

1 HOUSE BILL NO. 456

2 INTRODUCED BY J. KARLEN, J. REAVIS, L. MUSZKIEWICZ, B. EDWARDS, J. ISALY, M. LEE, P. STRAND,
3 J. SECKINGER, B. CLOSE, P. ELVERUM, S. FYANT, J. WEBER, A. GRIFFITH, M. CUNNINGHAM, D. BAUM,
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6 A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT EXPANDING THE BEST BEGINNINGS CHILD CARE
7 SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM TO PROVIDE SCHOLARSHIPS TO CHILD-CARE WORKERS EMPLOYED BY A
8 LICENSED DAY-CARE CENTER OR REGISTERED FAMILY OR GROUP DAY-CARE HOME; PROVIDING
9 AN APPROPRIATION; AMENDING SECTIONS 52-2-714 AND 52-2-715, MCA; AND PROVIDING AN
10 EFFECTIVE DATE."

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12 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

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14 **Section 1.** Section 52-2-714, MCA, is amended to read:

15 **"52-2-714. Best beginnings child care scholarship program.** There is a best beginnings child care
16 scholarship program administered by the department. The program is established to provide scholarships to
17 qualified low-income families and eligible child-care workers employed at a licensed day-care center or
18 registered family or group day-care home whose child received care provided by a licensed or registered ~~child~~
19 ~~care-child-care~~ provider or day-care facility."

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21 **Section 2.** Section 52-2-715, MCA, is amended to read:

22 **"52-2-715. Family income eligibility -- child-care worker eligibility -- requirements.** ~~(1) In-Except~~
23 ~~as provided in subsection (2), in determining income eligibility for qualified low-income families~~ for the best
24 beginnings child care scholarship program, the department shall:

25 ~~(4)(a)~~ set a qualifying income threshold at no less than 185% of the federal poverty level for each
26 family size; and

27 ~~(2)(b)~~ set a maximum qualifying income level that is no higher than that allowed by the federal child
28 care and development block grant.

1 (2) ~~(a) A child-care worker is eligible for the best beginnings child care scholarship program if the~~
2 ~~worker:~~

3 (A) ~~is employed at a licensed day-care center or registered family or group day-care home and is~~
4 ~~engaged in any of the eligible activities, FOR AT LEAST THE MINIMUM NUMBER OF HOURS REQUIRED as established~~
5 ~~by the department pursuant to 45 CFR 98.16(g), for at least the required minimum number of hours ; AND~~

6 (B) ~~HAS A HOUSEHOLD INCOME THAT IS LESS THAN TWO TIMES THE STATE MEDIAN INCOME.~~

7 (b) ~~The income eligibility requirements provided in subsection (1) do not apply to a child-care~~
8 ~~worker who is otherwise eligible under this subsection (2)."~~

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10 NEW SECTION. Section 3. Appropriation. There is appropriated \$5.5 million from the general fund
11 to the department of public health and human services for each year of the biennium beginning July 1, 2025, for
12 the purposes of providing best beginnings child care scholarships to eligible child-care workers as provided in
13 [section 1].

14

15 NEW SECTION. Section 4. Effective date. [This act] is effective July 1, 2025.

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