

Education Committee

SENATE FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SB-936

AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE OFFICE OF

Title: EARLY CHILDHOOD.

Vote Date: 3/15/2019

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 3/6/2019

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Education Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill aims to expand access of state-funded early childhood care services and ensure the safety of children in childcare services.

Substitute Language:

Section 4: Removes definition for “child care provider” and “child care staff member” as they are defined in Federal Law.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Beth Bye, Commissioner, Office of Early Childhood: Commissioner Bye and the Department support this bill. This bill increases Care 4 Kids income eligibility from 75% of the median income to 85%, aligning with federal requirements and increasing eligibility for Care 4 Kids. It allows a 45-day grace period for foster families to provide immunizations for their foster children, allowing these children to immediately start in child care services. The bill also addresses comprehensive background checks of childcare providers in order to comply with federal regulations. The bill also allows a childcare facility to stay open during suspension hearings so that children don't abruptly lose childcare services. It also fines providers who do not give families a 30-day notice of closing, as too short of notice can place children in potentially dangerous child care conditions. All of these changes are intended to increase the quality of care for all children in childcare facilities, while expanding access of low income families.

Sarah Healy Egan, Child Advocate, Office of the Child Advocate: Ms. Egan supports creating funding for a child care subsidy program which would expand access to safe and healthy childcare services to all families. OEC acknowledges that quality, licensed childcare providers may be financially out of reach for some Connecticut families and this provision would increase accessibility. OCA also supports provisions that allow OEC more authority to halt and investigate potentially dangerous childcare centers.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

See above testimony of OEC and OCA.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

September Jones, Kindercare: Kindercare has concerns regarding the removal of “Early Head Start Child Care Partnerships” from the priority listing. They are concerned that EHS-CCP money is intended to supplement, not supplant existing state child care subsidies and they worry this language may disqualify them from this funding.

Reported by: Garnet McLaughlin

Date: 4/1/2019