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H.43

Introduced by Representatives Mrowicki of Putney, Batchelor of Derby, Dakin
of Chester, Donahue of Northfield, Frank of Underhill, French
of Randolph, Haas of Rochester, Krowinski of Burlington,
McFaun of Barre Town, Pugh of South Burlington, Till of
Jericho, Trieber of Rockingham, and Waite-Simpson of Essex

Referred to Committee on

Date:

Subject: Human services; commission; fatherhood

Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to create a
Commission on Fatherhood to examine the barriers to responsible fatherhood
and recommend policies to support fathers and healthy family relationships.

An act relating to the Commission on Fatherhood

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

Sec. 1. 33 V.S.A. chapter 2 is added to read:

CHAPTER 2. VERMONT COMMISSION ON FATHERHOOD

§ 201. COMMISSION; PURPOSE

The Vermont Commission on Fatherhood is established in the Agency of
Human Services to examine the barriers to responsible fatherhood, to make
recommendations to the Governor and General Assembly on manners of

1 improving services to fathers, and to serve in an advisory capacity to state
2 agencies to promote healthy family relationships and fatherhood.

3 § 202. MEMBERS

4 (a) The Commission shall consist of the following seven members:

5 (1) the Chair of the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare or
6 legislative designee;

7 (2) the Chair of the House Committee on Human Services or legislative
8 designee;

9 (3) the Commissioner for Children and Families or designee;

10 (4) one representative of a nonprofit community organization serving
11 fathers or families, appointed by the Governor

12 (5) three representatives with experience serving fathers or families,
13 appointed by the Governor.

14 (b) Members appointed by the Governor shall serve four-year terms, except
15 that three members of the first Commission shall serve three-, two-, and
16 one-year terms respectively to ensure that the Governor appoints a new
17 member to the Commission each year.

18 § 203. DUTIES

19 (a) The Commission shall examine the barriers to responsible fatherhood,
20 including:

1 (1) identifying institutional barriers present in state government and the
2 private sector that inhibit fathers' involvement in the lives of their children;

3 (2) determining the availability of private and public services and
4 resources to enhance fathers' parenting ability; and

5 (3) identifying any services and resources missing that are necessary to
6 support fathers.

7 (b) The Commission shall annually make recommendations to the
8 Governor and General Assembly on methods of improving services to fathers,
9 including:

10 (1) identifying best practices that support and engage parents in the
11 emotional and financial upbringing of their children;

12 (2) proposing policies that sustain and engage fathers in the lives of their
13 children;

14 (3) promoting programs designed to educate and train young men who
15 are either current or future fathers about effective parenting skills, behaviors,
16 and attitudes;

17 (4) supporting programs that promote responsible fatherhood; and

18 (5) recommending changes to align supports for fathers across state
19 agencies.

20 (c) The Commission shall serve in an advisory capacity to state agencies to
21 promote healthy family relationships and fatherhood, including:

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

4 (2) raising public awareness of the potential consequences of the
5 absence of a father in a child's life.

6 (d) The Commission shall consult with experts, with fathers, and with
7 providers of services to fathers, children, or families. The Commission shall
8 hold at least one public hearing annually.

9 § 204. ADMINISTRATION AND FUNCTIONS

10 (a) The Commissioner for Children and Families shall call the first meeting
11 of the Commission to occur on or before September 1, 2013. At its first
12 meeting, the Commission shall elect a chair or co-chairs.

13 (b)(1) A majority of the members of the Commission shall be physically
14 present at the same location to constitute a quorum.

15 (2) Action shall be taken only if there is both a quorum and a majority
16 vote of all members physically present and voting.

17 (c) The Commission shall have the administrative, technical, and legal
18 assistance of the Agency of Human Services. For the purposes of preparing
19 recommended legislation, the Commission shall have the assistance of the
20 Office of Legislative Council.

1 (d) Members shall not seek compensation or expense reimbursement for
2 executing the duties of the Commission.

3 (e) External fundraising and grants shall be the sole source of funding for
4 the Commission. Funds from private and public sources shall be accepted and
5 used by the Commission to fulfill its duties under section 203 of this title.

6 Sec. 2. EFFECTIVE DATE

7 This act shall take effect on July 1, 2013.