87R6673 MLH-D

By:  Johnson of Dallas H.B. No. 1761

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the creation of the child care accessibility and affordability task force.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1.  (a) In this section, "task force" means the child care accessibility and affordability task force established under this section.

(b)  The task force is established to study the accessibility and affordability of child care in this state.

(c)  The task force is composed of the following 11 members:

(1)  the executive commissioner of the Health and Human Services Commission, or the executive commissioner's designee approved by the governor; and

(2)  10 members appointed by the executive commissioner of the Health and Human Services Commission as follows:

(A)  two child development professionals who are licensed to practice in this state, one of whom must specialize in early childhood education;

(B)  one representative of a state employee organization described by Section 403.0165, Government Code;

(C)  one representative of an organization representing the interests of licensed child-care facilities;

(D)  one social worker licensed to practice in this state;

(E)  one community advocate for child care workers;

(F)  one representative of the business community in this state;

(G)  one representative of or director from a private child care facility;

(H)  one home-based child care provider; and

(I)  one state employee who is a parent of not less than one school-aged child.

(d)  A task force member is not entitled to compensation for service on the task force but is entitled to reimbursement for actual and necessary expenses incurred in performing task force duties. The task force may accept gifts, grants, and donations to pay for those expenses.

(e)  The executive commissioner of the Health and Human Services Commission shall appoint a chair and vice chair of the task force.

(f)  The task force shall meet at least quarterly at the call of the chair and may meet at other times at the call of the chair. The chair shall set the agenda for each meeting.

(g)  Notwithstanding Chapter 551, Government Code, or any other law, the task force may meet by telephone conference call, videoconference, or other similar telecommunication method. A meeting held by telephone conference call, videoconference, or other similar telecommunication method is subject to the requirements of Sections 551.125(c), (d), (e), and (f), Government Code.

(h)  The task force shall:

(1)  conduct a cost-benefit analysis of the accessibility and affordability of child care in this state;

(2)  develop recommendations to incentivize employer-supported child care;

(3)  create a cost-estimate model to project the cost of providing safe, accessible, and affordable child care to anyone in this state who needs to use child care;

(4)  identify regions of the state in which child care is less accessible than in the state at large, and shall develop recommendations for improving the availability of child care in those regions, including:

(A)  proposing policies that will address racial, ethnic, and any geographic disparity and proportionality in the delivery of child care services; and

(B)  identifying opportunities to streamline the child care licensing requirements and to facilitate development and construction of additional child care facilities; and

(5)  conduct a survey of state employees to better understand the barriers to accessing and affording child care.

(i)  The task force shall submit a written report to the governor, the lieutenant governor, the speaker of the house of representatives, and each member of the legislature not later than December 31, 2022, detailing the findings of the task force. The report must include:

(1)  a summary of the accessibility and affordability of child care to state employees, as determined by the survey in Subsection (h)(5) of this section; and

(2)  a plan to provide accessible and affordable child care to all families in this state by the year 2030.

(j)  The task force is abolished and this Act expires June 1, 2023.

SECTION 2.  This Act takes effect immediately if it receives a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this Act takes effect September 1, 2021.