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By: **Delegate Rudolph**

Introduced and read first time: February 10, 2006

Assigned to: Ways and Means

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A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Education - Task Force on Universal Preschool Education**

3 FOR the purpose of establishing a Task Force on Universal Preschool Education;  
4 providing for the membership and staffing of the Task Force; specifying the  
5 purposes and goals of the Task Force; requiring the Task Force to evaluate and  
6 make recommendations regarding certain issues by a certain date and to submit  
7 a report to the Governor and the General Assembly; providing for the  
8 termination of this Act; and generally relating to a Task Force on Universal  
9 Preschool Education.

10 Preamble

11 WHEREAS, The legislature finds that the purpose and mission of education is  
12 to advance the endowment of human nature itself, so that each succeeding generation  
13 finds itself further along the road towards peace, social justice, and environmental  
14 sustainability in a society guided by creativity, compassion, and curiosity; and

15 WHEREAS, The legislature further finds that children are born ready to learn  
16 and that early childhood learning opportunities are essential and fundamental to  
17 developing self-esteem, personal values, social behaviors, attitudes that contribute to  
18 collaborative living, and skills that promote lifelong learning; and

19 WHEREAS, Nearly 85% of brain development occurs in the first 5 years of life  
20 and research has proven that a child's early years are the most crucial in their  
21 cognitive, emotional, social, and physical development; and

22 WHEREAS, It also has been affirmed that early childhood education  
23 measurably impacts kindergarten through grade 12 student achievement, as well as a  
24 child's ability to integrate into society as a productive, contributing member; and

25 WHEREAS, The legislature finds that every \$1 invested on quality early  
26 childhood education saves \$7 in welfare and penal system costs through improved  
27 student achievement, increased college attendance rates, and a corresponding  
28 reduction in crime and the need for welfare; and

1 WHEREAS, Early childhood education encourages and provides the support  
2 that friends need to improve the quality of life of children by ensuring that children  
3 have enhanced access to a good beginning in life, laying the firm foundation that will  
4 enable children to reach the potential with which they are born; and

5 WHEREAS, The legislature recognizes the importance of providing children  
6 with early learning opportunities of the highest quality, including parenting  
7 programs, parent-child education programs, licensed and license-exempt child care,  
8 and center-based programs; and

9 WHEREAS, Early childhood education programs, both public and private,  
10 should meet professionally-accepted standards and be staffed by well-trained,  
11 appropriately-compensated educators; and

12 WHEREAS, The purpose of this Act is to:

13 (1) Improve early childhood education by establishing and appropriating  
14 funds for a temporary early childhood education task force to develop a framework to  
15 increase access to early childhood education;

16 (2) Improve the quality of early childhood learning programs;

17 (3) Support the professional and career development of early childhood  
18 educators and service providers;

19 (4) Educate families about the value of early childhood education;

20 (5) Identify funding mechanisms to appropriately compensate early  
21 childhood educators; and

22 (6) Increase the inventory of available facilities for early childhood  
23 education programs; now, therefore,

24 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF  
25 MARYLAND, That:

26 (a) There is a Task Force on Universal Preschool Education.

27 (b) The Task Force shall consist of 23 members as follows:

28 (1) The Speaker of the House of Delegates or the Speaker's designee;

29 (2) The President of the Senate or the President's designee;

30 (3) The State Superintendent of Schools or the State Superintendent's  
31 designee;

32 (4) The Secretary of Human Resources or the Secretary's designee;

33 (5) The Secretary of Health and Mental Hygiene or the Secretary's  
34 designee;

1 (6) The Dean of the College of Education at the University of Maryland  
2 at College Park or the Dean's designee;

3 (7) Two representatives, chosen by the Maryland Association of Boards of  
4 Education, who work with local school systems and are engaged in providing early  
5 childhood education services to children in their local communities;

6 (8) The President of the Maryland Head Start Association or the  
7 President's designee;

8 (9) The President of the Maryland State Child Care Association;

9 (10) The Executive Director of the Governor's Office for Children or the  
10 Executive Director's designee;

11 (11) One representative from the family child care community;

12 (12) Two parents whose children receive early childhood services;

13 (13) The Executive Director of the Association of Independent Maryland  
14 Schools or the Executive Director's designee;

15 (14) One member to be selected by the Maryland Chamber of Commerce;

16 (15) Three representatives of the University System of Maryland  
17 designated by the Chancellor;

18 (16) The Executive Director of the Maryland Association of Community  
19 Colleges or the Executive Director's designee;

20 (17) Two members of the public selected by the Governor; and

21 (18) A communications professional as recommended by a majority vote of  
22 the Task Force.

23 (c) The purposes and goals of the Task Force shall be to:

24 (1) Propose an overall plan to increase access to early childhood  
25 education opportunities for families, which may include incentives, resource  
26 development, the need for and availability of infrastructure, and possible funding  
27 sources through:

28 (i) The identification of criteria, procedures, and methods for  
29 issuing subsidies to parents and legal guardians of children to facilitate their  
30 attendance at preschools and early learning programs; and

31 (ii) The development of processes designed to:

32 1. Promote public-private partnerships;



1           (6)     Identify or develop appropriate evaluation methods, including  
2 appropriate performance indicators that will allow monitoring, improvement, and  
3 accountability of any initiative it proposes.

4     (d)     The Task Force may form workgroups and subcommittees to:

5           (1)     Obtain input from stakeholders, early education professionals, and  
6 any other individuals it determines necessary; and

7           (2)     Perform any other functions it deems necessary to fulfill its mission.

8     (e)     A member of the Task Force:

9           (1)     May not receive compensation; but

10          (2)     Is entitled to reimbursement for expenses under the Standard State  
11 Travel Regulations, as provided in the State budget.

12     (f)     The Maryland State Department of Education, the Maryland Higher  
13 Education Commission, and the University System of Maryland shall provide staff to  
14 the Task Force.

15     (g)     The Task Force shall report its findings and recommendations to the  
16 Governor and, in accordance with § 2-1246 of the State Government Article, to the  
17 General Assembly, on or before December 1, 2007.

18     SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect  
19 July 1, 2006. It shall remain effective for a period of 1 year and 6 months and, at the  
20 end of December 31, 2007, with no further action required by the General Assembly,  
21 this Act shall be abrogated and of no further force and effect.