

1 H.628

2 Introduced by Representative Mrowicki of Putney

3 Referred to Committee on

4 Date:

5 Subject: Human services; commission; fatherhood

6 Statement of purpose: This bill proposes to create a commission on fatherhood
7 to examine the barriers to responsible fatherhood, and recommend policies to
8 support fathers and healthy family relationships.

9 An act relating to commission on fatherhood

10 It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

11 Sec. 1. 3 V.S.A. chapter 2 is added to read:

12 CHAPTER 2. VERMONT COMMISSION ON FATHERHOOD

13 § 31. COMMISSION; PURPOSE

14 The Vermont commission on fatherhood is created in the agency of human
15 services to examine the barriers to responsible fatherhood, to make
16 recommendations to the governor and general assembly on methods of
17 improving services to fathers, and to serve in an advisory capacity to state
18 agencies to promote healthy family relationships and fatherhood.

1 § 32. MEMBERS

2 (a) The commission shall consist of the following 11 members or their
3 designees:

4 (1) the chair of the senate committee on health and welfare;

5 (2) the chair of the house committee on human services;

6 (3) the commissioners of the departments for children and families; of
7 health; of education; and of labor;

8 (4) the court administrator;

9 (5) one family court judge appointed by the chief justice of the supreme
10 court;

11 (6) three representatives, appointed by the governor, of nonprofit
12 community organizations serving fathers or families.

13 (b) The following members shall service a term of four years: the family
14 court judge and the three representatives of a nonprofit community
15 organization. The governor shall stagger the terms of the representatives of a
16 nonprofit organization.

17 (c)(1) The commissioner for children and families shall call the first
18 meeting of the commission. The commission, at its first meeting, shall elect a
19 chair or cochairs.

20 (2) The agency of human services shall provide administrative and staff
21 support to the commission.

1 (d) Funds from private and public sources may be accepted and utilized by
2 the commission to fulfill its duties under section 33 of this title.

3 (e) Legislative members of the commission shall be entitled to
4 compensation and reimbursement for expenses under section 406 of Title 2.
5 All other members not receiving compensation for service on the commission
6 from another source are entitled to compensation under section 1010 of
7 Title 32.

8 § 33. DUTIES

9 (a) The commission shall examine the barriers to responsible fatherhood,
10 including:

11 (1) identifying significant personal, institutional, and legal barriers to
12 fathers' involvement in the lives of their children;

13 (2) identifying the availability of private and public services to enhance
14 the parenting ability of fathers; and

15 (3) determining services which are missing and necessary to support
16 fathers.

17 (b) The commission shall make recommendations to the governor and
18 general assembly on methods of improving services to fathers, including:

19 (1) identifying promising best practices that support and engage both
20 parents in the emotional and financial support of their children;

1 (2) proposing policies that sustain and reengage fathers in the lives of
2 their children;

3 (3) promoting programs designed to educate and train young men who
4 are either current or future fathers as to effective parenting skills, behaviors,
5 and attitudes; and

6 (4) supporting programs that support responsible fatherhood.

7 (c) The commission shall serve in an advisory capacity to state agencies to
8 promote healthy family relationships and fatherhood, including:

9 (1) acting as a central clearinghouse and coordinating body for
10 governmental and nongovernmental activities and information relating to the
11 promotion of healthy families;

12 (2) raising public awareness of the consequences that the absence of the
13 father may cause in a child's life; and

14 (3) recommending changes to align supports for fathers across state
15 agencies.

16 (d) The commission shall consult with experts, with fathers, and with
17 providers of services to fathers, children, or families. The commission shall
18 hold at least one public hearing annually.