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**HOUSE BILL 2814**

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**State of Washington 66th Legislature 2020 Regular Session**

**By** Representatives Ortiz-Self, Chopp, Frame, Senn, Callan, Sells, Pollet, Stonier, Davis, Gregerson, Valdez, Bergquist, Slatter, and Macri

AN ACT Relating to developing best practices for the child care industry as recommended by the child care workforce commission; adding new sections to chapter 43.22 RCW; and creating new sections.

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

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  The legislature finds that Washington faces a crisis in licensed child care. Sixty percent of families live in a child care desert, meaning families across the state struggle to find safe, quality care while parents are working. Research has demonstrated that long-term relationships between children and their caregivers are key to supporting healthy brain development, particularly self-regulation skills that are critical for success in school and life. The legislature further finds that unnecessary disruptions in caregiving, such as frequent turnover among staff, can delay a child's social-emotional and cognitive development. There is frequent provider turnover due to low wages and limited employment benefits such as health care in the child care profession. Research has demonstrated that safe, stable environments are essential to allowing young children to develop the relationships and trust necessary to comfortably explore and learn from their surroundings. This is of particular significance for vulnerable children and families and children with special needs. The child care industry is an ecosystem of child care licensors, early achievers coaches, and child care providers working together to support children. Therefore, the legislature seeks to identify and promote best practice standards for the child care industry to sustain a high-quality, educated, diverse, and experienced workforce that can support the best outcomes for children.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 43.22 RCW to read as follows:

(1) The child care workforce commission is established. The governor shall appoint the commissioners as follows:

(a) Three licensed family home child care providers recommended by a statewide organization representing the interests of licensed family home providers. At least one licensed family home child care provider must provide care for children of agricultural workers, speak Spanish as a first language, or be located east of the crest of the Cascade mountains;

(b) Three licensed child care center representatives recommended by a statewide organization representing the interests of licensed child care centers. The recommending organization must include at least one provider with fewer than three center sites and one provider with more than fifteen center sites in the state. Of the three licensed child care center representatives, at least one must be a child care center teacher and at least one must be a child care center director. At least one licensed child care center teacher or director must provide care for children of agricultural workers, speak Spanish as a first language, or be located east of the crest of the Cascade mountains;

(c) Two teachers representing either an early childhood education and assistance program or a federal preschool program that provides comprehensive services;

(d) One license-exempt family, friend, or neighbor caregiver selected from a list of individuals recommended by a statewide organization representing the interests of licensed family home providers;

(e) One parent of a child enrolled in licensed child care or whose child has been enrolled in licensed child care within the past five years;

(f) Two representatives of a labor union or professional organization representing at least one thousand members who are in the business of providing child care;

(g) One early achievers coach;

(h) One representative from a tribal government that is in the business of providing child care either as a direct provider or a service provision coordinator;

(i) One representative from the statewide child care resource and referral network;

(j) One representative of an advocacy organization representing parents;

(k) Two representatives from advocacy organizations dedicated to issues related to racial equity and diversity;

(l) One representative from an educational service district or their designee;

(m) Two representatives of the department of children, youth, and families. Of the two representatives, at least one must be a child care licensor; and

(n) One representative of the office of financial management.

(2) Of the commissioners initially appointed to the commission, half must be appointed to serve two-year terms and half must be appointed to serve three-year terms. Upon the expiration of initial terms, subsequent term lengths are three years for all commission positions.

(3) The department of labor and industries shall provide administrative and staff support to the commission.

(4) Commissioners must be reimbursed for travel expenses according to chapter 43.03 RCW.

(5) Licensed family home child care providers and child care center representatives serving as commissioners must be reimbursed for the cost of hiring a substitute for times the provider is away from the child care business for official commission travel and meetings.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 43.22 RCW to read as follows:

(1) The child care workforce commission created in section 2 of this act shall establish recommended best practice standards for the child care industry and update the standards at least once every two years. The best practice standards may vary by geographic region and must include recommended:

(a) Wage levels for various early learning provider occupations, including directors, assistant directors, supervisors, lead teachers, assistant teachers, aides, and any other personnel working in a licensed family home or child care center;

(b) Benefits such as health care, dental care, paid leave, and retirement; and

(c) Assistance designed to help providers develop professionally.

(2) The commission shall conduct public listening sessions at least once every two years in each of the child care subsidy regions designated by the department of children, youth, and families. The regional listening sessions must be conducted for the purpose of understanding regional differences, unique economic and social dynamics, and workforce development needs in each region.

(3) In collaboration with the department of labor and industries, the commission shall submit biennial budget requests to the office of financial management by October 1st of every even-numbered year. The budget requests must identify the amount of funding necessary to implement the best practice standards as recommended by the commission. The governor is encouraged to include a request for funds that are necessary to implement the best practice standards in his or her biennial budget submitted to the legislature under RCW 43.88.060.

(4) Nothing in this section repeals or modifies the duties or authority of the department of children, youth, and families as the lead state agency for child care licensing, quality standards, and federal child care and development funds.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  Nothing in this act shall interfere with any right or reduce any benefit a provider may receive under collective bargaining agreements entered into pursuant to chapter 41.56 RCW.

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