

Committee on Children

JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-6840

AN ACT REQUIRING THE OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD TO STUDY THE AVAILABILITY OF CHILD CARE SERVICES THROUGHOUT THE STATE AND TO DEVELOP A PLAN TO ADDRESS INFANT AND TODDLER CHILD CARE

Title: SERVICES NEEDS FOR LOW-INCOME FAMILIES.

Vote Date: 2/18/2025

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 2/6/2025

File No.:

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CO-SPONSORS OF BILL:

Sen. Gary A. Winfield, 10th Dist.
Rep. Trenee McGee, 116th Dist.
Rep. Michael "MJ" Shannon, 117th Dist.

SPONSORS OF BILL:

Committee on Children

REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill seeks to address the ongoing shortage of childcare services across Connecticut, with a focus on infant and toddler care for low-income families. The legislation would mandate an annual study to evaluate childcare availability and requires the development of a strategic plan to address shortages.

There are four key objectives this bill seeks to accomplish. These include conducting a statewide analysis of licensed and license-exempt childcare facilities as well as assessing supply and demand at municipal, regional, and state levels. Additionally, the bill would like to identify gaps in childcare access in the state, particularly for infants and toddlers and subsequently develop strategies for increasing availability of subsidized childcare slots for low-income families at childcare providers.

By taking these measures, the bill aims to ensure that families in need have equitable access to affordable and high-quality childcare services.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

[Office of Early Childhood, Commissioner, Beth Bye](#) appreciates the intent of this bill, however they note that the breadth and scope of the study but do the current lack of data available to the agency, work needed to comply with the requested requirements would necessitate extensive staff resources. To comply, the OEC would need additional resources to compile the needed data because at the present time, the agency does not have the capacity to do this.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

[Bridgeport Prospers, Senior Community & Civic Engagement Manager, Talyn Cook](#), supports this bill, noting the significant burden low-income families face without affordable and accessible childcare options.

[West Haven Child Development Center, Inc, Early Childhood Educator, Patrice Farquharson, EdD](#), supports this bill and suggests the legislature additionally support efforts to increase the number of children that Family Childcare (FCC) providers can care for in their homes, which would further increase the availability of childcare options for families.

[United Way of Southeastern Connecticut, President/CEO, Dina Sears-Graves, MS](#), supports this bill, noting that in New London County, there is a 49% gap between demand and capacity for infant toddlers. Additionally, they note the bill would also address the financial gap (\$151.00) between state reimbursement and provider cost of care in eastern CT.

[YWCA Greenwich, President & CEO, Mary Lee. A Kiernan](#), supports this bill, highlighting a 2024 report by Connected Voices for Children, which found the average cost for center-based childcare in Connecticut is approximately \$18, 000, the second highest of any state in the nation. The study also noted that there is a shortage of 17, 000 childcare slots in the state, directly incoming children from low-income families and those with special needs.

[Connecticut Voices for Children, Research & Policy Director, Emily Knox, Ph.D.](#)

[Connecticut Voices for Children, Research & Policy Associate, Carmen Clarkin, M.P.H.](#)

[Connecticut Voices for Children, Research & Policy Associate, Ruchi Sheth, M.A.](#), supports this bill, highlighting how children's cognitive and behavioral skills develop most between birth and age three and this means proper childcare and early childhood education are crucial during this time period. They note later in life, children well cared for during this period are more likely to perform better in school, retain gainful employment and are less likely to be incarcerated. They also note that in a recent report on poverty both nationally and in Connecticut, found that work related costs including transportation and childcare were the largest contributor to poverty, pushing 36, 870 persons including 8,090 children into poverty in 2022. Additionally, they mention that current subsidy rates do not reflect the true cost of care in CT, but providers have limited ability to charge tuition as the communities they serve at present, do not have the means to afford it.

[CT Early Childhood Alliance, Executive Director, Merrill Gay](#), supports this bill because their research notes our state only has licensed childcare capacity for one out of every three children under the age of three. They note per the Office of Early Childhood, 44% of Connecticut's population lives in a childcare desert. The Alliance suggests that Section One of bill 6840 be strengthened with the addition of the following in line 12: "(D) the difference between the subsidy level and the cost of quality care as described in the Narrow Cost Analysis". Additionally, the alliance suggests the study mandated by Section One of bill 6840 be strengthened by the following additions at the end of line 15: " (5) an assessment of the

childcare facility needs in each region and an estimate of the cost to fill that need, and (6) an assessment of the workforce training capacity to address the need for additional early childhood educators."

[State of Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities, Executive Director, Tanya Hughes](#), supports this bill, noting that a study by the CT Data Collaborative found that 25% of CT families with children under the age of five have a household income under \$50,000 and 18% fall below \$35,000.

[Thames Valley Council for Community Action, Inc., Chief Executive Officer, Joshua Steele Kelly](#), supports this bill, noting that the TVCCA and its subcontracted partners serve approx. 450 children in New London County, and have 541 children on a waitlist, due to overwhelming demand in comparison to current openings with this bill would help address. Family Childcare Provider, Ernestine McGee, supports this bill.

[Hartford Foundation, Senior Public Policy Officer, Chris Senecal](#), supports this bill because and appreciates the proposals specific inclusion of family childcare providers, noting how home-based childcare centers play a vital role in the current childcare shortage, as it can be care that is linguistically and culturally appropriate as well as available during non-traditional hours.

[Eleven Members of CSEA SEIU Local 2001, Labor Union](#), support this bill however feel the bill 6840 should include language that requires the Office of Early Childhood to consult with and seek the input of home-based childcare providers as they conduct the study and develop the plan.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None expressed.

Reported by: Alex Sferrazza

Date: 2/24/25