



House Bill No. 5557

Public Act No. 26-151

AN ACT CONCERNING A PLAN TO REVISE THE DEFINITION OF INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF WORKING GROUPS ON AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION AND NONEMERGENCY MEDICAL TRANSPORTATION REIMBURSEMENT.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

Section 1. (*Effective from passage*) (a) The Commissioner of Developmental Services shall produce a plan with recommendations on developing a standard definition of intellectual disability that originates before an individual attains eighteen years of age and is characterized by significant limitations in both intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior, including, but not limited to, conceptual, social and practical skills. Such definition shall be consistent with generally accepted professional standards, including, but not limited to, such standards recognized by the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities.

(b) As part of the plan, the commissioner shall ensure (1) no single test score or single measure would be determinative of intellectual disability in any such definition; and (2) that such definition is based on the totality of relevant clinical, educational and functional evidence, including, but not limited to (A) standardized assessments when valid and appropriate, (B) adaptive behavior measures, (C) developmental

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history, (D) medical evidence, and (E) other reliable information.

(c) The commissioner shall include in the plan (1) a recommendation for a timeline for the transition to a new definition of intellectual disability, (2) any approvals required from the federal government, and (3) estimates of the one-time costs of making such transition and the recurring costs of utilizing the new definition to the Department of Developmental Services, other state agencies and school districts impacted by the change in the definition.

(d) Not later than July 1, 2027, the commissioner shall file a report on the plan to provide recommendations on developing a standard definition of intellectual disability, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes, with the joint standing committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to appropriations and the budgets of state agencies, human services and public health.

Sec. 2. (NEW) (*Effective January 1, 2027*) (a) The Commissioner of Education shall establish an American Sign Language education working group which shall consist of:

(1) (A) One representative each from the (i) Departments of Education and Aging and Disability Services, (ii) Labor Department, and (iii) Office of Higher Education, and (B) the following members appointed by the Commissioner of Education: (i) A representative of the Connecticut Council of Language Teachers, (ii) a representative of the American School for the Deaf, (iii) a representative of the Connecticut Association of the Deaf, and (iv) at least one American Sign Language instructor who teaches in a public school in the state;

(2) One appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives;

(3) One appointed by the president pro tempore of the Senate;

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(4) One appointed by the majority leader of the House of Representatives;

(5) One appointed by the majority leader of the Senate;

(6) One appointed by the minority leader of the House of Representatives;

(7) One appointed by the minority leader of the Senate;

(8) The House and Senate chairpersons and House and Senate ranking members of the joint standing committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to education and human services, or their designees; and

(9) Two persons appointed by the Governor.

(b) The working group shall provide recommendations to the Department of Education regarding the following:

(1) Curriculum guidance for American Sign Language instruction that includes, but is not limited to, aligning such curriculum with nationally recognized proficiency frameworks;

(2) Teacher certification standards based on standards established by the American Sign Language Teachers Association and the American Sign Language Proficiency Interview that includes, but is not limited to, (A) establishment of a proficiency benchmark, (B) recognition of an alternative certification pathway for native American Sign Language users and interpreters, and (C) reciprocity with American Sign Language teaching certifications from other states; and

(3) Guidance to educator preparation programs in the state concerning, but not limited to, the (A) expansion of American Sign Language and interpretation education programs, (B) creation of educational incentives, such as tuition support, credit enhancement or

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alternative programs, and (C) establishment of bridge, endorsement or alternative programs for native American Sign Language users and certified interpreters seeking teacher certification.

(c) Not later than January 1, 2028, and annually thereafter, the Department of Education shall submit a progress report, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes, to the joint standing committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to education and human services concerning the work of the American Sign Language education working group.

Sec. 3. (*Effective from passage*) (a) The Commissioner of Social Services shall conduct a study relating to Medicaid reimbursement rates for, and the availability of, nonemergency medical transportation services for Medicaid beneficiaries to (1) evaluate the adequacy of current Medicaid reimbursement rates for nonemergency medical transportation services; (2) examine the availability of such transportation services across the state, including, but not limited to, geographic disparities in access and service gaps; (3) evaluate options for permitting home care providers, including, but not limited to, home health aides, to provide transportation services to or from medical appointments for Medicaid beneficiaries; (4) assess appropriate qualifications, licensing requirements and insurance standards for any such home care providers providing transportation services; (5) review the practices of other states concerning reimbursement rates and provider eligibility for nonemergency medical transportation services; and (6) identify any other issues the commissioner deems relevant to improving access to non-emergency medical transportation services for Medicaid beneficiaries.

(b) Not later than February 1, 2027, the Commissioner of Social Services shall submit a report on the findings of such study, and any recommendations for legislation, to the joint standing committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to human

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services and public health, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes.