



State of Connecticut
GENERAL ASSEMBLY



Commission on Children

Legislation for Children and Youth

An Update on the Work of the 2008 Connecticut General Assembly

Prepared by Commission on Children Legislative Director Elizabeth C. Brown

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Early Childhood

- **SB 303, An Act Creating a Comprehensive System for Children and Families From Birth to Age Five:** Would have established an inter-agency group to develop a model “master contract” for the integrated delivery of early childhood services by state agencies. **No final action taken.**
- **SB 340, An Act Establishing and Early Childhood Integrated System of Care:** Sought to replicate in two regions a model for early intervention and home visitation for high-risk families and children. **Passed the Senate, No action taken in the House.**
- **HB 5134, An Act Concerning the Early Childhood Education Cabinet:** Would have expanded membership to include the Comptroller, Mental Health and Addiction Services, the Office of Workforce Competitiveness, the Children’s Trust Fund, the Child Advocate, the Connecticut Health and Education Facilities Authority, two persons representing parent organizations, one representative of the Academy of Pediatrics, and a representative of the Torrington Child Care Collaborative. **No final action.**
- **HB 5592, An Act Concerning Early Childhood Education:** Would have permitted the issuance of temporary 90-day certificates to applicants in the certification endorsement area of early childhood education. **No final action.**
- **Public Act 08-100, An Act Concerning the Expansion of the Care 4 Kids Program:** Expands the eligibility periods of parents receiving child care subsidies under the Department of Social Services' (DSS) Care 4 Kids program. Parents may remain in the program during temporary interruptions in employment or approved education, training, or other job-preparation activities. **Signed by the governor on May 27.**
- **Budget line for Department of Social Services (DSS) child-care center rate increases:** Would have allocated \$950,000 to provide for a 3 percent increase for state-funded child care centers to achieve parity with payments to the School Readiness pre-

kindergarten program in the State Department of Education. **No action taken. The rate remains \$8,025.**

Child Poverty Reduction

- **Public Act 08-161, An Act Concerning Family Prosperity and the Recommendation of the Child Poverty and Prevention Council:** Requires the Department of Social Services (DSS) to establish a Food Stamp Employment and Training grant program for providers who serve food stamp recipients. The program provides a 50-50 match for expenditures related to employment and other related services. The Act calls for local/regional collaboratives to develop priorities for reducing child poverty and aligns the FSET dollars with the goals of the Child Poverty Council. Providers will receive 75 percent of the matching dollars and the collaboratives will receive 25 percent of the matching dollars to implement priorities. Connecticut is the first state in the country to link the FSET program with a goal of reducing child poverty. **Signed into law by the governor on June 12.**
- **SB 666, An Act Concerning Child Poverty:** Would have implemented the recommendations of an expert panel assembled by the Child Poverty and Prevention Council. The panel, ask to identify ways to reduce child poverty, called for grants concerning fatherhood, urban male youths, adolescent pregnancy, and first-time parents on Temporary Assistance for Families who need better job readiness and employment skills. **No action taken.**
- **HB 5907, An Act Concerning the Temporary Family Assistance Program:** Would have directed the Department of Social Services to extend a certain portion of cash assistance for families who have reached time limits. **No final action taken.**
- **HB 5102, An Act Providing Equal Payments Per Child for Relative Caregivers Receiving Child Only Benefits Under the Temporary Family Assistance (TFA) Program:** Would have raised the benefit for relative caregivers in the TFA program. **No final action taken.**
- **SB. 304, An Act Concerning Children of Incarcerated Parents:** Would have established a position in the Department of Correction to ensure family connection during incarceration and provide for grants to local communities to serve the needs of children of incarcerated parents. **No final action taken.**
- **HB 5105, An Act Concerning the Minimum Wage:** Would have raised the minimum wage from \$7.65 per hour to \$8 per hour on January 1, 2009, and to \$8.25 per hour in 2010. **Vetoed by the governor.**
- **Public Act 08-176, An Act Concerning Responsible Lending and Economic Security:** Authorizes the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority (CHFA) to (1) continue the CT FAMILIES refinancing program and (2) implement mortgage refinancing and emergency mortgage assistance programs. It allows CHFA to develop and implement a

program for it to purchase foreclosed Connecticut property and turn the property into supportive and affordable housing. The act requires the WorkPlace, Inc., in conjunction with the other regional workforce development boards and one-stop centers, to establish a mortgage crisis job training program. **Signed by the governor on June 12.**

