

115TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 1630

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 SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JULY 25, 2017

Mr. CASEY (for himself, Ms. BALDWIN, and Mr. BROWN) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

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 “CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
11 SERVICES PROGRAMS” under the heading “ADMINIS-
12 TRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES” under title
13 II of division H of the Consolidated Appropriations
14 Act, 2016 (Public Law 114–113) and of the Consoli-
15 dated Appropriations Act, 2017 (Public Law 115–
16 31).

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

21 (b) ADDITIONAL GOALS.—The national plan under
22 subsection (a) shall include recommendations for achieving
23 the following goals:

24 (1) Understanding the root causes of child pov-
25 erty, including persistent intergenerational poverty,

1 taking into account social, economic, and cultural
2 factors.

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

8 (3) Eliminating disparate rates of child poverty
9 based on race, ethnicity, gender, age, English lan-
10 guage proficiency, ability, and geographic location in
11 a rural, urban, or suburban area.

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

16 (5) Connecting low-income children, discon-
17 nected youth, and families of those children and
18 youth to education, job training, work, and the re-
19 spective communities in which those children and
20 youth live in.

21 (6) Shifting the measures and policies of Fed-
22 eral anti-poverty programs from the goal of helping
23 individuals and families living in poverty to achieve
24 freedom from deprivation toward the goal of helping

1 individuals and families rise above poverty and
2 achieve long-term economic stability.

3 (c) METHODS.—In developing the national plan
4 under subsection (a), the Working Group shall employ
5 methods for achieving the goals described in subsections
6 (a) and (b), including—

7 (1) studying the effect that child poverty has on
8 the health and welfare of children, including access
9 to health care, housing, proper nutrition, and edu-
10 cation;

11 (2) measuring the effect of child poverty on the
12 ability of individuals to achieve economic stability,
13 including such effect on educational attainment,
14 rates of incarceration, lifetime earnings, access to
15 healthcare, and access to housing;

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

21 (4) using and applying fact-based measures to
22 evaluate the long-term effectiveness of anti-poverty
23 programs, taking into account the long-term savings
24 and value to the Federal Government and to State,

1 local, and tribal governments of practices and poli-
2 cies designed to prevent poverty.

3 **SEC. 4. OTHER DUTIES.**

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

6 (1) monitor, in consultation with the Domestic
7 Policy Council and the National Economic Council,
8 all Federal activities, programs, and services related
9 to child welfare and child poverty;

10 (2) establish guidelines, policies, goals, and di-
11 rectives related to the achievement of the goals of
12 the national plan, in consultation with—

13 (A) nongovernmental entities providing so-
14 cial services to low-income children and fami-
15 lies;

16 (B) advocacy groups that directly rep-
17 resent low-income children and families;

18 (C) policy experts; and

19 (D) officials of State, local, and tribal gov-
20 ernments, including the working groups of the
21 largest associations of State and local govern-
22 ment officials, who administer or direct policy
23 for anti-poverty programs;

24 (3) advise all relevant Federal agencies regard-
25 ing methods of effectively administering and coordi-

1 nating programs, activities, and services related to
2 child welfare and child poverty, and resolving any
3 disputes that arise between or among those Federal
4 agencies as a result of such administration or co-
5 ordination;

6 (4) provide recommendations to the Congress
7 regarding how to ensure that Federal agencies ad-
8 ministering programs, activities, and services related
9 to child welfare and child poverty have adequate re-
10 sources to increase public awareness of such pro-
11 grams, activities, and services, and how to maximize
12 enrollment of eligible individuals;

13 (5) identify methods for improving communica-
14 tion and collaboration among and between Federal,
15 State, and local governmental entities regarding the
16 implementation of State and local programs related
17 to child welfare and child poverty, such as State pro-
18 grams funded under part A of title IV of the Social
19 Security Act (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.) (relating to
20 block grants to States for temporary assistance for
21 needy families), and submit recommendations re-
22 garding such methods to relevant Federal agencies
23 and congressional committees; and

24 (6) hold hearings in different geographic re-
25 gions of the United States to collect information and

1 feedback from the public regarding personal experi-
 2 ences related to child poverty and anti-poverty pro-
 3 grams, and make that information and feedback
 4 publicly available.

5 **SEC. 5. MEMBERSHIP.**

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

8 (b) EXECUTIVE PAY RATE.—Each member shall be
 9 an official of an executive department who occupies a posi-
 10 tion for which the rate of pay is equal to or greater than
 11 the rate of pay for level IV of the Executive Schedule
 12 under section 5313 of title 5, United States Code.

