

# STATE OF NEW YORK

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1160--B

2021-2022 Regular Sessions

## IN ASSEMBLY

January 7, 2021

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Introduced by M. of A. BRONSON, BARRON, CLARK, COOK, CRUZ, CUSICK, ENGLEBRIGHT, EPSTEIN, FAHY, PERRY, SEAWRIGHT, SIMON, WOERNER, MEEKS, JENSEN, JACKSON, MITAYNES, LUNSFORD, RAMOS, RICHARDSON, AUBRY, GONZALEZ-ROJAS, GOTTFRIED, ANDERSON, WALLACE, FRONTUS, REYES, BRAUNSTEIN, DINOWITZ, McDONALD, HUNTER, WEPRIN, JEAN-PIERRE, DARLING, GUNTHER, SMITH -- read once and referred to the Committee on Children and Families -- committee discharged, bill amended, ordered reprinted as amended and recommitted to said committee -- reference changed to the Committee on Social Services -- committee discharged, bill amended, ordered reprinted as amended and recommitted to said committee

AN ACT to amend the social services law, in relation to establishing an advisory council to effectuate a reduction in child poverty in the state; to amend the state finance law, in relation to requiring periodic reports on the state's progress in reducing child poverty and evaluating the effects adjustments or reductions to the state budget will have on reducing child poverty in New York state; 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:

1 Section 1. The social services law is amended by adding a new section  
2 131-zz to read as follows:

3 § 131-zz. Child poverty reduction. 1. Legislative findings. The  
4 legislature hereby declares that New York should take any steps neces-  
5 sary to reduce the overall child poverty rate by fifty percent in the  
6 next ten years. Nearly three million New Yorkers are living in poverty,  
7 eight hundred ninety-five thousand of which are children. In fact, one  
8 in five New York children struggle to meet basic needs, and although  
9 several efforts have been undertaken, the overall poverty rate in New  
10 York has failed to see a reduction over the last decade. The legislature  
11 finds that reducing child poverty will protect the health and general  
12 well-being of all New Yorkers. To effectuate this reduction, the child

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

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1 poverty reduction advisory council shall be established to research  
2 policy ideas, develop best practices, and continually monitor relevant  
3 benchmarks to ensure that New York continues to work towards reducing  
4 child poverty by fifty percent in ten years.

5 2. Child poverty reduction advisory council established. (a) To effec-  
6 tuate a reduction in child poverty in the state, there is hereby estab-  
7 lished an advisory council, to be known as the "child poverty reduction  
8 advisory council", hereafter referred to as the "advisory council". The  
9 advisory council shall carry out the required acts set forth in subdivi-  
10 sion four of this section.

11 (b) The members of the advisory council shall be chaired by a repre-  
12 sentative of the executive chamber and the commissioner of the office of  
13 temporary and disability assistance, or their designees. Ensuring  
14 adequate geographic representation, members of the advisory council  
15 shall be appointed in the following manner:

16 (i) two members shall be appointed by the temporary president of the  
17 senate;

18 (ii) two members shall be appointed by the speaker of the assembly;

19 (iii) two members shall be appointed by the commissioner of the office  
20 of temporary and disability assistance;

21 (iv) at least one member shall be appointed by the governor from each  
22 of the following entities:

23 (1) the office of children and family services;

24 (2) the New York state council on children and families;

25 (3) the department of taxation and finance;

26 (4) a regional economic development council;

27 (5) a statewide non-profit poverty advocacy organization; and

28 (6) a non-profit organization with a focus on poverty issues; and

29 (v) two individuals who are directly impacted by poverty in the state.

30 (c) The members of the advisory council shall receive no compensation  
31 for their services but shall be allowed their actual and necessary  
32 expenses incurred in the performance of their duties.

33 (d) The advisory council shall convene within sixty days after the  
34 effective date of this section. A quorum shall consist of a majority of  
35 the members of the advisory council entitled to vote on the matter under  
36 consideration. Approval of any matter shall require the affirmative vote  
37 of a majority of the members voting thereon. The advisory council shall  
38 adopt by-laws for the management and regulation of its affairs, includ-  
39 ing the creation of committees and subcommittees to effectuate the work  
40 required.

