

# SENATE HEALTH, HUMAN SERVICES AND SENIOR CITIZENS COMMITTEE

## STATEMENT TO **SENATE, No. 3257**

with committee amendments

# STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JUNE 10, 2021

The Senate Health, Human Services and Senior Citizens Committee reports favorably and with committee amendments Senate Bill No. 3257.

As amended by the committee, this bill establishes a Task Force for the Development of Universal Child Care in the Department of Children and Families. The purpose of the task force is to develop a framework upon which a universal child care system can be established in the State. As used in the bill, “universal child care” means a cohesive system of state-run, licensed child care centers, family day care homes, and approved home providers delivering child care services to children from birth to entry into kindergarten, regardless of family income, for up to six days a week, including summers and holidays.

The task force will consist of 19 members:

1) the Commissioners of Children and Families, Community Affairs, Education, Health, Human Services, and Labor and Workforce Development, and the Director of the Division on Women in the Department of Children and Families, or their designees, who will serve ex officio;

2) eight public members appointed by the Governor, including: a representative of the Advocates for Children of New Jersey; a representative of the Child Care Advisory Council; a representative of the New Jersey Business and Industry Association; a representative of the New Jersey Association for the Education of Young Children; an individual with experience, training, or other interests in child care issues; an operator of a licensed child care center; a family day care provider, and an approved home provider;

3) two public members appointed by the Senate President, one whom is to be a parent of a child receiving child care services at a licensed child care center, and one whom is to be a director of a licensed child care center; and

4) two public members appointed by the Speaker of the General Assembly, one whom is to be a parent of a child receiving child care

services from an in-home provider, and one whom is to be teacher at a licensed child care center.

The task force will be required to:

- 1) conduct a comprehensive study identifying policies, procedures, practices, and financial priorities relating to child care services in the State and the gaps therein;
- 2) study and evaluate aspects of the child care industry that may contribute to the lack of access to, and the high cost of, quality child care services;
- 3) review existing research, studies, and data concerning universal child care and how the establishment of a universal child care system can increase the accessibility and availability of affordable, high quality child care in the State;
- 4) evaluate a variety of potential financial incentives to encourage private investment in a Statewide universal child care system;
- 5) analyze the relationship between the lack of investment in child care infrastructure, including, but not limited to, facility upgrades and the lack of access to affordable, high quality child care; and
- 6) develop a process to evaluate the services, initiatives, and programs provided through, and funded by, a universal child care system, based on core principles that include: the recruitment, hiring, and training of qualified child care providers who are compensated appropriately; the expansion of supports to help all families access affordable, high-quality child care by making significant public investment to ensure the financial viability of licensed child care centers, family day care homes, and approved home providers; and the remediation of structural inequalities within the State's child care infrastructure that hinder access to affordable, high quality child care.

The task force is to issue a report to the Governor and to the Legislature, no later than six months after the task force organizes, containing the task force's findings and recommendations. The task force will expire 30 days after issuing its report.

#### COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amendments clarify that all members of the task force will serve without compensation; as introduced, the bill only provided that the public members would serve without compensation.

The committee amendments make various technical changes involving internal structure, numbering, and punctuation.