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69TH CONGRESS }
1st Session }

SENATE

{ REPORT
No. 745 }

AMEND THE MATERNITY ACT

MAY 3, 1926.—Ordered to be printed

Mr. PHIPPS, from the Committee on Education and Labor, submitted the following

REPORT

[To accompany H. R. 7555]

The Committee on Education and Labor, to whom was referred the bill (H. R. 7555) to authorize for the fiscal years ending June 30, 1928, and June 30, 1929, appropriations for carrying out the provisions of the act entitled "An act for the promotion of the welfare and hygiene of maternity and infancy, and for other purposes," approved November 23, 1921, having considered the same, report thereon with amendments and recommend that as amended the bill do pass.

The principal object of the original maternity and infancy act was to assist to lower infant mortality and maternity death rates in the United States through the aid of a Federal bureau, which should carry on proper research work and disseminate helpful knowledge on this subject to the citizens of the several States. As a temporary portion of this general program and to encourage the States to take direct charge of such work within their boundaries there was authorized, for a period of five years, an annual appropriation of \$240,000 to be equally apportioned among the States, and an additional sum of \$1,000,000 annually to be distributed at the rate of \$5,000 to each State, plus an amount proportional to its population. In order to obtain the latter funds each State is required to appropriate an equal amount to be used for similar purposes.

It will be noted that such annual appropriations were strictly limited to a five-year period, and the present bill, as it passed the House, would extend the time for an additional two years or, in other words, for the fiscal years ending June 30, 1928, and June 30, 1929.

Your committee's amendment is to strike out the words "for the period of seven years" appearing in lines 8 and 9 of the bill, and to insert in lieu thereof the words "for the period of six years," and to amend the title accordingly. It will be noted that this amendment

would authorize such appropriations for Federal maternity aid for only one additional year, instead of two, as proposed by the House.

Five States, Connecticut, Illinois, Kansas, Maine, and Massachusetts, have steadfastly refused to accept such funds from the Federal Government. It would seem that no permanent policy should be adopted by Congress whereby States who do not share in the benefits of such an appropriation would be required to contribute indefinitely to same.

The progress of this important work in the several States has been set forth in full in the hearings before the House Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce, and in that committee's report on the pending bill, being Report No. 575, Sixty-ninth Congress first session.

The data furnished in the hearings and report need not be repeated here, as your committee does not question the good which has been accomplished. It is sufficient to add that the committee has given the entire subject sympathetic consideration, as it is one which properly appeals to the highest emotions of mankind.

However, in suggesting its amendment, your committee believes that the very fact that the attempt to meet this problem through Government aid has met with response in 43 States justifies Congress in taking cognizance of the original five-year limitation and of the general thought then in the minds of legislators, namely, that the work of the bureau was to be educational and inspirational in order to lead the States to appreciate the value of such State activities and to undertake them, within a short period of time, entirely at the State's expense. Certainly it was not thought then that such financial aid would become a permanent function of the Federal Government or that such Federal appropriations should be continued indefinitely from year to year.

Your committee feels, therefore, that a definite date for the discontinuance of such aid should now be established, that the question should be decided at this time in order that State legislatures may arrange their budgets accordingly and make plans to continue the entire work at their own expense. It has been strongly argued, however, that there should be no abrupt termination of Federal aid, especially as State legislatures do not meet every year, and the committee recognizes this fact in its amendment, making the effective date of such termination June 30, 1928. As the bill will doubtless be acted upon during the present session of Congress, notice of more than two years would thereby be given to the States as to the fulfillment of the Government's part of the program, in so far as financial aid is concerned; and this should certainly prove sufficient for the purpose.

It should be unnecessary to advance arguments to show that the policy of the Federal Government in this regard should not be indefinitely continued, and that a time limit should now be fixed. The following facts, however, might properly be borne in mind:

1. The original purpose and intent of Congress to encourage the States to take up this important work is rapidly approaching fulfillment, if indeed that time has not already come. It is conceded that the experiment or demonstration has been a success, and that many States have established the necessary machinery which is now func-

tioning properly and adequately, even where they have declined to accept Federal aid.

2. It is also generally admitted that this work as conducted in the several States is strictly a local function. They should therefore be encouraged to stand on their own feet rather than to lean upon the central Government, thus tending to impair the prestige, power, and sovereignty of local self-government. As already indicated, the very object of granting such Federal aid fails if the States, instead of learning to take care of matters connected with maternity and infancy through their own efforts, grow to be dependent upon Washington for this purpose.

3. The enactment of the pending bill, with the committee's amendment, and the fixing of a definite time for the cessation of Federal aid, will have no direct effect upon the infancy and maternity work conducted by the Children's Bureau and the Women's Bureau in the Department of Labor in Washington. In other words, the bill only refers to Federal aid to the several States. When this aid is discontinued, there will still exist these governmental agencies in Washington which will proceed with their important research work, issue pamphlets, and be a general clearing house of information on this subject in order to aid the people of the United States.



forming itself and substantially, it is clear that laws should be made for the purpose of the Act.

2. It is also generally admitted that the work as conducted in the several States is entirely a local question. They should therefore be encouraged to stand on their own feet rather than to lean upon the central Government, thus leading to neglect of the people's power and responsibility of local self-government. It should be pointed out that the very object of creating such bodies and giving them the right to legislate is to enable them to take care of their own affairs, and not to be dependent upon the central Government for the purpose.

3. The existence of the problem, and with the formation of a central body, the duty of a national body for the purpose of local self-government should be clearly defined, and it should be clearly understood by the Central Government and the Provincial Government that the Department of Labour in Washington, in other words, the Department of Labour in the several States, will not be able to do more than to assist in the work of the several States. It is essential that we should not have a central body which will not be able to do more than to assist in the work of the several States. It is essential that we should not have a central body which will not be able to do more than to assist in the work of the several States.

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