H.829

Introduced by Representatives Fay of St. Johnsbury, Donovan of Burlington, and Waite-Simpson of Essex

Referred to Committee on

Date:

Subject: Domestic relations; supervised visitation programs

Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to create a certification process for supervised visitation programs in Vermont and to require the State to provide funding support for the programs. The Vermont Council on Domestic Violence will set the certification standards, oversee the certification process, and ensure that programs meet the certification standards on an ongoing basis.

An act relating to certification of supervised visitation programs in Vermont

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

Sec. 1. 15 V.S.A. § 1174 is added to read:

§ 1174. SUPERVISED VISITATION PROGRAM

(a) The Council shall establish a certification process for supervised visitation programs. The Council shall be the sole entity authorized to certify supervised visitation programs in Vermont.

(b) The Council shall delegate the responsibility for establishing and implementing a certification process to the Supervised Visitation Services Committee, which shall operate as a standing committee of the Council. The Council shall determine the membership of the Committee and shall consider including the following members:

(1) one representative of the Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence;

(2) one representative of the Family Services Division of the Department for Children and Families;

(3) one representative of the Office of Child Support;

(4) one representative of the Vermont Center for Crime Victims Services;

(5) one representative of the Department of Corrections;

(6) two representatives of the Judiciary, one of whom may be a guardian ad litem; and

(7) if available, one member who is a survivor of domestic violence or a custodial or noncustodial parent who has used supervised visitation services, and another member who is an adult who experienced supervised visitation as a child.

(c) The Committee shall develop the certification process for supervised visitation programs required by this section in collaboration with the Vermont Coalition of Supervised Visitation Programs. The process shall include:

(1) creation of statewide standards for supervised visitation programs and a process for periodic review of those standards;

(2) approval of local program review teams responsible for the review of local supervised visitation programs;

(3) review of recommendations of local program review teams;

(4) preparation of recommendations regarding certification of supervised visitation programs based on the information provided by the local program review teams;

(5) distribution of information about certified supervised visitation programs to stakeholders throughout Vermont; and

(6) recommendations for improvements to systems which support supervised visitation services in Vermont.

Sec. 2. APPROPRIATION

The sum of $250,000.00 is appropriated from the General Fund to the Vermont Center for Crime Victims Services to be allocated to supervised visitation programs and the Vermont Council on Domestic Violence in fiscal year 2015 for the purpose of funding the supervised visitation program established under 15 V.S.A. § 1174.

Sec. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on July 1, 2014.