

1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to caregiving youth; defining the
3 terms "caregiving youth" and "household member";
4 creating the Florida Caregiving Youth Task Force
5 within the Department of Health for a specified
6 purpose; requiring the department to provide
7 administrative and technical assistance to the task
8 force; providing for membership, meetings, and duties
9 of the task force; providing duties for co-chairs of
10 the task force; requiring state agencies to assist and
11 cooperate with the task force upon request; requiring
12 the task force to submit a final report to the
13 Governor, the Legislature, the State Surgeon General,
14 and the director of the Office of Program Policy
15 Analysis and Government Accountability by a specified
16 date; providing for expiration of the task force;
17 creating s. 1006.045, F.S.; defining the terms
18 "caregiving youth" and "household member"; providing a
19 legislative finding; requiring the Department of
20 Education to maintain and make available to school
21 districts a comprehensive list of specified
22 information; requiring each middle and high school to
23 have a designated caregiving youth liaison; requiring
24 liaisons to connect caregiving youth to specified
25 supports and services; providing that caregiving youth

26 | may count hours devoted to caring for a household
 27 | member toward certain community service hour
 28 | requirements; requiring the department to develop a
 29 | specified form and procedure; amending s. 1009.25,
 30 | F.S.; exempting caregiving youth from payment of
 31 | certain tuition and fees under certain circumstances;
 32 | creating s. 1012.581, F.S.; requiring the department
 33 | to establish a training program for school personnel
 34 | related to caregiving youth for a specified purpose;
 35 | requiring the department to select a regional or
 36 | national authority on caregiving youth to facilitate
 37 | providing such training to school personnel; providing
 38 | requirements for the training; requiring school
 39 | districts to notify school personnel who complete the
 40 | training of specified information; providing an
 41 | effective date.

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43 | Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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45 | Section 1. Florida Caregiving Youth Task Force.—

46 | (1) DEFINITIONS.—As used in this section, the term:

47 | (a) "Caregiving youth" means a person younger than 18
 48 | years of age who is responsible, to varying degrees, for the
 49 | care of a household member in need of assistance due to a
 50 | chronic physical or mental illness, a disability, frailty

51 associated with aging, substance abuse, or other similar
52 condition. For purposes of this definition, care of a household
53 member includes, but is not limited to, direct medical and
54 personal care, household management, language translation in
55 medical settings, emotional support, and parenting siblings.

56 (b) "Household member" means a parent, a grandparent, a
57 sibling, or any extended family member residing in the home,
58 whether related by whole or half blood, by affinity, or by
59 adoption.

60 (2) TASK FORCE CREATION.—The Florida Caregiving Youth Task
61 Force, a task force as defined in s. 20.03(5), Florida Statutes,
62 is created within the Department of Health to study and make
63 findings and recommendations regarding the necessary supports
64 for caregiving youth who are assisting the aging or adults with
65 disabilities. The department shall provide administrative and
66 technical assistance to the task force in the performance of its
67 duties.

68 (3) MEMBERSHIP.—

69 (a) The task force shall be composed of the following
70 members, to be appointed by July 1, 2024:

71 1. One member of the Senate, appointed by the President of
72 the Senate, to serve as a co-chair.

73 2. One member of the House of Representatives, appointed
74 by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, to serve as a
75 co-chair.

76 3. One representative of the Department of Health,
 77 appointed by the State Surgeon General.

78 4. One representative of the Department of Education,
 79 appointed by the Commissioner of Education.

80 5. One representative of the Department of Children and
 81 Families, appointed by the Secretary of Children and Families.

82 6. One representative of the Agency for Persons with
 83 Disabilities, appointed by the director of the agency.

84 7. One representative of the Department of Elderly
 85 Affairs, appointed by the Secretary of Elderly Affairs.

86 8. One representative of AARP Florida, appointed by the
 87 state director of the organization.

88 9. One representative of the American Association of
 89 Caregiving Youth, appointed by the board of directors of the
 90 association.

91 10. One representative of the Florida Developmental
 92 Disabilities Council, appointed by the chair of the executive
 93 committee of the council.

94 11. One representative of the Alzheimer's Association
 95 Southeast Chapter, appointed by the executive director of the
 96 chapter.