41 3. Appointments to the advisory council. (a) Appointments to the  
42 advisory council shall be made no later than forty-five days after the  
43 effective date of this section.

44 (b) If any such appointment is not made by such date, the appointing  
45 official may make the appointment after that date, but such vacant  
46 appointment shall not count for the calculation of a quorum until such  
47 vacancy is filled.

48 (c) Any vacancies in the advisory council shall be filled in the same  
49 manner as the original appointment was made.

50 4. Policy proposal review and recommendations. The advisory council  
51 shall:

52 (a) develop and publish a timeline, inclusive of yearly benchmarks,  
53 for reducing child poverty in the state by fifty percent in ten years.  
54 Such timeline shall be made publicly available.

55 (b) consider policy proposals that shall include, but not be limited  
56 to, the following proposals and release a report outlining the effect

1 that the enactment of such proposals may have on the rate of childhood  
2 poverty in New York:

3 (i) expanding and strengthening the state's earned income tax credit  
4 to align with the state's minimum wage to cover individual taxpayer  
5 identification number filers and young, childless adults and to be paid  
6 out quarterly;

7 (ii) expanding and strengthening the state's child tax credit to  
8 include young children, and to eliminate the minimum income threshold;

9 (iii) expanding work training and employment programs in the state;

10 (iv) expanding access to subsidized housing; and

11 (v) expanding access to subsidized child care.

12 (c) investigate the effects that each of the proposals listed in para-  
13 graph (b) of this subdivision may have if enacted by itself, as well as  
14 the effect the proposals may have if enacted in conjunction with the  
15 other proposals. The advisory council shall include the cost to the  
16 state related to the implementation of such policies, as well as the  
17 projected savings in both the short and long term that the state could  
18 realize by reducing poverty.

19 (d) review agency programs that can be modified, suspended, or other-  
20 wise changed to immediately reduce the child poverty rate.

21 (e) deliver to the governor, the speaker of the assembly and the  
22 temporary president of the senate, reports containing the timeline  
23 required pursuant to paragraph (a) of this subdivision, the review of  
24 the policy proposals required pursuant to paragraph (b) of this subdivi-  
25 sion, the investigation of the effects of such policies pursuant to  
26 paragraph (c) of this subdivision and the review of agency programs  
27 required pursuant to paragraph (d) of this subdivision on or before six  
28 months from the effective date of this section.

29 (f) develop recommendations for additional policies and procedures to  
30 reduce the state's child poverty rate by fifty percent in ten years from  
31 the effective date of this section. In developing such policies and  
32 procedures, the advisory council shall consider:

33 (i) the disproportionate impact poverty may have on various racial  
34 and ethnic communities and what policies may assist in alleviating such  
35 disparities;

36 (ii) ways to improve access to public benefits for individuals regard-  
37 less of their immigration status;

38 (iii) policies that assist families to obtain and maintain financial  
39 stability, including policies that assist individuals with educational  
40 advancements as well as securing employment that provides a living wage;  
41 and

42 (iv) any other factors that may impact a family, parent, or child's  
43 ability to stay above the poverty level, including, but not limited to:

44 (1) stability and predictability of income;

45 (2) equitable and ready access to programs;

46 (3) equitable treatment across racial, immigration and ethnic groups;

47 (4) positive environmental conditions;

48 (5) the individual health and well-being of the parents and children;

49 and

50 (6) the cost to the state, including the short-term costs of the  
51 programs and the long-term savings from having such programs in place.

52 (g) deliver to the governor, the speaker of the assembly and the  
53 temporary president of the senate the recommendations of the advisory  
54 council as required pursuant to paragraph (f) of this subdivision on or  
55 before one year after the effective date of this section.

1 (h) release bi-annual reports starting June first, two thousand twen-  
2 ty-two, detailing the progress that the state has made in reducing the  
3 child poverty rate in line with the recommendations set forth in this  
4 subdivision.

5 (i) collaborate with experts in the field of poverty research, utilize  
6 available data from other relevant statewide studies of poverty, and  
7 solicit input from stakeholder interests including, but not limited to  
8 persons impacted by poverty, non-profit organizations that assist those  
9 living in poverty, individuals or organizations that work to end racial  
10 disparities in New York, and child poverty advocacy organizations. The  
11 advisory council shall also conduct formal public hearings, which shall  
12 take place in at least four regions of the state, as defined by the  
13 empire state development corporation, and shall be offered during non-  
14 traditional hours to allow for persons unable to normally testify due to  
15 work requirements to so testify.

