

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 846

To implement or strengthen programs that increase the supply of quality child care services by enhancing the wages of child care workers, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MARCH 4, 2025

Mrs. BRITT (for herself, Mr. KAINE, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. KING, and Mrs. GILLIBRAND) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

A BILL

To implement or strengthen programs that increase the supply of quality child care services by enhancing the wages of child care workers, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Child Care Workforce
5 Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. PURPOSE.**

7 The purpose of this Act is to establish a pilot pro-
8 gram to increase the supply of quality child care services
9 by providing funding to States, Indian Tribes, and Tribal

1 organizations to implement or strengthen programs to
2 supplement the wages of eligible child care workers, in
3 order to—

4 (1) attract and retain eligible child care work-
5 ers;

6 (2) improve eligible child care worker well-
7 being;

8 (3) improve the quality of child care services;
9 and

10 (4) increase the availability of affordable child
11 care services.

12 **SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.**

13 In this Act:

14 (1) CHILD CARE WORKER.—The term “child
15 care worker” means any individual whose primary
16 and daily focus of work is—

17 (A) providing child care services, including
18 direct care and education services, to children
19 for a family child care provider or other child
20 care provider, or a provider of early childhood
21 education, that is in compliance with any licens-
22 ing or registration standards, or regulations, of
23 the State, Indian Tribe, or Tribal organization
24 involved; and

1 (B) providing the child care services in a
2 center-based or home-based setting.

3 (2) INDIAN TRIBE.—The term “Indian Tribe”
4 has the meaning given the term in section 4 of the
5 Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance
6 Act (25 U.S.C. 5304).

7 (3) STATE.—The term “State” means any of
8 the several States, the District of Columbia, the Vir-
9 gin Islands of the United States, the Commonwealth
10 of Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, and the
11 Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

12 (4) TRIBAL ORGANIZATION.—The term “Tribal
13 organization” has the meaning given the term “trib-
14 al organization” in section 658P of the Child Care
15 and Development Block Grant Act of 1990 (42
16 U.S.C. 9858n).

17 **SEC. 4. PILOT PROGRAM.**

18 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary of Health and
19 Human Services (referred to in this Act as the “Sec-
20 retary”) shall establish a pilot program to award competi-
21 tive grants to States, Indian Tribes, and Tribal organiza-
22 tions to supplement the wages of eligible child care work-
23 ers.

1 (b) CONSIDERATIONS.—In selecting States, Indian
2 Tribes, and Tribal organizations to receive grants under
3 this section, the Secretary shall consider—

4 (1) the number of children under the age of 5
5 residing in the State or on the Tribal land of the In-
6 dian Tribe or Tribal organization;

7 (2) the number of child care workers working in
8 licensed, regulated, or registered programs in the
9 State or on the Tribal land;

10 (3) the average wage of child care workers
11 working in the State or on the Tribal land;

12 (4) the percentage of families in the State or on
13 the Tribal land who are eligible for child care sub-
14 sidies under the Child Care and Development Block
15 Grant Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 9857 et seq.) but do
16 not receive the subsidies; and

17 (5) the need for additional child care workers in
18 the State or on the Tribal land.

19 (c) ELIGIBILITY.—To be eligible for a grant under
20 this section, a State, Indian Tribe, or Tribal organization
21 shall submit an application to the Secretary at such time,
22 in such manner, and containing such information as the
23 Secretary may require, including—

1 (1) information showing a significant need for
2 increased numbers of child care workers and in-
3 creased wages among child care workers;

4 (2) a commitment to using the grant funds to
5 supplement the wages of low-wage eligible child care
6 workers;

7 (3) a plan for using the grant funds to supple-
8 ment the wages of eligible child care workers, includ-
9 ing—

10 (A) the criteria that will be used to deter-
11 mine which child care workers are eligible to re-
12 ceive the wage supplements;

13 (B) a description of how funds will be
14 prioritized for areas with greatest need, includ-
15 ing areas with overall staffing challenges, un-
16 derserved geographic areas, areas with short-
17 ages of programs that serve low-income children
18 and families, and areas with shortages of pro-
19 grams that serve infants and toddlers, that
20 serve children with disabilities, or that offer
21 child care services during nontraditional hours;
22 and

23 (C) a description of how the wage supple-
24 ments will be provided to eligible child care
25 workers (directly, through the employer, or

1 through a trusted intermediary) and how the
2 supplements will be provided in a timely man-
3 ner;

4 (4) a plan to engage in a public awareness cam-
5 paign directed at eligible child care workers;

6 (5) a description of the measures that will be
7 used to assess the impact of the wage supplement
8 pilot program on attraction and retention of eligible
9 child care workers, eligible child care worker well-
10 being, child care services quality, and availability of
11 affordable child care services, provided by eligible
12 child care workers;

13 (6) a description of how the pilot program will
14 contribute to the State's or Tribe's overall plan for
15 increasing eligible child care worker compensation;

16 (7) a description of the plan for addressing and
17 minimizing any destabilization that may occur after
18 the grant funds are expended; and

19 (8) such other information as the Secretary
20 may require.

21 **SEC. 5. USE OF FUNDS.**

22 (a) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in subsection
23 (c), a State, Indian Tribe, or Tribal organization that re-
24 ceives a grant under section 4 shall use the grant funds

1 solely to supplement the wages of eligible child care work-
 2 ers.

3 (b) REQUIREMENTS.—In carrying out subsection (a),
 4 a State, Indian Tribe, or Tribal organization shall—

5 (1) disburse the wage supplements to eligible
 6 child care workers not less frequently than quarterly;

7 (2) target grant funding based on the areas de-
 8 scribed in section 4(c)(3)(B);

9 (3) provide to eligible child care workers edu-
 10 cation on any effect the wage supplements may have
 11 on taxes or public benefit eligibility; and

12 (4) inform eligible child care workers that ac-
 13 ceptance, of the wage supplements, is voluntary.

14 (c) ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS.—The State, Indian
 15 Tribe, or Tribal organization may use not more than 10
 16 percent of the grant funds to pay for administrative costs
 17 associated with the administration of payments to eligible
 18 child care workers, financial counseling for eligible child
 19 care workers, including as described in subsection (b)(3),
 20 and public awareness campaigns to make child care work-
 21 ers aware of the availability of such payments.

22 **SEC. 6. EVALUATION.**

23 The Secretary shall conduct an evaluation of the pilot
 24 program to assess its effectiveness in—

1 (1) attracting and retaining eligible child care
2 workers;

3 (2) improving eligible child care worker well-
4 being and the quality of child care services; and

5 (3) increasing the availability of affordable child
6 care services.

7 **SEC. 7. REPORT.**

8 Not later than 2 years after the date on which the
9 pilot program is implemented, the Secretary shall submit
10 a report to Congress containing the results of the evalua-
11 tion.

12 **SEC. 8. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

13 There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out
14 this Act such sums as may be necessary for fiscal year
15 2026 and each subsequent fiscal year.

16 **SEC. 9. EFFECTIVE DATE.**

17 This Act shall take effect 75 days after the date of
18 enactment of this Act.

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