

114TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 2224

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

OCTOBER 29, 2015

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 2015”.

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1 **TITLE I—FEDERAL INTER-**
 2 **AGENCY WORKING GROUP ON**
 3 **REDUCING CHILD POVERTY**

4 **SEC. 101. ESTABLISHMENT OF WORKING GROUP.**

5 There is established in the Administration for Chil-
 6 dren and Families of the Department of Health and
 7 Human Services a group which shall be known as the Fed-
 8 eral Interagency Working Group on Reducing Child Pov-
 9 erty (in this Act referred to as the “Working Group”).

10 **SEC. 102. NATIONAL PLAN TO REDUCE CHILD POVERTY.**

11 (a) PRIMARY GOAL.—

12 (1) DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL PLAN.—The
 13 primary goal of the Working Group is to develop a
 14 national plan—

1 (A) to reduce, within 10 years after the
2 date on which funding is made available to
3 carry out this Act—

4 (i) the number of children living in
5 poverty in the United States to half of the
6 number of such children as reported in the
7 report of the United States Census Bureau
8 on Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance
9 Coverage in the United States: 2014
10 (issued in September 2015); and

11 (ii) the number of children living in
12 extreme poverty in the United States to
13 zero; and

14 (B) to reduce, within 20 years after the
15 date on which funds are made available to carry
16 out this Act, the number of children living in
17 poverty in the United States to zero.

18 (2) CONSULTATION WITH NATIONAL ACADEMY
19 OF SCIENCES.—In developing the national plan
20 under paragraph (1), the Working Group shall con-
21 sider all recommendations, research papers, and re-
22 ports published by the National Academy of Sciences
23 as a result of the workshops conducted pursuant to
24 title II.

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

5 (b) ADDITIONAL GOALS.—The national plan under
6 subsection (a) shall include recommendations for achieving
7 the following goals:

8 (1) Understanding the root causes of child pov-
9 erty, including persistent intergenerational poverty,
10 taking into account social, economic, and cultural
11 factors.

12 (2) Improving the accessibility of anti-poverty
13 programs and increasing the rate of enrollment in
14 such programs among eligible children and families
15 by reducing the complexity and difficulty of enrolling
16 in such programs.

17 (3) Eliminating disparate rates of child poverty
18 based on race, ethnicity, gender, and age.

19 (4) Improving the ability of individuals living in
20 poverty, low-income individuals, and unemployed in-
21 dividuals to access quality jobs that help children
22 and their families rise above poverty.

23 (5) Connecting low-income children, discon-
24 nected youth, and their families to education, job
25 training, work, and their communities.

1 (6) Shifting the measures and policies of Fed-
2 eral anti-poverty programs from the goal of helping
3 individuals and families living in poverty to achieve
4 freedom from deprivation toward the goal of helping
5 such individuals and families rise above poverty and
6 achieve long-term economic stability.

7 (c) METHODS.—In developing the national plan
8 under subsection (a), the Working Group shall employ
9 methods for achieving the goals described in subsections
10 (a) and (b) that include—

11 (1) entering into an agreement with the Na-
12 tional Academy of Sciences for a workshop series on
13 the economic and social costs of child poverty, as de-
14 scribed in title II;

15 (2) studying the effect of child poverty on the
16 health and welfare of children, including the access
17 of children living in poverty to health care, housing,
18 proper nutrition, and education;

19 (3) measuring the effect of child poverty on the
20 ability of individuals to achieve economic stability,
21 including such effect on educational attainment,
22 rates of incarceration, lifetime earnings, access to
23 healthcare, and access to housing;

24 (4) updating and applying improved measures
25 of poverty that can meaningfully account for other

1 aspects relating to the measure of poverty, such as
2 the Supplemental Poverty Measure used by the
3 United States Census Bureau; and

4 (5) using and applying fact-based measures to
5 evaluate the long-term effectiveness of anti-poverty
6 programs, taking into account the long-term savings
7 and value to the Federal Government and to State,
8 local, and tribal governments of practices and poli-
9 cies designed to prevent poverty.

10 **SEC. 103. OTHER DUTIES.**

11 In addition to developing the national plan under sec-
12 tion 102(a), the Working Group shall—

13 (1) monitor, in consultation with the Domestic
14 Policy Council and the National Economic Council,
15 all Federal activities, programs, and services related
16 to child welfare and child poverty;

17 (2) establish guidelines, policies, goals, and di-
18 rectives related to the achievement of the goals of
19 the national plan, in consultation with nongovern-
20 mental entities providing social services to low-in-
21 come children and families, advocacy groups that di-
22 rectly represent low-income children and families,
23 policy experts, and officials of State, local, and tribal
24 governments who administer or direct policy for
25 anti-poverty programs;

1 (3) advise all relevant Federal agencies regard-
2 ing how to effectively administer and coordinate pro-
3 grams, activities, and services related to child wel-
4 fare and child poverty and how to resolve any dis-
5 putes that arise between or among such agencies as
6 a result of such administration or coordination;

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

14 (5) identify methods for improving communica-
15 tion and collaboration among and between State and
16 Federal governmental entities regarding the imple-
17 mentation of State programs related to child welfare
18 and child poverty, such as State programs funded
19 under part A of title IV of the Social Security Act
20 (relating to block grants to States for temporary as-
21 sistance for needy families), and submit rec-
22 ommendations regarding such methods to relevant
23 Federal agencies 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 such information and feedback
4 publicly available.