16 5. Implementation of recommendations. The legislature may utilize  
17 recommendations provided to prioritize the implementation of programs  
18 and services, as they deem appropriate, that would facilitate the goals  
19 of reducing child poverty by fifty percent over the next ten years from  
20 the effective date of this section.

21 6. Advisory council staff and agency liaison. (a) The commissioner of  
22 the office of temporary and disability assistance shall designate such  
23 employees of the office of temporary and disability assistance as are  
24 reasonably necessary to provide support services to the advisory coun-  
25 cil. The advisory council, acting by the chair of the advisory council,  
26 may employ additional staff and consultants, who shall be paid from  
27 amounts made available to the advisory council for such purpose.

28 (b) All state agencies, public authorities, and public benefit corpo-  
29 rations shall provide such assistance as may be reasonably requested by  
30 the chair of the advisory council. Provided however, any information  
31 provided shall be kept confidential and shall be used only for the  
32 specific purpose of effectuating the duties of the council.

33 7. Deliberations of the advisory council. The deliberations, meetings  
34 and other proceedings of the advisory council and any committee or  
35 subcommittee thereof shall be governed by article seven of the public  
36 officers law. Any one or more members of a committee or subcommittee may  
37 participate in a meeting of such committee or subcommittee by means of a  
38 conference telephone, conference video or similar communication or elec-  
39 tronic communication, provided that such communication allows all  
40 persons participating in the meeting, and all persons observing the  
41 meeting, including members of the public, to hear each other at the same  
42 time. Participation by such means shall constitute presence at a meet-  
43 ing. If a meeting other than an executive session is to be conducted by  
44 means of a conference telephone, conference video or similar communi-  
45 cation or electronic communication, the public notice for such meeting  
46 shall inform the public that such equipment will be used, and further  
47 identify the means by which the public may listen to such meeting.

48 § 2. Section 22 of the state finance law is amended by adding a new  
49 subdivision 1-d to read as follows:

50 1-d. within ten days following the submission of the financial  
51 plans presented in accordance with subdivision one of this  
52 section, the director of the budget shall submit to the chairs of the  
53 senate finance and the assembly ways and means committees and  
54 the comptroller, a report on the overall child poverty rate in the  
55 state, in accordance with the recommendations and reports of the child  
56 poverty reduction advisory council established by section one hundred

1 thirty-one-xx of the social services law. Such report by the director of  
2 the budget shall include information on the increase or decrease of  
3 child poverty during the prior year (including information by region of  
4 the state and by the race and ethnicity of the children), the progress  
5 or lack thereof by the state in meeting the goals set forth in section  
6 one hundred thirty-one-xx of the social services law to reduce the over-  
7 all child poverty rate, and the proposals contained within the budget  
8 that are expected to impact the child poverty rate.

9 § 3. Subdivision 7 of section 23 of the state finance law is amended  
10 by adding a new paragraph (g) to read as follows:

11 (g) Prior to making any such adjustment or reduction authorized by  
12 this subdivision, the director of the budget shall evaluate the effect  
13 that such reductions will have on child poverty in New York, and shall  
14 make such evaluation available to the public.

15 § 4. Severability clause. If any clause, sentence, paragraph, subdivi-  
16 sion, section, or part of this act shall be adjudged by any court of  
17 competent jurisdiction to be invalid, such judgment shall not affect,  
18 impair, or invalidate the remainder thereof, but shall be confined in  
19 its operation to the clause, sentence, paragraph, subdivision, section  
20 or part thereof directly involved in the controversy in which such judg-  
21 ment shall have been rendered. It is hereby declared to be the intent of  
22 the legislature that this act would have been enacted even if such  
23 invalid provisions had not been included herein.

24 § 5. This act shall take effect immediately and shall expire and be  
25 deemed repealed ten years after such effective date; provided, however,  
26 that the amendments to subdivision 7 of section 23 of the state finance  
27 law made by section three of this act shall not affect the repeal of  
28 such subdivision and shall be deemed repealed therewith.