



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Velmanette Montgomery

First Public Assistance Grant Increase In 19 Years Now In Effect

VELMANETTE MONTGOMERY July 1, 2009

| ISSUE: **FAMILIES**

| COMMITTEE: **CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**

The first increase to the basic public assistance grant in nearly two decades took effect on **July 1, 2009**, providing more aid to individuals and families struggling in poverty during this unprecedented economic downturn. **The public assistance grant will be raised again in each of the next two years, resulting in a cumulative 33 percent increase by July 2011.**

As of July 1, the basic public assistance grant for a family of three will be **\$321 a month, up from \$291 a month. Approximately 200,000 households -- including nearly 290,000 children--** will benefit from this increase, the first since 1990. The 2009-10 State budget authorized the basic grant increase in each of the next three years, totaling \$353 a month in July 2010 and rising to \$388 from July 2011 forward. The State will support the counties' share of the costs of the grant increase for a period of two years.

While increasing the grant helps those on public assistance better provide for their families' needs in the short term, the State is also committed to assist these individuals and their families in improving their long-term economic prospects. New York has substantially boosted its investment in job training and will enable them to achieve and sustain economic self-sufficiency.

To help people transition from welfare to financial independence, Senator Montgomery introduced legislation (S.5846-A) that expands access to a college education for low-income New Yorkers. Under the Montgomery bill, public assistance recipients would be able to have their time spent pursuing a college education count towards work participation requirements as authorized under federal law. The bill is sponsored in the Assembly by Assemblyman Keith Wright (D-Manhattan).

New York has been working to increase access to supports that help hard-working New Yorkers leverage low-wage paychecks, vital benefits such as Food Stamps, home energy

assistance and an array of tax credits including the federal and state Earned Income Tax Credit that has contributed greatly to the success of public assistance reform not only in New York State, but across the country.