STATE OF NEW YORK

6567--A

2021-2022 Regular Sessions

IN ASSEMBLY

March 19, 2021

Introduced by M. of A. NIOU -- read once and referred to the Committee on Governmental Operations -- committee discharged, bill amended, ordered reprinted as amended and recommitted to said committee

AN ACT to establish the Marshall plan for moms interagency task force; and providing for the repeal of such provisions upon expiration thereof

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

Section 1. Legislative findings. The Legislature finds that any relief and long-term recovery from the economic fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic must recognize the disproportionate burden mothers have weathered. Women, especially mothers, have faced the brunt of the economic challenges of the pandemic due to social barriers and policy failures that have been compounded by enduring racism and gender injustices, including the lack of care infrastructure, lack of family-supportive workplaces, and gender and racial pay inequities.

Women continue to face unjust gender and racial wage gaps, and are overrepresented in low-wage jobs, despite their gains in workforce participation. Asian-American and Pacific Islander women, particularly Southeast Asian and Pacific Islander women, get paid as little as $.50 for every dollar a White man makes. Black women make only $0.63 for every dollar a White man makes, and as a result may lose $946,000 in their lifetimes. Latina women earn $0.55 for every dollar earned by a White man, and as a result may lose over $1,100,000 in wages over the course of a 40-year career. Native American women are paid $0.60 for every dollar a White man makes and are murdered at 10 times the rate of the national average, even though financial independence and security can increase chances of escaping violence for these women. Women's wages are key to their families' economic security and survival. Across the country, mothers are breadwinners in almost half of families with children under 18, even though mothers face a greater pay gap than women as

EXPLANATION--Matter in *italics* (underscored) is new; matter in brackets [-] is old law to be omitted.

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a whole. Even prior to the pandemic, working mothers faced continued biases and stigmas in the workplace that caregiving responsibilities will negatively impact their work performance.

Women have suffered the majority of pandemic-related job losses. Since February 2020, women have lost over 5,400,000 net jobs and account for 55% of overall net job loss since the beginning of the crisis. Women of color are experiencing higher rates of job loss than White women. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics January 2021 unemployment data, the jobless rate for Black women and Latina women aged 20 and over is over 60% higher than their White counterparts. Asian Americans recorded the highest jobless rates among women in the last 6 months of 2020, even though before the pandemic their average unemployment rate was the lowest.

Women face a disproportionate burden of caregiving responsibilities. Mothers are three times more likely than fathers to be responsible for most of the caregiving and household work. Single mothers are more likely than other parents to take care of all housework and childcare responsibilities in their household, and are more likely than other mothers to experience financial insecurity.

Throughout the pandemic, women of color have played integral roles on the frontlines as essential workers, including as nursing assistants, home health aides, and child care educators.

The unprecedented burdens of child care, work, and remote learning have strained mental and emotional health for mothers. These points of stressor are compounded by financial instability, racial injustice, being a single parent, having children with special needs, and many other factors.

§ 2. 1. There is hereby established an interagency task force hereby known as the Marshall plan for moms intergency task force which shall consist of the following members or their designees: (a) the commissioner of the department of labor, who shall serve as chair; (b) the commissioner of the department of social services; (c) the chair of the workers' compensation board; (d) the commissioner of the department of health; (e) the director of the division of human rights; (f) two members, who shall be appointed by the governor, one upon the recommendation of the New York State American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations and one upon the recommendation of the New York State Business Council; (g) one member, who shall be appointed by the speaker of the assembly; and (h) one member, who shall be appointed by the temporary president of the senate.

2. The interagency task force shall meet as often as is necessary, but no less than once per month and where otherwise appropriate to fulfilling its duties under this chapter. The members of the commission shall serve without compensation but shall be entitled to reimbursement for all necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties.

§ 3. The Marshall plan for moms interagency task force shall examine the following policy areas and issue proposals and recommendations thereon:

1. The utilization of recurring payments or financial assistance to mothers and other caregivers and any equivalent policies under all current state and federal programs.

2. The current utilization rates and impacts of the state paid family leave program as well as specific impacts of the program on mothers and other caregivers.

3. Current state policy impacting the childcare industry and the access or availability of child care in all areas of the state.

4. The availability and access to unemployment for New Yorkers who have left a job or worked reduced hours in order to take on caregiving responsibilities.

5. The impact of any new policies imposed by the federal government or by state or local officials during the COVID-19 pandemic that have impacted mothers and other caregivers in the workforce.

6. The availability and access to mental health support for mothers and other caregivers, and the impact of access or availability to mental health support on such families.

7. The access and availability of all such programs for immigrant families, and the impact of inaccessibility or unavailability of any such programs on immigrant families and the state.

8. Any other areas the task force deems relevant in the review of policies that may impact mothers and other caregivers.

§ 4. Within one year of the effective date of this act, in carrying out its functions, the task force shall hold five public hearings around the state to foster discussions among, and conduct formal public hearings with requisite public notice to solicit input and recommendations from statewide and regional stakeholder interests. The task force shall also accept public input in writing. The task force may utilize remote access such as web conferencing in order to comply with the provisions of this section.

§ 5. Within two years of the effective date of this act the task force shall report its findings and recommendations to the governor, the temporary president of the senate and the speaker of the assembly, and shall publicize its findings on a website provided by the department of labor.

§ 6. This act shall take effect immediately and shall expire and be deemed repealed 3 years after such date.