



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 1851

Resolution calling upon the Bloomberg Administration to discontinue the practice of defunding child care centers mid-year and thus closing desperately needed child care services throughout the city.

By Council Members James, Brewer, Comrie, Fidler, Gentile, Koppell, Liu, Mealy, Palma, Rivera, Sanders Jr., Sears, Weprin, Stewart and Foster

Whereas, In November 2008, the Administration for Children Services (ACS) brought forth a plan to reduce child care capacity by 18% through a series of actions that included closing classrooms in centers throughout the city and moving most five-year-olds in ACS child care centers to public schools; and

Whereas, Despite the economic challenges of the times, the need to maintain an investment in child care services is most pressing; and

Whereas, Since more mothers participate in the labor force and TANF rules require that people on public assistance work, it is imperative that we preserve subsidized child care services; and

Whereas, According to the latest report on early care and education for children titled “Charting the Course for Child Care and Head Start: Community Needs Analysis of Early Care and Education in New York City” (“CNA”) issued by ACS, in New York City there are 345,508 children under the age of six who are living below 200% of the federal poverty guidelines, making them eligible for subsidized child care services offered by ACS; and

Whereas, As of August 2008, ACS’s total child care capacity was 93,295 slots for ACS funded early care and education services; and

Whereas, Some of the remaining children are served by the Direct Head Start program including Early Head Start and Department of Education Universal Pre-Kindergarten, which combined has 146,846 slots; and

Whereas, A comparison of the total number of children eligible and system wide capacity figures for subsidized childcare services shows that 57% of children eligible for early child care services in the city cannot receive them within the current system because ACS does not have enough child care slots to accommodate the actual number of children eligible; and

Whereas, ACS's numbers show that enrollment as of October 2008 was at 102,339 in subsidized child care and 18,072 in head start slots; and

Whereas, A comparison of the latest enrollment figures and children eligible for subsidized childcare services show that 70% of eligible children are not receiving services; and

Whereas, Despite the difference between capacity and enrollment in these subsidized child care slots, the entire capacity within the ACS subsidized child care system is not sufficient to accommodate close to 200,000 children that are eligible to receive the services; and

Whereas, Efforts need to be made to reach-out to parents of children and enroll them into appropriate child care options; and

Whereas, ACS also indicates in its CNA report that there is a shortage of infant and toddler care throughout the city; and

Whereas, For infant care in subsidized child care centers, 11,853 slots are available for a total of 114,075 eligible infants, demonstrating New York City's failure to meet the needs of 90% of eligible infants; and

Whereas, This is also true for toddler care, as only 11,131 slots exist in the ACS system for a population of 169,977 eligible toddlers, demonstrating that 80% of New York City's eligible toddler population must go without child care services; and

Whereas, These facts point to a need for immediate and long term investment in child care infrastructure with resources targeted to high need age groups, populations and communities throughout the city; and

Whereas, A particular focus needs to be placed on the need for funding to allow child care centers to

age down their services for younger children to enter the system; and

Whereas, The numbers presented in the CNA report are compelling and require the Mayor to coordinate resources and invest in early childhood education initiatives that are proven to benefit children; and

Whereas, Early childhood education investments have long term lasting effects and cause children to have academic success in later years and in life; and

Whereas, Thomas Fooley, an economist, argues that investments with long term impact begin with a focus on a human capital investment, such as early childhood education, in an article published in *Forbes*, on November 26, 2008 titled “Prime the Pump with Education Spending”; and

Whereas, Fooley goes onto say that the first five years of a child’s life are critical to development in later years and that absent early childhood education a child is “more likely to drop out of school, commit crimes and require support from the welfare system,” which are costs that eventually society must bear; and

Whereas, Investing in early child care education will prove beneficial to the city as a whole in later years, and deliberate investments must be focused on increasing services where they are needed; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the Bloomberg Administration to discontinue the practice of defunding child care centers mid-year and thus closing desperately needed child care services throughout the city.

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