

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 45

RESOLUTION CHAPTER 75

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 45—Relative to early care and education.

[Filed with Secretary of State August 15, 2013.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

ACR 45, Weber. Early care and education.

This measure would urge the California State Legislature and the Governor to restore budget funding to early care and education programs and to support efforts to fund and implement the Quality Rating and Improvement System and other programs that support early care and education. The measure would also urge the California State Legislature to commit to improving the public's understanding of the role that early care and education plays in securing an educated, nimble, and stable workforce to help keep California's economy vibrant and strong for years to come.

WHEREAS, Over the last two decades, a significant body of research has shed light on neuroscience and brain development, improving our understanding of the importance of the earliest years in a child's life, and of the influence those years have on later economic, educational, emotional, and social outcomes; and

WHEREAS, Eighty percent of a child's brain development occurs by age three and 90 percent of brain development occurs by age five, and children who attend quality early care and education programs are more likely to pass reading exams through third grade; and

WHEREAS, On the National Assessment of Educational Progress and on California's own standards-based tests, poor, African American, and Latino students, as well as English learners, are all overrepresented among students scoring at the lowest levels and underrepresented among those scoring at the highest levels; and

WHEREAS, Other measures of assessing student achievement, including high dropout rates, low graduation rates, failure to complete the A through G course requirements for eligibility to the state's four-year universities, and lower college admissions, reflect similar achievement patterns; and

WHEREAS, In 2011 in San Diego County, only 51 percent of third graders were proficient in English language arts and 34 percent of preschool-aged children were enrolled in early care and education programs, while statewide only 46 percent of third graders were proficient in English language arts and 25 percent of preschool-aged children were enrolled in early care and education programs; and

WHEREAS, A high-quality early care and education program, which is the formal care and teaching of young children often provided by individuals other than a child's first teacher or parents, that actively engages parents in their child's education, results in higher grades, better school attendance, increased motivation, and higher graduation rates. It is well documented in research and widely understood that quality early care and education programs contribute tremendously to a child's ability to mature, reach his or her potential, and become a productive citizen; and

WHEREAS, Early care and education reflects a variety of educational and care service options, including child care, development, and preschool programs that provide positive early learning experiences to foster a child's emotional, intellectual, and social development, and lays the foundation for later academic success; and

WHEREAS, Children learn by observing and modeling what they see their parents do. When parents enroll in parenting classes, they learn new techniques and realize that parental involvement and early care and education will advance their children as compared to other children whose parents do not know about or do not value the importance of parental classes and early care and education; and

WHEREAS, San Diego has a "Parent Engagement Education Program" through the Parent Institute for Quality Education that teaches parents how to create a positive and lasting educational environment at home using a number of proven academic success tools, including dedicating a home study location and time of day for homework, creating ongoing dialog with their children about academic successes and challenges, discussing children's college expectations, and more. Parents also learn about how grades are used for college admittance, what classes are important and needed for children planning to attend college, how to navigate the school system, and other information vital to the academic success of their children; and

WHEREAS, The earlier that parent involvement begins in a child's educational process, the more powerful the effects on the child's life. Sometimes parents do not realize that the parental involvement and early care and education will have a positive impact in the lives of their children forever. Studies have shown that parental involvement is a strong predictor of school achievement, especially among children from low-income families. These studies have demonstrated that children in poverty whose parents provide an engaging learning environment at home are better prepared for school and have lower suspension rates than their low-income peers; and

WHEREAS, Statistics on parental involvement indicate that family participation in education is twice as predictive of a child's academic success as a family's socioeconomic status, meaning a child whose parents are engaged in their child's education tends to have fewer behavioral problems, performs better academically, and is more likely to complete high school than a child whose parents are not engaged in his or her education; and

WHEREAS, A child who attends quality early care and education programs is less likely to be arrested and more likely to earn higher incomes than a child who does not, and the opportunity to participate in such

programs prepares children to attain a higher standard of living as adults and to become members of the high-skilled workforce that is critical to our nation's economic future; and

WHEREAS, The finding of a connection between strong early care and education programs and the state's economic growth is what compelled First 5 LA to make a number of early care and education investments, including the ECE Works! Career Development Policy Project, which promotes the development of a strong early care and education workforce to prepare today's children for the dynamic workforce challenges of the future. This early care and education workforce development initiative supports the First 5 LA Strategic Plan FY 2009–2015's goal of ensuring that children are ready for kindergarten; and

WHEREAS, The public's understanding of the relationship between brain development at the early stages of life and a child's future development compelled voters in California to dedicate resources solely for the benefit of children from birth to five years of age through the establishment of First 5 California and county First 5 commissions and agencies, which are located in all 58 counties, including Alameda, Contra Costa, El Dorado, Fresno, Los Angeles, Merced, Orange, Sacramento, San Diego, San Francisco, San Joaquin, Santa Barbara, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, Ventura, and Yolo Counties; and

WHEREAS, An integral part of a sound public investment strategy to secure California's economic future must include the development of, and the appropriate compensation levels to recruit and retain, a highly trained early care and education workforce; and

WHEREAS, There is now broad-based consensus that early care and education is a critical foundation for improving our nation's educational system and a vital investment strategy to ensure the competitiveness of our nation's workforce in the global economy; and

WHEREAS, Historically, early care and education settings, such as child care and preschool for infants, toddlers, and young children, were viewed solely as a means of enabling parents to function in the workforce, and public policy for providing and funding early care and education was focused on safety and accessibility; and

WHEREAS, Brain development research has informed our understanding of the relevance and importance of early care and education environments and the value of the early care and education workforce. Public policy must develop and evolve to more accurately reflect what we now know to be most effective, including well-trained teachers offering high-quality services that provide a large return on investment; and

WHEREAS, President Barack Obama's 2013 State of the Union Address proposed making high-quality preschool "available to every single child in America." The President explained that his focus will be on low- and moderate-income four-year-old children. The President stated, "Every dollar we invest in high-quality early childhood education can save more than seven dollars later on—by boosting graduation rates, reducing teen pregnancy, even reducing violent crime. In states that make it a priority to

educate our youngest children, like Georgia or Oklahoma, studies show students grow up more likely to read and do math at grade level, graduate high school, hold a job, form more stable families of their own. We know this works. So let's do what works and make sure none of our children start the race of life already behind. Let's give our kids that chance.”; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate thereof concurring, That we urge our colleagues in the California State Legislature and the Governor of California to restore budget funding to early care and education programs and to support efforts to fund and implement the Quality Rating and Improvement System and other programs that support early care and education; and be it further

Resolved, That we urge our colleagues to commit to improving the public's understanding of the role that early care and education plays in securing an educated, nimble, and stable workforce to help keep California's economy vibrant and strong for years to come; and be it further

Resolved, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.