97 12. Seven members of the public, appointed by the
 98 Governor. The Governor is encouraged to appoint a public member
 99 representing each of the following:

100 a. Adult day care centers.

101 b. Adult caregivers.
 102 c. Caregiving youth.
 103 d. Adult care recipients.
 104 e. Secondary school teachers.
 105 f. Health care professionals.
 106 g. Home health agencies.
 107 (b) Any vacancy occurring on the task force must be filled
 108 in the same manner as the original appointment.
 109 (c) Members shall serve without compensation but are
 110 entitled to reimbursement for per diem and travel expenses
 111 pursuant to s. 112.061, Florida Statutes.
 112 (4) MEETINGS.—
 113 (a) The task force shall hold its first organizational
 114 meeting by August 1, 2024.
 115 (b) The task force shall meet by teleconference or other
 116 electronic means, if possible, to reduce costs. However, the
 117 task force must ensure that members of the public have
 118 meaningful access to such meetings.
 119 (c) A majority of the members of the task force
 120 constitutes a quorum, and the task force may not meet or take
 121 any action without a quorum present.
 122 (5) DUTIES.—The task force shall do all of the following:
 123 (a) Develop a list of evidence-based questions or criteria
 124 that school districts may use to identify caregiving youth in
 125 their respective districts and determine the extent of need for

126 supports for those caregiving youth based on the level of
127 responsibility they have in caring for a household member.

128 (b) Identify current best practices for supporting other
129 at-risk populations in secondary schools which would also
130 benefit caregiving youth in the pursuit of their personal
131 achievement and successful future careers.

132 (c) Survey the school districts in this state to determine
133 which, if any, support services are currently offered to
134 students, including, but not limited to, tutoring, mentoring,
135 occupational skills training, leadership development, and
136 guidance and counseling, and require school districts to
137 identify any eligibility requirements for accessing such
138 services.

139 (d) Identify state and federal funding and resources that
140 may be applicable to and would benefit caregiving youth and
141 determine whether a request for federal approval is needed
142 before such opportunities may be offered to caregiving youth who
143 do not otherwise qualify for such opportunities.

144 (e) Study additional innovative and creative means to
145 support caregiving youth so that they can continue providing
146 necessary in-home care for aging adults and adults with
147 disabilities while pursuing an education or skills training.

148 (f) Identify ways in which the Department of Health, the
149 Department of Education, and the Department of Children and
150 Families can work together to provide comprehensive and

151 streamlined support services to caregiving youth in this state.

152 (g) Identify any legislative barriers to implementing any
153 of the tasks force's recommendations.

154 (6) CO-CHAIR DUTIES.—The co-chairs of the task force are
155 responsible for guiding the task force in performance of its
156 duties, including, but not limited to, all of the following:

157 (a) Coordinating appointments to the task force to ensure
158 that members are assembled in a timely manner.

159 (b) Setting a date, time, and place for the initial
160 organizational meeting, as required under subsection (4), and
161 for subsequent meetings.

162 (c) Supervising the preparation and distribution of
163 meeting notices, agendas, minutes, correspondence, and reports
164 of the task force.

165 (d) After the task force's organizational meeting, sending
166 a list of the members appointed and the meeting notice, agenda,
167 and minutes to the director of the Office of Program Policy
168 Analysis and Government Accountability.

169 (e) Directing the task force's study of applicable
170 policies and resources and programs that are or should be
171 available to caregiving youth.

172 (f) Organizing methods to obtain relevant testimony on the
173 needs of caregiving youth.

174 (g) Overseeing the process of compiling an inventory of
175 the resources available to caregiving youth.

176 (h) Ensuring the timely submission of the task force's
 177 final report under subsection (8).

178 (7) AGENCY COOPERATION.—All state agencies shall assist
 179 and cooperate with the task force as requested and shall provide
 180 reasonable and necessary support staff and materials to the task
 181 force.

182 (8) REPORT.—The task force shall submit a report of its
 183 findings and recommendations to the Governor, the President of
 184 the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the
 185 State Surgeon General, and the director of the Office of Program
 186 Policy Analysis and Government Accountability by January 1,
 187 2025.

188 (9) EXPIRATION.—This section expires June 30, 2025.