5 **SEC. 104. 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 po-
10 sition 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. 105. 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. 106. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.**

13 (a) ANNUAL REPORT.—Not later than September 30,
14 2017, 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, which shall include—

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 (relating to
15 block grants to States for temporary assistance for
16 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 **TITLE II—WORKSHOPS BY NA-**
6 **TIONAL ACADEMY OF**
7 **SCIENCES**

8 **SEC. 201. REQUIREMENT TO ENTER INTO AGREEMENT**
9 **WITH NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES.**

10 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after the
11 date on which funds are made available to carry out this
12 Act, the Secretary of Health and Human Services shall
13 enter into an agreement with the National Academy of
14 Sciences for 2 public workshops to provide the Working
15 Group with information to assist in the development of
16 the national plan under section 102(a).

17 (b) STEERING COMMITTEE.—The agreement under
18 subsection (a) shall include the creation of a steering com-
19 mittee to plan and conduct such workshops.

20 (c) EXPERTS.—The agreement under subsection (a)
21 shall include the commission of experts to prepare re-
22 search papers that summarize and critique literature on
23 the economic and social costs of child poverty.

1 **SEC. 202. WORKSHOP TOPICS.**

2 The purpose of the workshops required by section
3 201(a) shall be to collect information and input from the
4 public on the economic and social costs of child poverty,
5 addressing topics that include—

6 (1) the macroeconomic costs of child poverty,
7 including the effects of child poverty on productivity
8 and economic output;

9 (2) the health-related costs of child poverty, in-
10 cluding the costs incurred by the Federal Govern-
11 ment and State, local, and tribal governments due to
12 child illnesses, other child medical problems, and
13 other child health-related expenditures;

14 (3) the effect of child poverty on crime rates;

15 (4) the short-term and long-term effects of
16 child poverty on the Federal budget, including out-
17 lays for anti-poverty programs;

18 (5) poverty metrics such as income poverty,
19 food insecurity, and other measures of deprivation,
20 and the role of such metrics in assessing the effects
21 of poverty and the performance of anti-poverty pro-
22 grams;

23 (6) the effect of child poverty on certain popu-
24 lation groups, including immigrants, single parent
25 families, individuals who have attained the age of 16
26 but have not attained the age of 25 with large stu-

1 dent loans, individuals living in areas of con-
2 centrated poverty, and individuals living on Indian
3 reservations; and

4 (7) the effect of child poverty on individuals
5 and families living in extreme poverty, as compared
6 with such effect on individuals and families living in
7 poverty or near poverty.

8 **SEC. 203. REPORTING REQUIREMENT.**

9 (a) RESEARCH PAPERS.—The agreement under sec-
10 tion 201(a) shall include the publication of the research
11 papers required under such section on the public Web site
12 of the National Academy of Sciences.

13 (b) WORKSHOP SUMMARY.—The agreement under
14 section 201(a) shall include the publication of a summary
15 of each workshop required under such section on the pub-
16 lic Web site of the National Academy of Sciences.

17 **SEC. 204. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

18 There is authorized to be appropriated \$1,000,000 to
19 carry out this title.

20 **TITLE III—DEFINITIONS**

21 **SEC. 301. DEFINITIONS.**

22 In this Act:

23 (1) ANTI-POVERTY PROGRAM.—The term “anti-
24 poverty program” means a program or institution
25 with the primary goal of lifting children or families

1 out of poverty and improving economic opportunities
2 for children or families that operates in whole or in
3 part using Federal, State, local, or tribal govern-
4 ment funds.

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

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

11 (4) DISCONNECTED YOUTH.—The term “dis-
12 connected youth” means individuals who have at-
13 tained the age of 16 but have not attained the age
14 of 25 who are unemployed and not enrolled in
15 school.

16 (5) ECONOMIC STABILITY.—The term “eco-
17 nomic stability” means, with respect to an individual
18 or family, that such individual or family has access
19 to the means and support necessary to effectively
20 cope with adverse or costly life events and to effec-
21 tively recover from the consequences of such events
22 while maintaining a decent standard of living.

23 (6) EXTREME POVERTY.—The term “extreme
24 poverty” means, with respect to an individual or
25 family, that such individual or family has a total an-

1 nual income that is less than the amount that is 50
2 percent of the official poverty threshold for such in-
3 dividual or family, as provided in the report of the
4 United States Census Bureau on Income, Poverty,
5 and Health Insurance Coverage in the United
6 States: 2014 (issued in September 2015).

7 (7) FEDERAL AGENCY.—The term “Federal
8 agency” means an Executive department, a Govern-
9 ment corporation, and an independent establish-
10 ment.

11 (8) NEAR POVERTY.—The term “near poverty”
12 means, with respect to an individual or family, that
13 such individual or family has a total annual income
14 that is less than the amount that is 200 percent of
15 the official poverty threshold for such individual or
16 family, as provided in the report of the United
17 States Census Bureau on Income, Poverty, and
18 Health Insurance Coverage in the United States:
19 2014 (issued in September 2015).

20 (9) POVERTY.—The term “poverty” means,
21 with respect to an individual or family, that such in-
22 dividual or family has a total annual income that is
23 less than the amount that is the official poverty
24 threshold for such individual or family, as provided
25 in the report of the United States Census Bureau on

- 1 Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in
- 2 the United States: 2014 (issued in September 2015).

