



May 27, 2021

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## MEMORANDUM IN SUPPORT

S.6589 (Persaud) / A.7534 (Rosenthal)

A.7661 (Hevesi)

The Buffalo Niagara Partnership, on behalf of its members who employ over a quarter million people in the region, SUPPORTS two bills that remove barriers to workforce development and economic mobility. The BNP is committed to addressing the “benefits cliff,” an economic phenomenon in which a worker’s earnings increase disqualifies them from social service benefits, thereby worsening their net financial position. The BNP has focused significant attention on working with employers to understand the cliff and structure career pathways accordingly. However, these bills can help supplement our work by reducing the negative impacts of the cliff and incentivizing career advancement.

Under S.6589/A.7534, if a worker completed a federal or state job training program and then entered the workforce, the state would disregard that worker’s first six months of earned income when calculating their income-based benefits. The practical impact of this bill would be that workers would not have to fear losing their social service benefits upon entering the workforce or taking a higher-paying job. During the six-month period, workers could save their additional earned income to help ease the transition once they qualify out of benefits. This bill would remove financial barriers that perpetuate generational poverty and give workers the opportunity to advance their careers without fear of financial damage to their families.

A.7661 would expand child care benefits to incentivize parental pursuit of employment, training, or educational opportunities. Current law requires that parents must be unable to “provide care and supervision for a substantial part of the day” to receive child care benefits. This law makes qualifying difficult for parents working rotating schedules. Also, it does not adequately account for time spent on related but unscheduled career activity, such as schoolwork or job training programs. Under this bill, working parents would have the opportunity to pursue jobs and training/educational opportunities while ensuring that their children receive proper care. In doing so, the state could help low-income parents advance their careers and better care for their families.

Both of these bills would reduce barriers to career advancement and incentivize parents to further their educations, pursue promotions, and better provide for their families. Additionally, these bills would build on the BNP’s benefits cliff efforts, strengthen our regional workforce, and bolster the Buffalo Niagara economy. For these reasons, **the BNP SUPPORTS S.6589/A.7534 and A.7661.**