189 Section 2. Section 1006.045, Florida Statutes, is created
 190 to read:

191 1006.045 Caregiving youth; resources and support;
 192 community service hours.—

193 (1) DEFINITIONS.—As used in this section, the term:

194 (a) "Caregiving youth" means a person younger than 18
 195 years of age who is responsible, to varying degrees, for the
 196 care of a household member in need of assistance due to a
 197 chronic physical or mental illness, a disability, frailty
 198 associated with aging, substance abuse, or other similar
 199 condition. For purposes of this definition, care of a household
 200 member includes, but is not limited to, direct medical and

201 personal care, household management, language translation in
202 medical settings, emotional support, and parenting siblings.

203 (b) "Household member" means a parent, a grandparent, a
204 sibling, or any extended family member residing in the home,
205 whether related by whole or half blood, by affinity, or by
206 adoption.

207 (2) LEGISLATIVE FINDING.—The Legislature recognizes that
208 children and adolescents who serve as caregivers to chronically
209 ill, injured, elderly, or disabled family members are at an
210 academic disadvantage and deserve support in their pursuit of
211 personal achievement and successful future careers.

212 (3) RESOURCES AND SUPPORT FOR CAREGIVING YOUTH.—The
213 department shall maintain and make available to school districts
214 a comprehensive list of benefits and resources available to
215 caregiving youth in this state.

216 (4) CAREGIVING YOUTH LIAISONS.—Each middle and high school
217 must have a designated caregiving youth liaison to connect
218 students who are caregiving youth to available supports and
219 services that will promote their academic success, including,
220 but not limited to, all of the following:

221 (a) Any available free, remote, or in-person tutoring or
222 mentoring opportunities, professional training opportunities,
223 mental health services, transportation services, and financial
224 assistance.

225 (b) Information on eligibility for tuition and fee waiver

226 programs established under s. 1009.25.

227 (c) The ability of caregiving youth to count hours devoted
 228 to caring for a household member toward community service
 229 requirements for high school graduation and for participation in
 230 the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program.

231 (d) Any state or federal resources available to caregiving
 232 youth to support their education and training for successful
 233 future careers.

234 (5) COMMUNITY SERVICE HOURS.—The hours that high school
 235 students devote to care of a household member may be counted
 236 toward meeting community service requirements for high school
 237 graduation and for participation in the Florida Bright Futures
 238 Scholarship Program. The department shall develop a standard
 239 form for reporting such hours for community service and a
 240 procedure for submitting such hours for approval.

241 Section 3. Paragraph (h) is added to subsection (1) of
 242 section 1009.25, Florida Statutes, to read:

243 1009.25 Fee exemptions.—

244 (1) The following students are exempt from the payment of
 245 tuition and fees, including lab fees, at a school district that
 246 provides workforce education programs, Florida College System
 247 institution, or state university:

248 (h) A student who is a caregiving youth as defined in s.
 249 1006.045, provided that he or she pursues education or training
 250 in a health-related field of study.

251 Section 4. Section 1012.581, Florida Statutes, is created
 252 to read:

253 1012.581 Training on caregiving youth.—

254 (1) The Department of Education shall establish an
 255 evidence-based training program to help school personnel
 256 identify students who are caregiving youth as defined in s.
 257 1006.045, to understand the difficulties facing such students,
 258 and to learn skills to support those who are struggling
 259 academically due to the added responsibility of caring for a
 260 household member.

261 (2) The department shall select a regional or national
 262 authority on caregiving youth to facilitate providing the
 263 training to all school personnel in elementary, middle, and high
 264 schools.

265 (3) The training program must include, but need not be
 266 limited to:

267 (a) An overview of caregiving youth, including an
 268 explanation of the nature and varying degrees of responsibility
 269 caregiving youth assume in providing care for a household member
 270 and how this may contribute to underperformance in school.

271 (b) Instruction on how to identify caregiving youth and
 272 determine the extent of their need for support in the pursuit of
 273 personal achievement and successful future careers, including
 274 procedures and practices that school personnel can implement to
 275 promote the academic success of caregiving youth in their

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276 classrooms.

277 (c) Information on available resources for caregiving
278 youth and how school personnel can connect their students to
279 such resources.

280 (4) Each school district shall notify all school personnel
281 who have received training under this section of the resources
282 and services available for caregiving youth in the school
283 district and the individuals to contact if a student needs such
284 services.

285 Section 5. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law.