

S.9 (as introduced), Sen. White's suggested changes. Feb. 5. 2015

* * * Legislature; Establishing a Joint Legislative Child
Protection Oversight Committee * * *

Sec. 12. JOINT LEGISLATIVE CHILD PROTECTION OVERSIGHT
COMMITTEE

(a) Creation. There is created a Joint Legislative Child Protection Oversight
Committee.

(b) Membership. The Committee shall be composed of the following 10 members,
who shall be appointed each biennial session of the General Assembly:

(1) Five current members of the House of Representatives, not all from the same
political party, who shall be appointed by the Speaker of the House; and

(2) Five current members of the Senate, not all from the same political party, who
shall be appointed by the Committee on Committees.

(3) In addition to two members-at-large appointed from each Chamber, one
appointment shall be made from the:

(A) House Committee on Appropriations;

(B) Senate Committee on Appropriations;

(C) House Committee on Judiciary;

(D) Senate Committee on Judiciary;

(E) House Committee on Human Services; and

(F) Senate Committee on Health and Welfare.

(c) Powers and duties.

(1) The Committee shall:

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(A) Exercise oversight over Vermont's system for protecting children from abuse and neglect, including:

(i) evaluating whether the branches, departments, agencies, and persons that are responsible for protecting children from abuse and neglect are effective;

(ii) determining if there are deficiencies in the system and the causes of those deficiencies;

(iii) evaluating which programs are the most cost-effective;

(iv) determining whether there is variation in policies, procedures, practices, and outcomes between different areas of the State and the causes and results of any such variation;

(v) determining how to improve data sharing between the courts, treatment providers, Department of Education, Department for Children and Families, and other branches, departments, agencies, and persons involved in protecting children from abuse and neglect, including:

(I) determining the data that should be shared between parties;

(II) investigating regulatory requirements and security parameters;

(III) investigating the potential costs of creating a platform to share data;

and

(vi) making recommendations to address these issues and to improve the system for protecting children from abuse and neglect.

(C) At least annually, report on the Committee's activities and recommendations to the General Assembly.

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(2) The Committee may:

(A) Review and make recommendations to the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations regarding budget proposals and appropriations relating to protecting children from abuse and neglect.

(B) Review aggregate reports concerning child abuse and neglect as necessary to fulfill the Committee's powers and duties.

(d) Assistance. The Committee shall have the administrative, technical, and legal assistance of the Office of Legislative Council.

(e) Data and records. All State agencies and departments shall provide data and aggregated information to the Committee upon request.

(f) Retaliation. No person who is an employee of the State of Vermont, or of any State, local, county, or municipal department, agency, or person involved in child protection, and who testifies before, supplies information to, or cooperates with the Committee shall be subject to retaliation by his or her employer. Retaliation shall include job termination, demotion in rank, reduction in pay, alteration in duties and responsibilities, transfer, or a negative job performance evaluation based on the person's having testified before, supplied information to, or cooperated with the Committee.

(g) Meetings.

(1) The member appointed from the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare shall call the first meeting of the Committee.

(2) The Committee shall select a Chair, Vice Chair, and Clerk from among its members and may adopt rules of procedure. The Chair shall rotate biennially between the House and the Senate members. A quorum shall consist of six members.

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(3) When the General Assembly is in session, the Committee shall meet at the call of the Chair. The Committee may meet six times during adjournment, and may meet more often subject to approval of the Speaker of the House and the President Pro Tempore of the Senate.

(h) Reimbursement. For attendance at meetings during adjournment of the General Assembly, members of the Committee shall be entitled to per diem compensation and reimbursement of expenses pursuant to 2 V.S.A. § 406.

(i) Sunset. On December 30, 2020, this section (creating the Joint Legislative Child Protection Oversight Committee) is repealed and the Committee shall cease to exist.