

TEMPORARY EXTENSION OF CERTAIN SPECIAL PROVISIONS RELATING TO STATE PLANS FOR AID TO THE BLIND

APRIL 12, 1957.—Ordered to be printed

Mr. BYRD, from the Committee on Finance, submitted the following

REPORT

[To accompany H. R. 3035]

The Committee on Finance, to whom was referred the bill (H. R. 3035) to provide a temporary extension of certain special provisions relating to State plans for aid to the blind, having considered the same, report favorably thereon without amendment and recommend that the bill do pass.

PURPOSE OF THE BILL

The purpose of the bill, as reported, is to extend from June 30, 1957, to June 30, 1959, the provisions of section 344 of the Social Security Act Amendments of 1950 (Public Law 734, 81st Cong.), as amended. Section 344 relates to approval by the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare of certain State plans for aid to the blind.

GENERAL STATEMENT

The bill extends from June 30, 1957, to June 30, 1959, the provision in section 344 of the Social Security Act Amendments of 1950 which provided for the approval of certain State plans for aid to the blind which did not meet the requirements clause (8) of section 1002 (a) of the Social Security Act. The amendments provided that such plans could be approved for the period from October 1, 1950, and ending June 30, 1955. The original expiration date was extended by the Social Security Amendments of 1954 (Public Law 761, 83d Cong.), from June 30, 1955, to June 30, 1957, the present expiration date. The bill would extend this period an additional 2 years to June 30, 1959.

While the provisions apply to any State, as defined in the Social Security Act, which did not have a State plan on January 1, 1949, approved under title X of the Social Security Act, your committee is advised that only two States, Missouri, and Pennsylvania, are now

affected by the provision. These States have programs under which needy and non-needy blind persons receive similar treatment with the payments to needy blind persons being financed from State and Federal funds and the payments to non-needy blind persons being financed entirely from State funds. Information received by your committee from the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare indicates that the degree of blindness required in these two States is more stringent than that generally required by States which operate programs in full conformity with the Social Security Act. It understands that some needy persons, who are not determined to be blind within the definitions used in these States but who have not sufficient vision to engage in activities for which sight is essential, are denied assistance in these States, whereas they would generally be found eligible in other States.

Your committee does not believe that the failure of these States to make any greater provision for needy blind persons than for non-needy ones is consistent with the intent of title X of the Social Security Act. It also considers unfortunate the exclusion in these States of certain needy persons who would meet the test of blindness generally applied for purposes of eligibility for assistance in the other States. It would appear that the first of these situations would be corrected and a more realistic test of blindness would receive greater consideration if the States involved placed greater emphasis on need.

While your committee favors the full compliance by these States with all requirements of title X of the Social Security Act, it believes it better that this be accomplished through orderly planning rather than through permitting the special provision to expire at this time, since this might result in hardships for blind persons in the States. The 2-year extension will provide time for the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare and the 2 States to plan for bringing programs into full conformity. A shorter extension would also not be realistic in the light of the fact that the legislatures of the two States are not scheduled to meet during 1958.

Your committee accordingly recommends enactment of the legislation.

CHANGES IN EXISTING LAW

In compliance with subsection 4 of rule XXIX of the Standing Rules of the Senate, changes in existing law made by the bill are shown as follows (existing law proposed to be omitted is enclosed in black brackets; new matter is printed in italics; existing law in which no change is proposed is shown in roman):

SECTION 344 OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT AMENDMENTS OF 1950

APPROVAL OF CERTAIN STATE PLANS

SEC. 344. (a) In the case of any State (as defined in the Social Security Act, but excluding Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands) which did not have on January 1, 1949, a State plan for aid to the blind approved under title X of the Social Security Act, the Administrator shall approve a plan of such State for aid to the blind for the purposes of such title X, even though it does not meet the requirements of clause (8) of section 1002 (a) of the Social Security Act, if it meets

all other requirements of such title X for an approved plan for aid to the blind; but payments under section 1003 of the Social Security Act shall be made, in the case of any such plan, only with respect to expenditures thereunder which would be included as expenditures for the purposes of such section under a plan approved under such title X without regard to the provisions of this section.

(b) The provisions of subsection (a) shall be effective only for the period beginning October 1, 1950, and ending June 30, **[1957]** 1962.

