

# Workfare bill gets Senate OK, moves to House

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A bill which would require employable welfare recipients to work off their monthly benefits in government jobs received speedy approval in the state Senate yesterday on a final vote of 40 to 0.

"This year we've got a few people on that committee who are going to fight a little harder for it," Malkus added.

There are so many exemptions in the bill, only about 300 to 600 persons throughout the state are expected to be affected by the new program which will cost the state about \$300,000 a year in administrative costs to operate.

But, Sen. Charles W. Gilchrist, D-Montgomery, floor



**FREDERICK D. MALKUS JR.**  
got the program started

manager of the bill, argued after the vote that the principle involved is the most significant aspect of the bill.

"It comes down to a question of whether its an important enough principle to make sure that people who can work do," Gilchrist said.

"My whole purpose," Malkus explained, "is just to get this program started. After that, then it can be expanded to include more people."

Those who would be exempted include the sick and disabled, the aged, full-time students under 21, persons participating in work rehabilitation or incentive programs and anyone who must care for dependents at home and cannot find somebody else to do it.

"One of the elements of the bill which made it more palatable to me and others," Gilchrist said, "is an amendment which allows people to work up to 20 per cent beyond the amount of their welfare benefits in order to receive an additional grant."

Those bonus checks could cost the state an additional \$90,000 to \$175,000 a year, Gilchrist said, "but, I think that expense is justified in this case."

The jobs, provided only to those who cannot be employed in the private sector, would be positions in state, county or municipal governments. Regular employes could not be displaced, but, the welfare recipients would have to be paid the going rate for the job performed.

"The general public might have more confidence in our welfare program if they know work is involved," Gilchrist suggested.