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House Bill 5826 (Substitute S-1 as reported)  
Sponsor: Representative Mai Xiong  
House Committee: Health Policy (discharged)  
Senate Committee: Housing and Human Services

### **CONTENT**

The bill would enact a new law to do the following:

- Establish the Doula Scholarship Program administered by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and prescribe the Program's eligibility requirements.
- Allow the DHHS to award a maximum \$3,000 scholarship per awardee.
- Prescribe eligibility requirements for scholarships, including that an awardee would have to work in a medically underserved area as determined by the US Secretary of Health and Human Services.
- Require a scholarship recipient to be working toward the completion of doula training within six months of receiving the funds.
- Create the Doula Scholarship Fund within the State Treasury.

### **BRIEF RATIONALE**

Generally, doulas are individuals trained to provide educational, physical, and emotional support before, during, and after childbirth. According to testimony before the Senate Committee on Housing and Human Services, doula support lowers risks associated with pregnancy and childbirth, including fewer cesarean sections, shorter time in labor, and fewer negative experiences. Reportedly, the cost of doula education is the main barrier to entry for individuals interested in pursuing this profession, and so it has been suggested to create a Program that reduced that financial burden and increased the number of doulas in the State.

Legislative Analyst: Eleni Lionas

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

The bill would have an indeterminate negative fiscal impact on the DHHS and no fiscal impact on local units of government. The DHHS would incur minor administrative costs resulting from the promulgation of rules to implement the Program. Costs related to administering the Program once established would depend on the necessary time investment. If the administration of the Program could be supported using existing full-time equivalents (FTEs) and resources, the DHHS would incur no costs; however, if the administration of the Program would require one or more additional FTEs, the average annual cost incurred by the DHHS would be approximately \$137,500 per FTE, which includes salary and benefits.

Actual expenditures from the Fund to support the Program created in the bill would be contingent upon appropriation, therefore the impact on the DHHS would depend on how much funding was made available through an appropriation. The Fiscal Year 2024-2025 DHHS budget included \$2.9 million gross to support "doula training and continuing education". A portion of this funding may be eligible to support the Program created under the bill; however, Section 1948 of Public Act 121 of 2024 Article 6 also allows the \$2.9 million gross to be used

to support continuing education costs, which may not fall under the definition of "eligible costs" included in this bill.

The bill would have no fiscal impact on the Department of Treasury. Based on the level of estimated revenue likely to be appropriated to the Fund, ongoing costs associated with administration and investment would be less than \$100. Current appropriations would be sufficient to carry out these activities.

Date Completed: 10-18-24

Fiscal Analyst: Ellyn Ackerman  
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This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan Senate staff for use by the Senate in its deliberations and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.