

Pennsylvania yanking safety net for the disabled

Tom Gallagher | Jul. 6, 2012 NCR Today

When a constituency is poor and unrepresented, state governments can make cuts in safety-net programs with impunity. So it goes for Pennsylvania, thanks to the Republican-led legislature.

[Bloomberg News reports](#) [1]:

Pennsylvania will end \$200 monthly general-assistance payments to residents who are poor, disabled and unemployable, joining eight states that have eliminated or curbed such aid since last year.

About 61,000 Pennsylvanians will no longer get those checks as of Aug. 1 under the budget that passed the Republican-led Legislature last week. The cut will save \$150 million, according to Carey Miller, a Welfare Department spokeswoman. The agency oversees the program that mainly benefits childless adults.

Kansas, also dominated by Republicans, joined Illinois in ending general assistance last year, said Liz Schott, a senior fellow at the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, a nonprofit organization in Washington. Maine imposed new curbs on the payments this year, she said. The benefits serve people who don't receive "a lot of legislative support" while programs for the young and old do, she said.

"Because this is all state dollars, and not a very popular population, it tends to be one of the places where states look to make cuts," Schott said yesterday by telephone. "States are looking to save money."

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