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APA

CHICAGO MANUAL OF STYLE

Transcript
Some Governors Say Welfare Reform Is a Huge Unfunded Mandate
BRIAN WILLIAMS, anchor:
The nation's governors are meeting in Washington this weekend. Most of the talk is how to get back some of the federal dollars they are losing because of the new welfare law. Our report tonight from Andrea McCarren.
ANDREA McCARREN, reporting:
As the nation's governors hammer out the agenda for the 105th Congress, they agree with the president that the welfare law should be changed, but they oppose his plans for a per-person cap on Medicaid spending.
Governor BOB MILLER (Democrat, Nevada): We are in total agreement that a balanced budget and the elimination of the deficit can and should be reached. But we think it's achievable without placing such undue burdens on the states and on the recipients of some of these social programs.
McCARREN: When President Clinton signed the welfare reform bill into law last August, it ended a 60-year guarantee of federal aid to poor women and children. It also switched control of many social programs from the federal government to the states, and will leave needy people, especially legal immigrants, without a federal safety net. States will be forced to accept the added financial burden.
Governor LAWTON CHILES (Democrat, Florida): This is a mother of unfunded mandates.
McCARREN: Some Republican governors acknowledged the problems, but were quick to defend the current plan devised by the GOP Congress.
Governor MIKE HUCKABEE (Republican, Arkansas): The proposals at least need a chance to breathe and live before we take them back to surgery and work on them some more.
McCARREN: But a bipartisan group of governors has already drawn up a plan to restructure the welfare law. Among the proposals: lifting a ban on aid to legal immigrants who can't get citizenship because of age or disability, allowing immigrants who have applied for citizenship to continue receiving benefits.
while they're still in the naturalization process, and revising the five-year time limit on benefits so it applies only to cash assistance and not to child care and other forms of aid to the poor. In the next few days, all of the governors will vote on these recommendations. If they're approved, that could pressure Congress to reconsider the current welfare reform law. Andrea McCarren, NBC News, Washington.