Education

- **SB 50, An Act Concerning the Assessment of the Teaching of Reading:** Would have required the State Department of Education to institute a reading assessment test to ensure teachers have the skills and knowledge to teach reading. **No final action taken, but the State Board of Education has added a test on reading pedagogy that all early childhood and elementary school teacher candidates must pass before obtaining teaching licenses.**
- **Public Act 08-160, An Act Concerning School Learning Environment:** Will strengthen state law on school bullying by requiring schools to develop and implement a bullying prevention strategy, investigate all written reports of bullying, and submit their bullying policy to the State Department of Education for review and analysis. It also directs the State Department of Education, within available appropriations, to document schools' needs for technical assistance and training related to bullying. Further, it adds bullying prevention as a required in-service training topic for teachers and encourages teacher candidates to complete a bullying and suicide prevention component. **Signed by the governor on June 12.**
- **Special Act 08-5, An Act Concerning Special Education and Instructional Methods Concerning Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities:** Requires the departments of Education and Higher Education to develop specific training and curriculum for teaching children with autism. **Signed by the governor on June 5.**
- **HB 5593, An Act Concerning Early Reading Success Grants:** Would have bolstered the accountability of priority school districts that receive Early Reading Success grants. **No final action taken.**
- **SB 339, An Act Concerning Child Nutrition Programs:** Would have increased mandatory participation in the federally funded childhood nutrition programs to school districts with 40 percent or more students receiving free and reduced price lunch. **No final action taken.**
- **HB 5870, An Act Concerning Minor Changes to the Education Statutes:** Would have included in education statutes a requirement performance of a survey on school family partnerships to help improve school performance and increase student achievement. **No final action taken.**
- **Public Act 08-170: An Act Concerning Various Education Grants and Changes to the Statutes Concerning Magnate Schools, Vocational Agricultural Centers and the Certification of Bilingual Education Teachers. (SB 404, An Act Concerning the**

Minimum Budget Requirement, the Carryover of Education Cost Sharing Accountability Funds and the Repeal of an Obsolete Public Act Section is included in this bill)

Includes changes to the School Readiness grant: 1) changes the formula for the distribution of school readiness grant funding by utilizing actual program capacity rather than kindergarten enrollment and free and reduced price lunch data. This change will give competitive school districts access to up to 2% of unspent allocations in the priority school districts that would otherwise lapse. It is not expected to impact school readiness slot distribution. 2) increases the per-child allowance for school readiness to \$8,346 or 4% increase.

Includes Sheff v. O'Neil Implementation: 1) allows \$9.9 million provided in FY 09 for the Sheff settlement to be expended on implementation of the settlement; 2) allows for direct enrollment of magnet school students from any district without participation agreements. **Signed by the governor on June 12.**

- **HB 5132, An Act Concerning the Family Support Council:** Would have provided \$75,000 to the Family Support Council in the Department of Developmental Disabilities. **No final action taken.**
- **Public Act 08-63: HB 5666, An Act Concerning Expansion of the Pilot Program for Persons with Autism Spectrum Disorders:** expands pilot that provides services for adults with autism spectrum disorders to two additional counties in Connecticut. **Passed**
- **Public Act 08-132: HB 5696, An Act Requiring Insurance Coverage for Autism Spectrum Disorder Therapies-** requires private and public insurance programs to provide early intervention services for children with autism including physical and speech therapy. **Signed by the governor on May 12.**
- **Public Act 08-68, An Act Replacing Expedited Eligibility for Pregnant Women with Presumptive Eligibility Under the Social Security Act and the Treatment of Tax Refunds Under the Economic Stimulus Act.**
- **Public Act 08-163: An Act Concerning Establishing an Adult Literacy Board. The bill establishes an Adult Literacy Board as part of the state Commission on Employment and Training administered by the Office of Workforce Competitiveness. It is charged with developing a three year plan strategic plan for an adult literacy system by July 1, 2009.**

Youth and Juvenile Justice

- **Public Act 08-3: An Act Concerning Youth Policy and Continuation of the Youth Futures Committee Function.** Continues the work of the Youth Futures Committee to coordinate and promote positive youth development in Connecticut's youth. **Passed**

