

PLEASE NOTE: Legislative Information **cannot** perform research, provide legal advice, or interpret Maine law. For legal assistance, please contact a qualified attorney.

Amend the bill by striking out the title and substituting the following:

'Resolve, To Establish an Early Childhood Stakeholder Group'

Amend the bill by striking out everything after the title and inserting the following:

Emergency preamble. Whereas, acts and resolves of the Legislature do not become effective until 90 days after adjournment unless enacted as emergencies; and

Whereas, recent reductions in federal Medicaid funding and recent changes made to the Maine Department of Health and Human Services rules for MaineCare reimbursement may result in adverse implications for eligible children who are served by various early childhood programs delivered by human service agency programs and early childhood education programs in the public and private sector; and

Whereas, a unified early childhood system can result in a more efficient and effective use of limited public and private resources to provide critical early care and education services to children in the State; and

Whereas, the early childhood stakeholder group established by this resolve must convene at the earliest possible date in order to have sufficient time to complete its duties in time for reporting to the 125th Legislature; and

Whereas, in the judgment of the Legislature, these facts create an emergency within the meaning of the Constitution of Maine and require the following legislation as immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and safety; now, therefore, be it

Sec. 1 Early childhood stakeholder group; convening; staffing and technical assistance. Resolved: That the Maine Children's Growth Council shall establish an early childhood stakeholder group, referred to in this resolve as "the stakeholder group," within existing budgeted resources. The Maine Children's Growth Council shall appoint one of its members to serve as the chair of the stakeholder group and shall convene the stakeholder group; and be it further

Sec. 2 Stakeholder group membership. Resolved: That the stakeholder group consists of at least 15 members, including the chair and the following persons, appointed by the Maine Children's Growth Council as set out in this section:

1. A parent who is a member of the Child Care Advisory Council;
2. A parent who has a child who participates in a Head Start program in the State;
3. A parent who is a member of the Maine Parent Federation;
4. A parent who is a member of Maine Families;
5. A parent who has a child who participates in a Child Development Services System program in the State;

6. A parent who has a child who participates in a prekindergarten program operated by a public school in the State;
7. A member of the Maine Developmental Disabilities Council;
8. A member of the Maine Roads to Quality;
9. A regional site director from the Child Development Services System;
10. A Head Start director from the Maine Head Start Directors Association;
11. A family child care provider in the State;
12. A home visiting nurse provider in the State;
13. A public prekindergarten teacher in the State;
14. An early intervention therapeutic service provider in the State; and
15. Representatives of other interested parties in the State as determined by the Maine Children's Growth Council; and be it further

Sec. 3 Technical assistance. Resolved: That, upon the request of the chair of the stakeholder group, the Department of Education and the Department of Health and Human Services, referred to in this resolve as "the departments," shall, within existing budgeted resources, provide technical assistance to the stakeholder group; and be it further

Sec. 4 Duties. Resolved: That the stakeholder group shall determine the strengths and weaknesses of the State's current programs for children from birth to 5 years of age, including but not limited to the following programs:

1. The Child Development Services System;
2. The public prekindergarten programs operated by public schools in the State; and
3. Programs within the Department of Health and Human Services, Bureau of Child and Family Services, including:
 - A. The maternal and child health program;
 - B. The early childhood program;
 - C. The child welfare program;
 - D. The child behavioral health services program;
 - E. The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program; and
 - F. The child care licensing program.

The stakeholder group's goal is to make recommendations to improve the early childhood system's efficacy and efficiency; and be it further

Sec. 5 Report. Resolved: That, no later than December 15, 2011, the stakeholder group shall submit a report to the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs and the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services that includes the findings of the stakeholder group, the

options and alternatives developed by the stakeholder group and any analysis by the departments of those options and alternatives. The report may include suggested legislation. The Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs and the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services may each submit a bill to the Second Regular Session of the 125th Legislature related to the report of the stakeholder group.

Emergency clause. In view of the emergency cited in the preamble, this legislation takes effect when approved.'

SUMMARY

This amendment replaces the bill with a resolve requiring the Maine Children's Growth Council to establish and convene a stakeholder group to identify options and alternatives to improve the efficacy and efficiency of Maine's early childhood system. The Department of Education and the Department of Health and Human Services are required to provide technical assistance to the stakeholder group. The stakeholder group is required to submit a report to the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs and the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services that includes the findings of the stakeholder group, including options and alternatives developed by the stakeholder group and any analysis by the departments of those options and alternatives. The report may include suggested legislation.