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Description

Welfare reform in the late 1990's pushed much of the responsibility for social services to the states. Governors respond to the new challenge and added cost.

Keywords

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History

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Transcript

Governor Mike Huckabee and Others Respond to Welfare Reform

BRIAN WILLIAMS, anchor:
The nation's governors are meeting in Washington this weekend. Most of the talk is about 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.

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.

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. 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.