AN ACT CONCERNING ACCESS TO LEGAL COUNSEL FOR INDIGENT CHILDREN IN IMMIGRATION REMOVAL PROCEEDINGS.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

Section 1. (NEW) (Effective July 1, 2019) (a) As used in this section:

(1) "Eligible respondent" means an individual who (1) is the subject of a removal proceeding at the Connecticut Executive Office for Immigration Review, and (2) at the time such proceeding commenced is or was (A) an accompanied minor, or (B) under the age of eighteen with no lawful immigration status in the United States and in the custody of the federal Department of Health and Human Services; and

(2) "Unaccompanied minor" has the same meaning as "unaccompanied alien child" as defined in 6 USC 279(g).

(b) The Judicial Branch shall establish and administer, within available appropriations, a legal aid program that shall provide grants to federally tax-exempt charitable organizations to provide legal counsel to an eligible respondent. Such grants shall be used to provide legal counsel to an eligible respondent for the following purposes: (1) Representation in proceedings related to a removal proceeding taking place at the Connecticut Executive Office for Immigration Review; (2) family reunification or placement with a sponsor, if the eligible respondent is detained by federal officials; or (3) applying for temporary or permanent status.

(c) For the fiscal year commencing on July 1, 2019, and each
succeeding fiscal year thereafter, the Office of the Attorney General, utilizing transfer invoices, shall remit eight hundred thousand dollars to the Judicial Branch from moneys received by the Office of the Attorney General in connection with the settlement of any lawsuit to which the state is a party. Moneys remitted to the Judicial Branch shall be used for the provision of legal counsel to eligible respondents, as provided in subsection (b) of this section.

(d) Not later than December 31, 2020, and annually thereafter, the Judicial Branch shall submit, in accordance with section 11-4a of the general statutes, a report concerning the grants made in the previous fiscal year under the program established pursuant to subsection (b) of this section to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to the judiciary. The report shall include, for each recipient of a grant: (1) The amount of money received under the program, (2) the number of eligible respondents for whom the recipient provided legal counsel, (3) the number of cases opened, (4) the number of cases disposed of, (5) the number of family reunifications or placements with a sponsor that were assisted by the program, and (6) the number of eligible respondents that achieved temporary and permanent status with assistance from the program.

Sec. 2. (Effective from passage) (a) There is established a task force to study (1) the unmet legal needs of indigent state residents subject to a removal proceeding at the Connecticut Executive Office for Immigration Review, and (2) the mechanisms available in the state to deliver and pay for legal representation for such indigent state residents.

(b) The task force shall consist of the following members:

(1) The chairpersons of the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to the judiciary, or their designees;

(2) The Chief Public Defender, or the Chief Public Defender's
designee;

(3) The executive director of Connecticut Legal Services, or the executive director's designee;

(4) The executive director of Greater Hartford Legal Aid, or the executive director's designee; and

(5) The executive director of the New Haven Legal Assistance Association, or the executive director's designee.

(c) Any member of the task force appointed under subdivision (1) of subsection (b) of this section may be a member of the General Assembly.

(d) All appointments to the task force shall be made not later than thirty days after the effective date of this section. Any vacancy shall be filled by the appointing authority.

(e) The chairpersons of the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to the judiciary, or their designees, shall select the chairpersons of the task force from among the members of the task force. Such chairpersons shall schedule the first meeting of the task force, which shall be held not later than sixty days after the effective date of this section.

(f) The administrative staff of the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to the judiciary shall serve as administrative staff of the task force.

(g) Not later than December 31, 2020, the task force shall submit a report on its findings and recommendations to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to the judiciary, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes. The task force shall terminate on the date that it submits such report or December 31, 2020, whichever is later.
This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:

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<tr>
<td>Section 1</td>
<td>July 1, 2019</td>
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<td>Sec. 2</td>
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