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H. R. 4680

To amend the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990 to improve the quality of infant and toddler care.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 20, 2014

Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts (for herself, Ms. MOORE, Ms. DELAURO, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. MCGOVERN, Ms. SPEIER, Mr. TIERNEY, Mrs. DAVIS of California, Mr. LANGEVIN, Ms. MENG, Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York, and Mr. SCHIFF) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Education and the Workforce

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A BILL

To amend the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990 to improve the quality of infant and toddler care.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Infant and Toddler Care Improvement Act".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS AND PURPOSES.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

(1) The brain undergoes its most dramatic development during a child's first 3 years of life, with 700 new neurological connections being formed every second based on early experience. During this time, the brain's foundational capacities for thinking, language, emotion, and self-regulation are formed.

(2) Economic deprivation can also affect the development of the brain and impair all aspects of development. Children in families below the poverty line are at risk for prolonged ''toxic'' stress, which can change the shape of the brain's structure. Twenty-five percent of children younger than 3 years of age live in families with incomes below the poverty level.

(3) Child care is second only to the family setting as the place in which early development takes place for many infants and toddlers. Sixty-one percent of mothers with children younger than 3 years of age are in the labor force and over 6,000,000 children younger than 3 years of age are cared for by someone other than their parents for some part or all of the day. Therefore, the relationship between the child and the child care provider often plays a significant role in child development.

(4) Research shows that high-quality child care can mitigate some of the effects of adverse experiences caused by poverty and that low-income children can benefit particularly well from high-quality child care. Yet, at-risk children younger than 3 years of age often receive low-quality child care that can lead to poor developmental outcomes.

(5) High-quality child care has been shown to promote positive cognitive, language, and social and emotional development, and contribute to academic success. High-quality child care can also help improve a child's communication skills, cognitive skills, behavioral skills, math and language assessment scores, and verbal intelligence.

(6) Providing training and technical assistance to family child care providers who are infant and toddler care providers, through family child care networks, has been shown to improve the quality of caregivers.

(7) Twenty-seven States use infant and toddler specialist networks as the structure for providing training and technical assistance, using research-based training and techniques such as mentoring and on-site coaching, to all types of providers of child care for infants or toddlers.

(8) Preparation for early childhood educators often does not include training specific to infants and toddlers. Only 21 States have infant and toddler credential requirements that define the particular knowledge and skills needed to work with children younger than 3 years of age.

(9) Infants and toddlers have unique needs that differ from those of older children in areas such as health and safety, interaction with teachers and caregivers, and learning, yet not all States recognize those differences in licensing regulations or in their Quality Rating and Improvement Systems. Just 20 States have infant and toddler quality indicators in their Quality Rating and Improvement Systems and only 3 States have separate categories of child care regulations related to infants and toddlers.

(b) PURPOSE.—The purpose of this Act is to improve the overall quality of child care programs serving infants or toddlers.

SEC. 3. HIGH-QUALITY INFANT AND TODDLER CARE PROGRAM.

The Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990 is amended by inserting after section 658G (42 U.S.C. 9858e) the following:

"SEC. 658H. HIGH-QUALITY INFANT AND TODDLER CARE PROGRAM.

"(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

"(1) ELIGIBLE INFANT OR TODDLER CARE PROVIDER.—The term 'eligible infant or toddler care provider' means an eligible child care provider, consistent with section 658P, who provides care to an infant or toddler.

"(2) INFANT OR TODDLER.—The term 'infant or toddler' means an individual under 3 years of age.

"(3) INFANT OR TODDLER WITH A DEVELOPMENTAL DELAY OR DISABILITY.—

"(A) IN GENERAL.—The term 'infant or toddler with a developmental delay or disability' has the meaning given the term 'infant or toddler with a disability' in section 632 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1432).

"(B) PLURAL FORM.—The term 'infants and toddlers with developmental delays or disabilities' means more than 1 infant or toddler with a developmental delay or disability.

"(4) LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT.—The term 'limited English proficient' has the meaning

given the term in section 637 of the Head Start Act (42 U.S.C. 9832).

"(5) LOW-INCOME COMMUNITY.—The term 'low-income community' shall be defined by the Secretary.

"(6) LOW-INCOME FAMILY.—The term 'low-income family' means a family with a family income described in section 658P(4)(B).

"(b) GRANTS.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall make grants to eligible States, from allotments described in paragraph (2), to enable the States to improve the quality of care for infants and toddlers.

"(2) ALLOTMENTS.—

"(A) AMOUNTS RESERVED.—

"(i) TERRITORIES AND POSSESSIONS.—The Secretary shall reserve an amount not to exceed 0.5 percent of the amount appropriated under this section for each fiscal year for payments to Guam, American Samoa, the United States Virgin Islands, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, to be allotted in accordance with their respective needs.

"(ii) INDIAN TRIBES.—The Secretary shall reserve not less than 1 percent, and not more than 2 percent, of the amount appropriated under this section for each fiscal year for payments to Indian tribes and tribal organizations with applications approved under section 658O(c).

"(B) ALLOTMENTS TO STATES.—After making reservations under subparagraph (A), the Secretary shall use the remainder of the amount appropriated under this section for a fiscal year to allot to each State an amount that bears the same relationship to that remainder as the amount allotted to the State under section 658O for that fiscal year bears to the amount allotted to all States under section 658O for that fiscal year.

"(C) STATE.—In this paragraph, the term 'State' does not include Guam, American Samoa, the United States Virgin Islands, or the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

"(c) AMENDMENT TO STATE PLANS.—A State that receives a grant under this section shall include in the State's plan under section 658E, a description of how the

State will use funds provided under this section to improve the quality of infant and toddler care.

"(d) USE OF FUNDS.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—A State that receives a grant under this section shall use the funds made available through the grant to carry out 1 or more of the activities described in paragraphs (2) through (7).

