

115TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 3381

To establish in the Administration for Children and Families of the Department of Health and Human Services the Federal Interagency Working Group on Reducing Child Poverty to develop a national strategy to eliminate child poverty in the United States, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JULY 25, 2017

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois (for himself, Ms. LEE, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, and Mr. CONNOLLY) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform

A BILL

To establish in the Administration for Children and Families of the Department of Health and Human Services the Federal Interagency Working Group on Reducing Child Poverty to develop a national strategy to eliminate child poverty in the United States, 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 Poverty Reduc-

5 tion Act of 2017”.

1 **SEC. 2. ESTABLISHMENT OF WORKING GROUP.**

2 There is established in the Administration for Chil-
3 dren and Families of the Department of Health and
4 Human Services a group which shall be known as the Fed-
5 eral Interagency Working Group on Reducing Child Pov-
6 erty (in this Act referred to as the “Working Group”).

7 **SEC. 3. NATIONAL PLAN TO REDUCE CHILD POVERTY.**

8 (a) PRIMARY GOAL.—

9 (1) DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL PLAN.—The
10 primary goal of the Working Group is to develop a
11 national plan—

12 (A) to reduce, within 10 years after the
13 date on which funding is made available to
14 carry out this Act—

15 (i) the number of children living in
16 poverty in the United States to half of the
17 number of such children as reported in the
18 report of the United States Census Bureau
19 on Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance
20 Coverage in the United States: 2015
21 (issued in September 2016); and

22 (ii) the number of children living in
23 extreme poverty in the United States to
24 zero; and

25 (B) to reduce, within 20 years after the
26 date on which funds are made available to carry

1 out this Act, the number of children living in
2 poverty in the United States to zero.

3 (2) CONSULTATION WITH NATIONAL ACADEMY
4 OF SCIENCES.—In developing the national plan
5 under paragraph (1), the Working Group shall con-
6 sider all recommendations, research papers, and re-
7 ports published by the National Academy of
8 Sciences, including the Social Services and Income
9 Maintenance Research conducted using amounts
10 made available under the heading “Administration
11 for Children and Families—Children and Families
12 Services Programs” in division H of Public Law
13 114–113 and in division H of Public Law 115–31.

14 (3) DEADLINE.—Not later than 180 days after
15 the date of the enactment of this Act, the Working
16 Group shall make substantial progress toward the
17 development of the national plan.

18 (b) ADDITIONAL GOALS.—The national plan under
19 subsection (a) shall include recommendations for achieving
20 the following goals:

21 (1) Understanding the root causes of child pov-
22 erty, including persistent intergenerational poverty,
23 taking into account social, economic, and cultural
24 factors.

1 (2) Improving the accessibility of anti-poverty
2 programs and increasing the rate of enrollment in
3 such programs among eligible children and families
4 by reducing the complexity and difficulty of enrolling
5 in such programs.

6 (3) Eliminating disparate rates of child poverty
7 based on race, ethnicity, gender, age, geography
8 (e.g., rural, urban, suburban), English language pro-
9 ficiency, and ability.

10 (4) Improving the ability of individuals living in
11 poverty, low-income individuals, and unemployed in-
12 dividuals to access quality jobs that help children
13 and their families rise above poverty.

14 (5) Connecting low-income children, discon-
15 nected youth, and their families to education, job
16 training, work, and their communities.

17 (6) Shifting the measures and policies of Fed-
18 eral anti-poverty programs from the goal of helping
19 individuals and families living in poverty to achieve
20 freedom from deprivation toward the goal of helping
21 such individuals and families rise above poverty and
22 achieve long-term economic stability.

23 (c) METHODS.—In developing the national plan
24 under subsection (a), the Working Group shall employ

1 methods for achieving the goals described in subsections
2 (a) and (b) that include—

3 (1) studying the effect of child poverty on the
4 health and welfare of children, including the access
5 of children living in poverty to health care, housing,
6 proper nutrition, and education;

7 (2) measuring the effect of child poverty on the
8 ability of individuals to achieve economic stability,
9 including such effect on educational attainment,
10 rates of incarceration, lifetime earnings, access to
11 healthcare, and access to housing;

12 (3) updating and applying improved measures
13 of poverty that can meaningfully account for other
14 aspects relating to the measure of poverty, such as
15 the Supplemental Poverty Measure used by the
16 United States Census Bureau; and

17 (4) using and applying fact-based measures to
18 evaluate the long-term effectiveness of anti-poverty
19 programs, taking into account the long-term savings
20 and value to the Federal Government and to State,
21 local, and tribal governments of practices and poli-
22 cies designed to prevent poverty.