13 (c) REQUIRED PARTICIPATION OF CERTAIN EXECU-
 14 TIVE DEPARTMENTS.—The Working Group shall include
 15 at least one member who is an official of each of the fol-
 16 lowing executive departments:

17 (1) The Department of Justice.

18 (2) The Department of Agriculture.

19 (3) The Department of Labor.

20 (4) The Department of Health and Human
 21 Services.

22 (5) The Department of Housing and Urban De-
 23 velopment.

24 (6) The Department of Education.

1 (d) APPOINTMENT.—Each member shall be ap-
 2 pointed by the head of the executive department that em-
 3 ploys such member.

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

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

10 (g) VACANCIES.—A vacancy in the Commission shall
 11 be filled in the manner in which the original appointment
 12 was made.

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

15 (i) CHAIRPERSON.—The Chairperson of the Working
 16 Group shall be appointed by the Secretary of Health and
 17 Human Services.

18 (j) MEETINGS.—

19 (1) INITIAL MEETING PERIOD.—The Working
 20 Group shall meet on a monthly basis during the
 21 180-day period beginning with the date on which
 22 funds are made available to carry out this Act.

23 (2) SUBSEQUENT MEETINGS.—After such 180-
 24 day period, the Working Group shall meet not less

1 than once every 6 months and at the call of the
2 Chairperson or a majority of members.

3 **SEC. 6. DIRECTOR AND STAFF.**

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

6 (b) STAFF.—The Director may appoint and fix the
7 pay of additional personnel as the Director considers ap-
8 propriate.

9 (c) DUTIES.—The duties of the Director and staff
10 shall be to achieve the goals and carry out the duties of
11 the Working Group.

12 **SEC. 7. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.**

13 (a) ANNUAL REPORT.—Not later than September 30,
14 2018, and annually thereafter, the Chairperson shall sub-
15 mit to the Congress a report describing the activities,
16 projects, and plans of the Federal Government to carry
17 out the goals of the Working Group, including—

18 (1) an accounting of—

19 (A) any increase in efficiency in the deliv-
20 ery of Federal, State, local, and tribal social
21 services and benefits related to child welfare
22 and child poverty;

23 (B) any reduction in the number of chil-
24 dren living in poverty;

1 (C) any reduction in the demand for such
 2 social services and benefits for which children
 3 living in poverty and near poverty are eligible;
 4 and

5 (D) any savings to the Federal Govern-
 6 ment as a result of such increases or reduc-
 7 tions;

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

11 (3) a summary of the efforts of each State to
 12 reduce child poverty within such State, including the
 13 administration of State programs funded under part
 14 A of title IV of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C.
 15 601 et seq.) (relating to block grants to States for
 16 temporary assistance for needy families); and

17 (4) legislative language and recommendations
 18 regarding reducing child poverty and achieving the
 19 other goals and duties of the Working Group.

20 (b) PUBLIC REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.—

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

24 (2) ANNUAL UPDATE FROM FEDERAL AGEN-
 25 CIES.—The head of each relevant Federal agency

1 shall post on the public Internet Web site of such
2 agency an annual summary of any plans, activities,
3 and results of the agency related to the goals and
4 duties of the Working Group.

5 **SEC. 8. DEFINITIONS.**

6 In this Act:

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

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

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

20 (4) DISCONNECTED YOUTH.—The term “dis-
21 connected youth” means individuals who have at-
22 tained the age of 16 but have not attained the age
23 of 25 who are unemployed and not enrolled in
24 school.

1 (5) ECONOMIC STABILITY.—The term “eco-
2 nomic stability” means, with respect to an individual
3 or family, that such individual or family has access
4 to the means and support necessary to effectively
5 cope with adverse or costly life events and to effec-
6 tively recover from the consequences of such events
7 while maintaining a decent standard of living.

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

17 (7) FEDERAL AGENCY.—The term “Federal
18 agency” means an executive department, a Govern-
19 ment corporation, and an independent establish-
20 ment.

21 (8) NEAR POVERTY.—The term “near poverty”
22 means, with respect to an individual or family, that
23 such individual or family has a total annual income
24 that is less than the amount that is 200 percent of
25 the official poverty threshold for such individual or

1 family, as provided in the report of the United
2 States Census Bureau on Income, Poverty, and
3 Health Insurance Coverage in the United States:
4 2015 (issued in September 2016).

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

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