

HOUSE BILL 598

By Hazlewood

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 4, Chapter 29; Title 49 and Title 71, relative to the Tennessee child care task force.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 49, Chapter 1, Part 11, is amended by adding the following language as a new section:

(a) There is created a Tennessee child care task force, to be administratively attached to the department of human services.

(b) The task force is created to recommend a strategic action plan to guide the administration and general assembly on how to:

(1) Address the challenges of quality, affordability, and accessibility of child care in this state;

(2) More effectively use public resources to address those challenges;

(3) Build partnerships between government and the business sector, through which businesses are motivated to create and participate in strategies that address the child care needs of their employees; and

(4) Streamline coordination between the department of human services, department of labor and workforce development, department of economic and community development, department of health, and department of education in developing solutions to the state's child care challenges.

(c) The task force is composed of fifteen (15) members as follows:

(1) The commissioner of human services;

(2) The commissioner of labor and workforce development, or the commissioner's designee;

(3) The commissioner of economic and community development, or the commissioner's designee;

(4) The commissioner of education, or the commissioner's designee;

(5) The commissioner of health, or the commissioner's designee;

(6) One (1) member of the senate to be appointed by the speaker of the senate;

(7) One (1) member of the house of representatives to be appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives;

(8) Four (4) representatives from organizations representing the business community that do not provide direct child care services, two (2) of which must be appointed by the speaker of the senate and two (2) of which must be appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives; and

(9) Four (4) experienced providers of high-quality child care services, two (2) of which must be appointed by the speaker of the senate and two (2) of which must be appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives.

(d)

(1) Members of the task force serve without compensation for their services, but may be reimbursed for travel expenses in accordance with the comprehensive travel regulations promulgated by the commissioner of finance and administration and approved by the attorney general and reporter.

(2) Vacancies among the members of the task force must be filled in the same manner as in the original selection of members.

(3) The speaker of the senate and the speaker of the house of representatives shall confer in making appointments to ensure that members of the task force are inclusive and reflect the racial, gender, geographic, urban, rural, and economic diversity of the state.

(4) The commissioner of human services shall serve as chair, and shall call the first meeting of the task force no later than October 1, 2021, at which time the members shall elect a first vice chair and second vice chair from among the private sector members.

(5) The task force shall meet at least monthly. The chair may call special meetings whenever necessary for the transaction of business. The chair shall notify each member of the task force of any special meeting at least five (5) days before the time fixed for the special meeting. A majority of the members of the task force may petition the chair to call a special meeting, in which case the chair shall call a special meeting.

(6) The task force may conduct regular or special meetings by conference call or video conference; provided, that the electronic nature of the meeting is included in the meeting notice.

(e) The task force shall agree upon any findings and recommendations by a majority vote of the total membership of the task force. A majority of the members of the task force constitutes a quorum for the purpose of meeting and conducting business.

(f) The chair of the task force may call on appropriate state agencies for reasonable assistance in the work of the task force.

(g) The task force has the responsibility to:

(1) Develop a strategic action plan for increasing the availability of high-quality, affordable, and accessible child care in this state;

(2) Hire and oversee a strategic consulting firm to support the development of the strategic plan and the gathering of data and information needed for informed decision-making; and

(3) Identify resources across state government departments that could be streamlined, coordinated, and more effectively utilized to address child care challenges.

(h) The task force shall submit an interim progress report of its findings and recommendations to the general assembly no later than July 1, 2022, and a final report of its findings and recommendations no later than December 31, 2022, at which time the task force will cease to exist. The final report must include:

(1) Findings and conclusions about child care needs in this state;

(2) The full strategic action plan, with executive summary; and

(3) Recommendations for legislation deemed necessary to implement the strategic plan.

(i) This section terminates on December 31, 2022, unless reenacted or extended by the general assembly prior to such date.

SECTION 2. For the purpose of making appointments, this act takes effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it. For all other purposes, this act takes effect July 1, 2021, the public welfare requiring it.