23 **SEC. 4. OTHER DUTIES.**

24 In addition to developing the national plan under sec-
25 tion 3(a), the Working Group shall—

1 (1) monitor, in consultation with the Domestic
2 Policy Council and the National Economic Council,
3 all Federal activities, programs, and services related
4 to child welfare and child poverty;

5 (2) establish guidelines, policies, goals, and di-
6 rectives related to the achievement of the goals of
7 the national plan, in consultation with non-govern-
8 mental entities providing social services to low-in-
9 come children and families, advocacy groups that di-
10 rectly represent low-income children and families,
11 policy experts, and officials of State, local, and tribal
12 governments, including the working group of the
13 largest State and local associations, who administer
14 or direct policy for anti-poverty programs;

15 (3) advise all relevant Federal agencies regard-
16 ing how to effectively administer and coordinate pro-
17 grams, activities, and services related to child wel-
18 fare and child poverty and how to resolve any dis-
19 putes that arise between or among such agencies as
20 a result of such administration or coordination;

21 (4) provide recommendations to the Congress
22 regarding how to ensure that Federal agencies ad-
23 ministering programs, activities, and services related
24 to child welfare and child poverty have adequate re-
25 sources to increase public awareness of such pro-

grams, activities, and services and how to maximize enrollment of eligible individuals;

(5) identify methods for improving communication and collaboration among and between Federal, State, and local governmental entities regarding the implementation of State and local programs related to child welfare and child poverty, such as State programs funded under part A of title IV of the Social Security Act (relating to block grants to States and localities for temporary assistance for needy families), and submit recommendations regarding such methods to relevant Federal agencies and congressional committees; and

(6) hold hearings in different geographic regions of the United States to collect information and feedback from the public regarding personal experiences related to child poverty and anti-poverty programs, and make such information and feedback publicly available.

SEC. 5. MEMBERSHIP.

(a) NUMBER OF MEMBERS.—The Working Group shall be composed of no less than 6 members.

(b) EXECUTIVE PAY RATE.—Each member shall be an official of an Executive Department who occupies a position for which the rate of pay is equal to or greater than

1 the rate of pay for level IV of the Executive Schedule
2 under section 5313 of title 5, United States Code.

3 (c) REQUIRED PARTICIPATION OF CERTAIN EXECU-
4 TIVE DEPARTMENTS.—The Working Group shall include
5 at least one member who is an official of each of the fol-
6 lowing Executive departments:

7 (1) The Department of Justice.

8 (2) The Department of Agriculture.

9 (3) The Department of Labor.

10 (4) The Department of Health and Human
11 Services.

12 (5) The Department of Housing and Urban De-
13 velopment.

14 (6) The Department of Education.

15 (d) APPOINTMENT.—Each member shall be ap-
16 pointed by the head of the Executive department that em-
17 ploys such member.

18 (e) OBTAINING OFFICIAL DATA.—On request of the
19 Chairperson, any head of a Federal agency shall furnish
20 directly to the Working Group any information necessary
21 to enable the Working Group to carry out this Act.

22 (f) TERMS.—Each member shall be appointed for the
23 life of the Working Group.

1 (g) VACANCIES.—A vacancy in the Commission shall
2 be filled in the manner in which the original appointment
3 was made.

4 (h) QUORUM.—A majority of members shall con-
5 stitute a quorum.

6 (i) CHAIRPERSON.—The Chairperson of the Working
7 Group shall be appointed by the Secretary of Health and
8 Human Services.

9 (j) MEETINGS.—

10 (1) INITIAL MEETING PERIOD.—The Working
11 Group shall meet on a monthly basis during the
12 180-day period beginning with the date on which
13 funds are made available to carry out this Act.

14 (2) SUBSEQUENT MEETINGS.—After such 180-
15 day period, the Working Group shall meet not less
16 than once every 6 months and at the call of the
17 Chairperson or a majority of members.

18 **SEC. 6. DIRECTOR AND STAFF.**

19 (a) DIRECTOR.—The Working Group shall have a Di-
20 rector who shall be appointed by the Chairperson.

21 (b) STAFF.—The Director may appoint and fix the
22 pay of additional personnel as the Director considers ap-
23 propriate.