"(2) INCREASING HIGH-QUALITY INFANT AND TODDLER CARE.—

"(A) IN GENERAL.—A State may use the funds described in paragraph (1) to make grants to eligible entities to be resources for eligible infant and toddler care providers, to improve the quality of early care and development services provided to infants and toddlers in the community from low-income families and to help such providers serving low-income families improve their capacity to offer high-quality care to such families.

"(B) ELIGIBLE ENTITY.—To be eligible to receive a grant under this paragraph, an entity shall be an eligible child care provider that—

"(i) serves infants and toddlers from low-income families; and

"(ii)(I) is ranked at the top level of the State's Quality Rating and Improvement System or similar rating system or accredited by a national accrediting body recognized, before the date of enactment of the Infant and Toddler Care Improvement Act, for high-quality program standards that are valid and reliable; or

"(II) is an Early Head Start agency under section 645A of the Head Start Act (42 U.S.C. 9840a) that is in full compliance with the performance standards applicable to such an agency under the Head Start Act (42 U.S.C. 9831 et seq.).

"(C) PRIORITY.—In making grants under this paragraph, a State—

"(i) shall give priority to entities that will serve significant populations of low-income families; and

"(ii) may give priority to entities that—

"(I) are located in low-income communities;

"(II) will serve communities with significant populations of families with limited English proficiency; or

"(III) will increase the ability of caregivers to provide appropriate services and coordinate activities with State and local systems providing services under part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1431 et seq.) for children with developmental delays or disabilities, including such children in the child welfare system of the State.

"(3) STAFFED FAMILY CHILD CARE NETWORKS OR SYSTEMS.—

"(A) IN GENERAL.—A State may use the funds described in paragraph (1) to make grants to organizations with expertise in providing child care and related technical assistance, to establish new staffed family child care networks (new as of the date of amendment of the State plan under subsection (c)) or to operate existing staffed family child care networks or systems that offer, to family child care providers who are eligible infant and toddler care

providers, technical assistance, training, administrative support, or direct services including monitoring visits to providers.

"(B) PRIORITY.—In making grants under this paragraph, a State—

"(i) shall give priority to organizations described in paragraph (2)(C)(i); and

"(ii) may give priority to organizations that have 1 or more of the 3 characteristics described in paragraph (2)(C)(ii).

"(4) STATEWIDE NETWORK OF INFANT AND TODDLER SPECIALISTS.—

"(A) IN GENERAL.—A State may use the funds described in paragraph (1) to support, or to make a grant to an organization with expertise in providing child care technical assistance to support, a statewide network of specialists who are eligible infant and toddler care providers, that shall—

"(i) provide individual or group training and intensive consultation services to eligible infant and toddler care providers, including relative caregivers, on strategies to improve the quality of care for infants and toddlers; and

"(ii) assist eligible infant and toddler care providers in coordinating activities with other offices responsible for child care, including Early Head Start programs and Head Start programs carried out under the Head Start Act (42 U.S.C. 9831 et seq.).

"(B) PRIORITY.—In delivering services or making grants under this paragraph, a State—

"(i) shall give priority to networks that deliver support to providers described in paragraph (2)(C)(i); and

"(ii) may give priority to networks that deliver support to providers that have 1 or more of the 3 characteristics described in paragraph (2)(C)(ii).

"(5) STATE WORKFORCE QUALITY INITIATIVES.—

"(A) IN GENERAL.—A State may use the funds described in paragraph (1) to support initiatives to improve the quality of the workforce of eligible infant and toddler care providers, such as—

"(i) providing relevant training, professional development, or mentoring to eli-

gible infant and toddler care providers, including linking the training, development, or mentoring to career pathways for eligible infant and toddler care providers;

"(ii) providing scholarships or other financial support to eligible infant and toddler care providers to advance their education and training;

"(iii) coordinating activities with the State's higher education system to expand the availability and quality of coursework for infant and toddler care providers, including developing career pathways for eligible infant and toddler care providers; or

"(iv) improving the State credentialing of eligible infant and toddler care providers.

"(6) SYSTEMS QUALITY.—A State may use the funds described in paragraph (1) to—

"(A) develop infant and toddler components for the State's Quality Rating and Improvement System or similar rating system, child care licensing regulations, or voluntary early learning guidelines;

"(B) improve the ability of parents to obtain information about high-quality infant and toddler care; or

"(C) assist eligible infant and toddler care providers seeking to improve the quality of their infant and toddler care by increasing their ranking on the State's Quality Rating and Improvement System or similar rating system, meeting performance standards applicable to an Early Head Start agency under the Head Start Act (42 U.S.C. 9831 et seq.), or becoming accredited by a national accrediting body described in paragraph (2)(B)(ii).

"(7) OTHER HIGH-QUALITY INITIATIVES.—A State may use the funds described in paragraph (1) to carry out other activities determined by the State to improve the quality of infant and toddler care provided in the State and for which there is evidence that the activities will lead to improved infant and toddler safety, infant and toddler development, or infant and toddler well-being.

"(e) REPORTING.—A State that receives a grant under subsection (b) shall submit in the State's annual reports required under section 658K(a)(2), information on how the State is using the funding provided under sub-

section (b) to improve the quality of infant and toddler care and the effect such funding is having on the quality of infant and toddler care in the State.

"(f) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section such sums as may be necessary for fiscal year 2014 and each subsequent fiscal year.".

SEC. 4. CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.

(a) AUTHORIZATION.—Section 658B of the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 9858) is amended by inserting "(other than section 658H)" after "subchapter".

(b) ALLOTMENT.—Section 658O(a)(1) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 9858m(a)(1)) is amended by striking "this subchapter" and inserting "section 658B".

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