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**MEMORANDUM IN SUPPORT**  
**Assembly Bill 7726 (Jaffee)/ Senate Bill 5929 (Avella)**

Establishes a child care availability task force to evaluate the need for and availability of child care.

A Better Balance supports the creation of a bipartisan childcare availability Task Force in order to establish the scope and impact of the current childcare crisis in New York State, and to develop recommendations for short and long term sustainable solutions. We also assert that the Task Force is only one part of the solution to this crisis.

A Better Balance is dedicated to leveraging the power of the law to promote equality and expand choices for working families at all income levels so that they may care for their families without risking their economic security. Our organization led advocacy efforts to pass New York's groundbreaking paid family leave law. The program, the strongest in the nation, will benefit millions of New York families and enable workers to breathe more easily knowing they can pay their bills when they take time off to welcome a new child or care for an ailing loved one. New York needs to build on the success of paid family leave and expand access to affordable and robust childcare. Currently, the average annual cost for center-based infant care in New York State is \$14,144, an exorbitant sum for many working families.<sup>1</sup> The creation of this bipartisan Task Force is one key step in addressing the childcare crisis in New York.

To address this crisis, New York State needs to develop a comprehensive statewide strategy for significantly expanding access to quality, affordable child care for all children and families, and for providing fair wages and benefits, and a path to professionalism, for all childcare workers.

A task force can begin that process, but it must include the following:

- Resources to complete its mandated work in a thorough and timely manner. The legislation requires the task force to undertake robust data collection and write an initial report on its findings and recommendations in a short (six month) time-frame. The Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) cannot accomplish this without adequate resources.
- A statewide policy advocate with special knowledge of child care systems. This representative is essential to helping the other members understand the nuances and complexities of the system, and to bring to the table knowledge of what other states are

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<sup>1</sup> Parents and the High Cost of Child Care: 2016 Report, ChildCare Aware of America, <http://www.usa.childcareaware.org/advocacy-public-policy/resources/reports-and-research/costofcare/>.

doing to address this issue.

- Representatives from the New York Economic Development Council, State Education Department, Department of Labor, and Department of Tax. These representatives are necessary because economic development, education, workforce supports and tax reform are all essential to solving the State's child care crisis and ultimately creating a child care system, from early care through school-age, that is affordable, high-quality, and accessible to all.
- Representation from the population of child care workers.

We further request that, as part of its work, the task force research, identify, and recommend new, sustainable funding streams for child care, including, but not limited to, economic development funds, dedicated tax levies, and public-private partnerships.

Thank you. We look forward to working with you as the task force undertakes this important work.