
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 2262 Session of
1998

INTRODUCED BY THOMAS, MANDERINO, L. I. COHEN, JAROLIN, CURRY,
STURLA, MCGEEHAN, BEBKO-JONES, LUCYK, WALKO, TIGUE,
J. TAYLOR, M. COHEN, CAPPABIANCA, LESCOVITZ, JOSEPHS,
BELFANTI, BLAUM, MCGILL, EACHUS, STETLER, BISHOP, YOUNGBLOOD,
BELARDI, READSHAW, SCRIMENTI, STABACK, WASHINGTON, ITKIN,
MYERS, MILLER, COLAFELLA, HORSEY, STEELMAN, COY, PRESTON,
MUNDY, GEORGE, COLAIZZO, LEDERER, KELLER, KIRKLAND, ROEBUCK,
CARN, JAMES, A. H. WILLIAMS, DeWEESE AND EVANS,
FEBRUARY 17, 1998

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS, FEBRUARY 17, 1998

AN ACT

1 Relating to a special fund to be administered by the Department
2 of Public Welfare; providing for grants to counties and
3 school districts for programs to aid children; and making
4 appropriations.

5 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
6 hereby enacts as follows:

7 Section 1. Short title.

8 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Children's
9 First Act of 1998.

10 Section 2. Legislative intent.

11 It is the intent of the General Assembly to provide support
12 and opportunities for children and families of this Commonwealth
13 to improve the future of the children, families, communities and
14 Commonwealth by:

15 (1) Improving the quality and availability of child care

1 for Pennsylvania low-income families.

2 (2) Improving the quality of and opportunities for
3 Pennsylvania children during nonschool hours.

4 (3) Improving the quality of public education for the
5 children of this Commonwealth.

6 (4) Assuring the availability, quality and utilization
7 of health care by Pennsylvania children.

8 Section 3. Findings.

9 The General Assembly finds and declares as follows:

10 (1) Child care is necessary for families to work and is
11 out of reach economically for thousands of low-income,
12 working families; quality child care helps prepare children
13 for success in school; and the needs of Pennsylvania families
14 for quality child care will increase in the coming years.

15 (2) A good education is necessary for children to be
16 prepared for work in the next century; that thousands of
17 children begin first grade without being prepared and are
18 being taught in inadequate facilities, with too little
19 attention provided by faculty in need of more staff
20 development, with too few supplies and too little time to
21 assist children in meeting successful educational outcomes.

22 (3) Tens of thousands of school-aged children and youth
23 are without supervision, support or opportunity in the
24 nonschool hours; that youth get into trouble as victims or by
25 committing delinquent acts most commonly between the hours of
26 3 p.m. and 6 p.m.; that after-school activities improve child
27 and community safety; and that the need for after-school
28 activities will grow as more and more families enter the
29 workplace leaving more children at risk of being home alone.

30 (4) The Commonwealth has the opportunity to create a

1 better system to make health care for children and youth more
2 accessible and available to this Commonwealth's families.

3 Section 4. Youth Development Fund.

4 There is hereby established a special fund in the State
5 Treasury to be known as the Youth Development Fund to which
6 shall be credited all appropriations made by the General
7 Assembly for the purposes of administering this act and making
8 grants to carry out the purposes of this act.

9 Section 5. Department of Public Welfare.

10 (a) Establishment of grants and programs.--The Department of
11 Public Welfare shall establish programs and make grants to carry
12 out the purposes of this act.

13 (b) Purposes for which funds may be expended.--The
14 Department of Public Welfare may expend funds in the Youth
15 Development Fund by making grants to counties or school
16 districts to provide programs to:

17 (1) Assist low-income families under 235% of the Federal
18 poverty level to obtain child care.

19 (2) Develop educational grants for training child-care
20 professionals.

21 (3) Provide for child-care providers that provide child
22 care on evenings and weekends.

23 (4) Aid families that are paying for child-care grants
24 that may be used as a credit against the families' State
25 income tax liability.

26 (c) Grants to school districts.--The Department of Public
27 Welfare may expend funds in the Youth Development Fund by making
28 grants to school districts as follows:

29 (1) Up to \$1,250 for each student who attends
30 kindergarten for not less than seven hours each school day.

1 (2) An amount to be determined by the department for
2 school districts that limit class size to 20 or fewer
3 students.

4 (3) An amount to be determined by the department for
5 preventive maintenance of school facilities.

6 (4) An amount to be determined by the department for
7 programs for staff development.

8 (5) An amount equal to 2% of the current State
9 reimbursement for basic education.

10 (6) Up to \$500 per child to any school district that has
11 more than one-third of its students living in poverty.

12 Section 6. Appropriations.

13 (a) Job training programs.--The sum of \$250,000,000, or as
14 much thereof as may be necessary, is hereby appropriated to the
15 Youth Development Fund for the purpose of making grants to
16 counties for job training programs that will assist residents of
17 this Commonwealth to obtain employment.

18 (b) After-school activities.--The sum of \$15,000,000, or as
19 much thereof as may be necessary, is hereby appropriated to the
20 Youth Development Fund for the purpose of making grants to
21 school districts to establish programs to care for children who
22 are not being cared for by their parents.

23 (c) Educational improvement.--The sum of \$450,000,000, or as
24 much thereof as may be necessary, is hereby appropriated to the
25 Youth Development Fund for grants to school districts for
26 programs to improve the educational outcomes of children in this
27 Commonwealth.

28 (d) Otherwise unexpended appropriation.--Any funds
29 appropriated by subsections (a), (b) and (c) may be used to
30 carry out any other purposes of this act.

1 Section 7. Effective date.

2 This act shall take effect in 60 days.