

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2005

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HOUSE BILL 1576

Short Title: Funds for Early Intervention Services. (Public)

Sponsors: Representatives Weiss, Insko (Primary Sponsors); Alexander, Coleman, Glazier, Hackney, Harrison, Luebke, Parmon, Ross, and Wainwright.

Referred to: Appropriations.

May 2, 2005

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT TO APPROPRIATE FUNDS TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES FOR EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICES.

Whereas, Early Intervention is an entitlement program under which federal law requires states to plan and provide early intervention services for children under age three with or at risk for disabilities or delays, and their families; and

Whereas, the total number of children entitled to early intervention services in this State increased by thirty-three percent between 2001 and 2004; and

Whereas, over the past four years there has been recurring annual growth in North Carolina children served of three and two-tenths percent of the total birth to age three population in North Carolina; and

Whereas, recently enacted federal child abuse legislation requires all children under age three to be referred, evaluated, and provided necessary early intervention services and has resulted in almost six thousand additional children qualifying for early intervention services; and

Whereas, increased awareness of and accessibility to early intervention services has increased referral rates by fifty-four and four-tenths percent in May and June of 2004; and

Whereas, there has been no increase in State appropriations for early intervention since fiscal year 1998-99, in the 2002-2003 fiscal year there was a two million dollar reduction in categorical funding for early intervention, and there has been no increase in federal funding for recently enacted child abuse legislation; and

Whereas, funding cuts and the lack of funding increases over time, have resulted in a significant waiting list for early intervention services; and

Whereas, in order for the State to continue to qualify for annual federal funds amounting to twelve million five hundred thousand dollars, the State must address issues related to funding and compliance with federal requirements; Now, therefore, The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

1 **SECTION 1.** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the
2 Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health, the sum of
3 seventeen million four hundred ninety-three thousand four hundred seventy-nine dollars
4 (\$17,493,479) for the 2005-2006 fiscal year, and the sum of twenty-four million five
5 hundred eleven thousand seven hundred eleven dollars (\$24,511,711) for the 2006-2007
6 fiscal year. These funds shall be used to increase the total number of children provided
7 early intervention services and to reduce early intervention case management caseloads.

8 **SECTION 2.** This act becomes effective July 1, 2005.