



Harvard Model Congress Boston 2024

“Early Childhood Education” Update

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The Head Start initiative has substantial flaws, and both liberal and conservative parties seek alternate early childhood education initiatives. There have been several bills introduced in Congress recently on the topic; they include the Child Care Stabilization Act (HR 5433), Child Care Workforce and Facilities Act of 2023 (S 268), Child Care for Every Community Act (S 388), and PROSPECT Act (S 848) (Congress.gov, 2023).

The Child Care Stabilization Act (HR 5433) was introduced by Rep. Katherine Clark (MA-5) in September 2023, with the purpose of increasing child care options for working families while enhancing support for care providers. The act emphasizes improving the quality of providers and awarding adequate compensation for workers without increasing costs for families, continuing federal child care stabilization funding (GovTrack, 2023).

The Child Care Workforce and Facilities Act of 2023 (S 268), iterations of which were introduced in 2019 and 2021, was reintroduced in February by Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-MN). Sen. Klobuchar’s bill provides a framework for U.S. states to complete projects that expand the child care workforce and the capacity of child care facilities (Klobuchar, 2023). While conservatives and liberals such as Klobuchar typically hold opposing views on how to enact high-quality early childhood education, the Child Care Workforce and Facilities Act was co-authored by Sen. Dan Sullivan (R-AK) and has some degree of bipartisan support (Congress.gov, 2023).

The Child Care for Every Community Act (S 388), introduced by Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), boasts a larger scope, aiming to establish universal child care in the U.S. and increase early learning programs (GovTrack, 2023). A progressive darling, Warren emphasizes the importance of families receiving high-quality child care, regardless of income class. Likewise, rather than providing generic services with the guise of universality, bill S388 seeks to create a system which supports families with their individually assessed needs (GovTrack, 2023).

The PROSPECT Act (S 848), also known as the “Preparing and Resourcing Our Student Parents and Early Childhood Teachers Act”, was introduced by Sen. Cory Booker (D-NJ) in March 2023. With this Act, Booker seeks Federal grants to establish community colleges and other institutions serving disenfranchised minorities, as incubators for

skilled child care workers—using these community campuses to train and equip workers to service their communities (GovTrack, 2023).

While the aforementioned Congressional bills are primarily authored by Democratic leaders, it is important to note that most of them have some level bipartisan support. Still, as with all legislation, they will need to acquire a broad bipartisan coalition to be passed through both houses of Congress and become part of United States law.

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