIBILITY OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE**  
2 **NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS FOR THE**  
3 **TANF PROGRAM.**

4 (a) IN GENERAL.—Section 419(5) of the Social Secu-  
5 rity Act (42 U.S.C. 619(5)) is amended by striking “and  
6 American Samoa” and inserting “American Samoa, and  
7 the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands”.

8 (b) FAMILY ASSISTANCE GRANT.—

9 (1) IN GENERAL.—Section 403(a)(1)(B) of  
10 such Act (42 U.S.C. 603(a)(1)(B)) is amended—

11 (A) by striking “specified in” and inserting  
12 “in effect for purposes of”; and

13 (B) by adding at the end the following:  
14 “Notwithstanding the preceding sentence, the  
15 State family assistance grant for the Common-  
16 wealth of the Northern Mariana Islands for  
17 each fiscal year shall be the lesser of the  
18 amount that equals 80 percent of the total ex-  
19 penditures of the Commonwealth under the  
20 Commonwealth program funded under this part  
21 in the fiscal year, or the mandatory ceiling  
22 amount (as defined in section 1108) with re-  
23 spect to Guam.”.

24 (2) APPROPRIATION.—Section 403(a)(1)(C) of  
25 such Act (42 U.S.C. 603(a)(1)(C)) is amended by  
26 adding at the end the following: “The dollar amount

1 in effect under this subparagraph for a fiscal year  
2 shall be the amount specified in the preceding sen-  
3 tence increased by the mandatory ceiling amount (as  
4 defined in section 1108) with respect to Guam, and  
5 an amount equal to that increase shall be reserved  
6 for a grant under this paragraph to the Common-  
7 wealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.”.

8 (c) ELIGIBILITY FOR THE CONTINGENCY FUND.—

9 (1) IN GENERAL.—Effective on October 1 of  
10 the 5th fiscal year immediately following the 1st fis-  
11 cal year referred to in subsection (g):

12 (A) ELIGIBILITY.—Section 403(b)(7) of  
13 the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 603(b)(7)) is  
14 amended by striking “States and the District of  
15 Columbia” and inserting “States, the District  
16 of Columbia, and the Commonwealth of the  
17 Northern Mariana Islands”.

18 (B) EXCLUSION FROM LIMITATION ON  
19 PAYMENTS TO THE TERRITORIES.—Section  
20 1108(a)(2) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 1308(a)(2))  
21 is amended by inserting “, or any payment  
22 made to the Commonwealth of the Northern  
23 Mariana Islands under section 403(b)” before  
24 the period.

1           (2) DEVELOPMENT OF NEEDY STATE CRI-  
2           TERIA.—As soon as is practicable but not later than  
3           the date paragraph (1) of this subsection takes ef-  
4           fect, the Secretary of Health and Human Services  
5           shall work with the Government of the Common-  
6           wealth of the Northern Mariana Islands to develop  
7           the criteria to be used in determining whether, on or  
8           after such date, the Commonwealth is a needy State  
9           for purposes of section 403(b) of the Social Security  
10          Act, which shall not include the criteria used by the  
11          Bureau of Labor Statistics in determining unem-  
12          ployment or the caseload criteria used in the Supple-  
13          mental Nutrition Assistance Program.

14          (d) INAPPLICABILITY OF CERTAIN REQUIREMENTS  
15          AND PROHIBITION.—

16               (1) STATE PLAN REQUIREMENTS RELATING TO  
17               OPERATION OF CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT AND  
18               FOSTER CARE AND ADOPTION ASSISTANCE PRO-  
19               GRAMS.—Section 402(a) of the Social Security Act  
20               (42 U.S.C. 602(a)) is amended in each of para-  
21               graphs (2) and (3) by adding at the end the fol-  
22               lowing: “The preceding sentence shall not apply with  
23               respect to the Commonwealth of the Northern Mar-  
24               iana Islands.”.

1           (2) MANDATORY WORK REQUIREMENTS.—Sec-  
2       tions 407 and 409(a)(3) of such Act shall not apply  
3       to the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Is-  
4       lands.

5           (3) BAN ON ASSISTANCE FOR FAMILIES NOT  
6       ASSIGNING CERTAIN SUPPORT RIGHTS TO THE  
7       STATE.—Section 408(a)(3) of such Act (42 U.S.C.  
8       608(a)(3)) is amended by adding at the end the fol-  
9       lowing: “The preceding sentence shall not apply with  
10      respect to the Commonwealth of the Northern Mar-  
11      iana Islands.”.

12          (4) MAINTENANCE OF EFFORT REQUIRE-  
13      MENT.—Section 409(a)(7) of such Act shall not  
14      apply to the Commonwealth of the Northern Mar-  
15      iana Islands.

16          (e) ASSESSMENT OF WORK, EMPLOYMENT, AND  
17      TRAINING PROGRAM.—The Secretary of Health and  
18      Human Services shall seek to negotiate an agreement with  
19      the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands  
20      under which the performance of the work, employment,  
21      and training program of the Commonwealth will be as-  
22      sessed.

23          (f) TRANSITION PROVISIONS.—With respect to each  
24      of the 4 fiscal years immediately following the 1st fiscal  
25      year referred to in subsection (g) of this section:

1           (1) EXEMPTION FROM LIMITATION ON USE OF  
2           GRANT FOR ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENDITURES.—Sec-  
3           tion 404(b) of the Social Security Act shall not  
4           apply to the Commonwealth of the Northern Mar-  
5           iana Islands.

6           (2) INAPPLICABILITY OF PENALTY FOR FAIL-  
7           URE OF STATE RECEIVING AMOUNTS FROM CONTIN-  
8           GENCY FUND TO MAINTAIN 100 PERCENT OF HIS-  
9           TORIC EFFORT.—Section 409(a)(10) of such Act  
10          shall not apply to the Commonwealth of the North-  
11          ern Mariana Islands.

12          (g) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—Not later than Octo-  
13          ber 1 of the 1st fiscal year that begins after the date of  
14          the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Health and  
15          Human Services shall provide the Commonwealth of the  
16          Northern Mariana Islands with technical assistance in de-  
17          veloping a plan to meet the requirements of section 402  
18          of the Social Security Act.

19          (h) EFFECTIVE DATE.—Except as provided in sub-  
20          section (c), the amendments made by this section shall  
21          take effect on October 1 of the 2nd fiscal year that begins  
22          after the date of the enactment of this Act.

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