State's Job Programs

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ment, and provision of training. In addition, SEOC wants to see how the program will be kept voluntary before it goes into effect.

Turn Welfare Into Workfare?

In contrast to the measured criticism of Job Creation, the Governor's Workfare plan was completely rejected by community groups in a mid-march press conference. The groups called for a complete disclosure by the Governor of the details of his plan and its costs, and called upon U.S. HEW Secretary Joseph Califano to reject the plan pending public hearings.

The extent to which the Dukakis plan has been secretly developed was made known in a *Beacon Hill Update* article and when a letter and proposal from the Governor to Califano was discovered by State Senator Jack Backman (D-Brookline). In the letter to Califano, dated February 25, 1977, Dukakis explains that Massachusetts needs a waiver of federal regulations which prohibit the program. He also enclosed a program outline which specifically requests the waiver.

Under the plan, known as Workfare, unemployed fathers in families receiving Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) would be compelled to work part-time each week at state agencies, including MDC (Metropolitan District Commission), Public Works, and Environmental Management, as a condition for receiving their cash assistance checks. They would receive no wages in addition to their public assistance benefits, only minimal work-related expenses. The work they would be forced to do includes zoo-litter cleanup, highway maintenance, beach-grass planting, and guard-rail painting. To date, 3,863 such work slots have been identified.

Senator Backman, speaking for the group, expressed outrage "that planning for workfare and negotiations with the Federal government have taken place in secret." Backman characterized the plan as an attack on the poor and a major change in state welfare policy. Without the *Beacon Hill Update* and Backman disclosures, the plan would have been put into place with no public input. As workfare planning occured at the same time as the Job Creation planning, the state's commitment to voluntariness was called into doubt. It was pointed out that costs resulting from the program will probably reach $6 million, due to overhead, supervision and equipment. Forcing welfare recipients to fill state job slots which also eventually lead to de-unionization of public employees.

Other persons and groups that joined in the protest included: Philip Johnston, Mary Goode, John Bussinger, Royal Bolling, Jr., and David Mofenson; Massachusetts Law Reform Institute, Massachusetts Community Action Director's Association, Human Services Coalition, Low Income Planning Aid, Massachusetts Union of Public Housing Tenants, Family Services Association, and the Boston Labor Council. J.B.

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