1 (c) DUTIES.—The duties of the Director and staff
2 shall be to achieve the goals and carry out the duties of
3 the Working Group.

4 **SEC. 7. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.**

5 (a) ANNUAL REPORT.—Not later than September 30,
6 2018, and annually thereafter, the Chairperson shall sub-
7 mit to the Congress a report describing the activities,
8 projects, and plans of the Federal Government to carry
9 out the goals of the Working Group, which shall include—

10 (1) an accounting of—

11 (A) any increase in efficiency in the deliv-
12 ery of Federal, State, local, and tribal social
13 services and benefits related to child welfare
14 and child poverty;

15 (B) any reduction in the number of chil-
16 dren living in poverty;

17 (C) any reduction in the demand for such
18 social services and benefits for which children
19 living in poverty and near poverty are eligible;
20 and

21 (D) any savings to the Federal Govern-
22 ment as a result of such increases or reduc-
23 tions;

1 (2) an accounting of any increase in the na-
2 tional rate of employment due to the efforts of the
3 Working Group;

4 (3) a summary of the efforts of each State to
5 reduce child poverty within such State, including the
6 administration of State programs funded under part
7 A of title IV of the Social Security Act (relating to
8 block grants to States for temporary assistance for
9 needy families); and

10 (4) legislative language and recommendations
11 regarding reducing child poverty and achieving the
12 other goals and duties of the Working Group.

13 (b) PUBLIC REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.—

14 (1) ANNUAL REPORT AVAILABLE TO PUBLIC.—
15 A version of the annual report required by sub-
16 section (a) shall be made publicly available.

17 (2) ANNUAL UPDATE FROM FEDERAL AGEN-
18 CIES.—The head of each relevant Federal agency
19 shall post on the public Internet Web site of such
20 agency an annual summary of any plans, activities,
21 and results of the agency related to the goals and
22 duties of the Working Group.

23 **SEC. 8. DEFINITIONS.**

24 In this Act:

1 (1) ANTI-POVERTY PROGRAM.—The term “anti-
2 poverty program” means a program or institution
3 with the primary goal of lifting children or families
4 out of poverty and improving economic opportunities
5 for children or families that operates in whole or in
6 part using Federal, State, local, or tribal govern-
7 ment funds.

8 (2) CHILD.—The term “child” means an indi-
9 vidual who has not attained the age of 18.

10 (3) DEPRIVATION.—The term “deprivation”
11 means, with respect to an individual, that such indi-
12 vidual lacks adequate nutrition, health care, housing,
13 or other resources to provide for basic human needs.

14 (4) DISCONNECTED YOUTH.—The term “dis-
15 connected youth” means individuals who have at-
16 tained the age of 16 but have not attained the age
17 of 25 who are unemployed and not enrolled in
18 school.

19 (5) ECONOMIC STABILITY.—The term “eco-
20 nomic stability” means, with respect to an individual
21 or family, that such individual or family has access
22 to the means and support necessary to effectively
23 cope with adverse or costly life events and to effec-
24 tively recover from the consequences of such events
25 while maintaining a decent standard of living.

1 (6) EXTREME POVERTY.—The term “extreme
2 poverty” means, with respect to an individual or
3 family, that such individual or family has a total an-
4 nual income that is less than the amount that is 50
5 percent of the official poverty threshold for such in-
6 dividual or family, as provided in the report of the
7 United States Census Bureau on Income, Poverty,
8 and Health Insurance Coverage in the United
9 States: 2015 (issued in September 2016).

10 (7) FEDERAL AGENCY.—The term “Federal
11 agency” means an Executive department, a Govern-
12 ment corporation, and an independent establish-
13 ment.

14 (8) NEAR POVERTY.—The term “near poverty”
15 means, with respect to an individual or family, that
16 such individual or family has a total annual income
17 that is less than the amount that is 200 percent of
18 the official poverty threshold for such individual or
19 family, as provided in the report of the United
20 States Census Bureau on Income, Poverty, and
21 Health Insurance Coverage in the United States:
22 2015 (issued in September 2016).

23 (9) POVERTY.—The term “poverty” means,
24 with respect to an individual or family, that such in-
25 dividual or family has a total annual income that is

1 less than the amount that is the official poverty
2 threshold for such individual or family, as provided
3 in the report of the United States Census Bureau on
4 Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in
5 the United States: 2015 (issued in September 2016).

