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**SENATE BILL 5535**

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**State of Washington 66th Legislature 2019 Regular Session**

**By** Senator Braun

AN ACT Relating to analyzing child care costs and affordability; creating a new section; and providing an expiration date.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1) The department of children, youth, and families shall convene and facilitate a child care affordability and accessibility work group to examine regulatory and licensing costs and the associated effects on child care affordability and accessibility for multiple and single-parent families. The director of the department of children, youth, and families, or his or her designee, must convene the first meeting of the work group by August 1, 2019.

(2) The work group must provide recommendations to the governor and the relevant legislative committees regarding:

(a) How to decrease child care costs and increase availability in each region through removal and amendment of relevant administrative rules and licensing barriers that increase operational costs for providers;

(b) How to increase availability of care in family, friend, and neighbor settings;

(c) Mitigating or offsetting the impacts of minimum wage increases;

(d) Licensing and educational requirements; and

(e) The economic impact of early achievers program rules and requirements, including costs and benefits for providers, subsidy recipients, and private pay consumers.

(3) To accomplish its duties, the work group shall evaluate current available data including, but not limited to:

(a) Child care market rate survey reports, including data related to the geographic distribution of licensed child care providers and the demand for, cost of care, and availability of such providers both in terms of actual slots and the total number of each type of provider;

(b) Reports related to the costs and benefits of care in terms of provider compliance with the early achievers program regulatory and licensing provisions and requirements;

(c) Research related to "fade out" of academic benefits in early learning and child care, kindergarten readiness, and other academic outcome metrics; and

(d) Regional subsidy rate analysis and surveys.

(4)(a) The work group shall consist of five voting members, with two senators and two representatives from the legislature from each major caucus and the executive director of the oversight board for children, youth, and families serving as the fifth voting member.

(b) The senate members of the work group must be appointed by the leaders of the two major caucuses of the senate. The house of representatives members of the work group must be appointed by the leaders of the two major caucuses of the house of representatives. Members must be appointed before the close of each regular session of the legislature during an odd-numbered year.

(c) The voting members of the work group shall select a work group chairperson. The work group chairperson must be selected by a majority vote of the voting work group members.

(5) The voting members of the work group shall appoint additional nonvoting work group members as follows:

(a) One licensed child care center provider;

(b) One parent representative with a child receiving care in a licensed child care center;

(c) One licensed family child care provider;

(d) One parent representative with a child receiving care in a family child care provider setting;

(e) One licensed family, friend, and neighbor child care provider;

(f) One parent representative with a child receiving care in a family, friend, and neighbor child care setting;

(g) One unlicensed family, friend, and neighbor child care provider; and

(h) One representative from Washington child care aware.

(6)(a) The executive director of the oversight board for children, youth, and families, or his or her designee, may invite additional representatives to participate as nonvoting members of the work group.

(b) Additional nonvoting members invited by the executive director of the oversight board for children, youth, and families must be approved by a majority of voting work group members.

(7) Staff support for the work group must be provided by the senate committee services and the house of representatives office of program research.

(8) Legislative members of the work group must be reimbursed for travel expenses in accordance with RCW 44.04.120. Nonlegislative members must be reimbursed for travel expenses in accordance with chapter 43.03 RCW.

(9) By June 1, 2020, and in compliance with RCW 43.01.036, the work group shall report its findings and recommendations to the governor and the appropriate committees of the legislature. The report must include the recommendations from subsection (2) of this section and findings related to**:**

(a) Options for exemptions from the early achievers program rules that would reduce provider operational costs without reducing child care safety and quality;

(b) Opportunities for streamlining permitting and licensing requirements to facilitate reduction in provider operating costs;

(c) Opportunities for administrative rule changes that would reduce provider costs without reducing child care safety or quality;

(d) How increased provider subsidy rates would impact affordability and accessibility of child care in each region;

(e) The economic impacts, including costs and benefits, of the early achievers program requirements and rules on providers with regard to health, safety, and education outcomes for children;

(f) A comparative analysis of outcome measurement tools used in other states to ascertain quality of care;

(g) Increasing child care affordability for nonsubsidized consumers; and

(h) Increasing child care availability.

(10) This section expires December 30, 2020.

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