- **Public Act 08-32: HB 5748, An Act Concerning Teen Drivers-** to strengthen the requirements for the issuance of a motor vehicle operator's license for persons under the age of eighteen, and to impose public safety restrictions on the operation of a motor vehicle by such persons. Imposes an 11 pm curfew for drivers under 18 years of age; automatic suspension of license for motor violations; parents will have to complete 2 hours of driver education classes. **Passed**
- **Public Act 08-36: HB 5926, An Act Concerning Families with Service Needs, Certificates of Birth Resulting in Stillbirth, Reentry and Diversionary Services for Youth, and Drug Courts for Youth.- Passed**
Implements the recommendations from the Family with Service Needs Task Force: makes minor revisions to the FWSN statutes; establish pilot programs and provide funding in accordance with the recommendations of the board; permit a parent to request from the Department of Public Health a certificate of birth resulting in stillbirth; establishes a community based pilot program to provide additional reentry and diversionary services for youth and calls for a study of the feasibility of establishing a separate drug court for offenders under the age of 18 years old.
- **SB 337, An Act Concerning Juvenile Justice-** to implement the changes to Raise the Age legislation, changing the jurisdiction of 16 and 17 year olds to the Juvenile Court, away from the Adult Court, exclusive of traffic violations. **No final action taken.**
- Youth Violence and Summer Employment: **Current FY 2009 budget allocated \$1 million for urban violence reduction and \$5 million for summer youth employment.**

Health

- **HB 5498, An Act Concerning a Catastrophic Illness in Children Relief Program**
Establishes a Catastrophic Illness in Children Relief Fund to provide grants to families for debt relief for extraordinary expenses related to a child's illness that exceed 10 to 15% of a family's income. **No final action taken.**
- **Public Act 08-106: HB 5650, HB 5025 An Act Concerning Child Product Safety**
Establishes lead safety standards for consumer products sold to children. **Passed**
1) **Bans child products for children under 12 years of age with greater than 300 parts per million total lead content by weight for any part of the product;** and on and after July 1, 2011, a total lead content of 100 parts per million total content of lead by weight. 2) **Directs** the Department of Consumer Protection who administers the State Child Protection Act to post a list of toys and other articles intended for use by children that are banned hazardous substances and provide a list of safer alternative substances; 3) **increased record keeping on toy recalls** and have to document how recalled products were disposed of. 4) **Warning labels-**The bill also requires the DCP in consultation with the Commissioner of the Department of Public Health to adopt regulations identifying consumer products with which a child may reasonably or

foreseeably come into contact with and manufacturers will have to put a warning label on the product.

- **HB 5490, An Act Concerning Health Data:** Would have allowed the use of existing student health data to monitor the growing children's health problems of diabetes, overweight and blood pressure. **Died in committee.**
- **HB 5536, An Act Establishing the Connecticut Healthcare Partnership:** Allows municipalities, small business and non-profits to become members of the State Employee Insurance Pool. **Vetoed by the governor.**
- **SB 415, An Act Concerning Appropriations for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and Grants for the Emergency and Community Food Sites:** Would have provided funding for the two food banks, Food Share and Connecticut Food Bank, to buy high-protein food to distribute to the emergency food sites. **No final action taken.**
- **HB 5618, An Act Concerning Revisions to the HUSKY Plan.** Would have decoupled the management of the Charter Oak Health Plan with the state HUSKY A and B health insurance for children, extended the current HUSKY A and B contracts until July 2009, and required the Department of Social Services to report to the legislature on the cost and of delivering the services—fee for service, managed care; primary case management or a non-risk based management system. **No final action taken. The new contracts with managed-care organizations will take effect on July 1, 2008.**
- **Public Act 08-68, An Act Replacing Expedited Eligibility for Pregnant Women with Presumptive Eligibility Under the Social Security Act.** Will expedite pregnant women's access to health care while waiting for approval of Medicaid coverage. **Signed by the governor on May 27.**

Family Support

- **Public Act 08-97, An Act Concerning Support for Grandparents and Other Relative Caregivers.** Expands eligibility for persons who can apply to the Kinship Fund or the Grandparents and Relative Respite Fund to include guardians appointed through the Superior Court as well as the current Probate Court process. **Signed by the governor on May 27.**
- **SB 678, An Act Establishing A Community-based Health and Human Services Strategy Board:** Would have created a cabinet charged with developing a long-range funding mechanism for nonprofits and submitting recommendations to the legislature by February 2009. **Vetoed by the governor.**