SPONSOR: Sen. Gay & Sen. Pettyjohn
Sen. Richardson

DELAWARE STATE SENATE
151st GENERAL ASSEMBLY

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 34

DIRECTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES TO PREPARE REPORTS ON THE PURCHASE OF CARE PROGRAM AND DIRECTING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO PREPARE REPORTS ON CHILD CARE CAPACITY.

WHEREAS, the Purchase of Care (POC) Program in Delaware is a subsidy that provides support for early childhood and after-school education for children from birth through age 12 living within 185% of the Federal Poverty Limit; and

WHEREAS, funding for POC comes from federal and state sources, which help low-income families pay for their child care so that parents or guardians can work or receive workforce training; and

WHEREAS, the Delaware Division of Social Services (DSS) is responsible for setting the standards and distributing this benefit to Delawareans; and

WHEREAS, having accurate data is integral to determining appropriate funding for the POC program as well as assisting in formulating policy to smartly build and expand the program.

NOW, THEREFORE:

BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the 151st General Assembly of the State of Delaware that the Secretary of the Department of Health and Social Services is directed to provide quarterly reports on Purchase of Care enrollment, spending, and unused spending. These reports shall be submitted on or before September 15, 2022; December 15, 2022; March 15, 2023; and June 15, 2023. The reports shall detail the number of individual children attending child care utilizing Purchase of Care each month in Fiscal Years 2022 and 2023, and also shall total the number of unduplicated children served over the year aggregating all months and removing duplicate counts, in addition to the monthly totals. The report must include the following information:

1. The number of active participants broken down by age, by county, and by provider type which includes center, family, large family, or school program. The report shall specify participants who have been determined eligible separately from those who are enrolled in a child care program and being covered by Purchase of Care.

2. The demographics of the children and their families served in the same period by the POC program, including race, individuals receiving the special needs rate, household income range, and whether the child or family is homeless or the child is in foster care.

3. A summary of trends by age group across Fiscal Years 2018 through 2022, including increases or decreases in the number of children by age served.

4. The number of families receiving POC that become ineligible as the result of increased household income.

5. A report from Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) on families' ability to access care in the same period and any specific needs of families that are not being met by POC, including areas that have been identified as shortages, such as infant and toddler care, dual language learner care, and off-hours care.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the reports shall detail the total spent on POC in Fiscal Years 2022 and 2023 and what portion of the funds came from State, federal, or one-time sources. The report must include the following information:

1. The anticipated spending, per month, through the end of FY23, with details on allocation to:

a. Rates.

b. Parent co-pays.

c. Absence days.

d. Other expenditures.

2. The anticipated funds to be remaining or unspent in the FY23 budget year.

3. The additional per month cost to increase:

a. Reinstating eligibility for families to 200% of Federal Poverty Level and/or connecting eligibility with SNAP eligibility, as Head Start and ECAP have done.

b. Kent and Sussex provider rates to the level of New Castle County.

c. All provider rates to 100%, or closer to 100%, of the 75th percentile of the 2021 market rate.

d. All provider rates to the basic cost of care according to the Department of Social Services Cost Estimation Model report, issued March 1, 2022.

4. The Department's analysis of opportunities to enhance the POC program to benefit children and their families.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Health and Social Services shall begin data collection for the new alternative methodology for rate setting, known as "cost estimation modeling," by January 31, 2023. Progress on data collected and a summary of data from these efforts shall be included in the March and June quarterly reports.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Office of Child Care Licensing shall collect updated total licensed capacity data, including children covered by private pay, Purchase of Care, ECAP, and other sources, and children receiving the special needs rate, as part of their annual licensing visit. Data collected to date and progress made to update systems of data collection shall be submitted in a report by January 1, 2023.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that any report discussed herein must be submitted to the Controller General, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, the Co-Chairs of the Joint Finance Committee, and the Delaware Early Childhood Council.

SYNOPSIS

This resolution directs the Department of Health and Social Services to prepare reports on the Purchase of Care Program and directs the Department of Education to prepare reports on child care capacity.

Author: Senator Gay