

1 TO THE HONORABLE SENATE:

2 The Committee on Health and Welfare to which was referred Senate Bill
3 No. 189 entitled “An act relating to foster parents’ rights and protections”
4 respectfully reports that it has considered the same and recommends that the
5 bill be amended by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in
6 lieu thereof the following:

7 Sec. 1. FOSTER PARENT WORKING GROUP; REPORT

8 (a) Creation. There is created a Foster Parent Working Group to
9 recommend policies pertaining to rights and protections for foster parents in
10 Vermont.

11 (b) Membership. The Working Group shall be composed of the following
12 six members:

13 (1) the Commissioner for Children and Families or designee;

14 (2) the Deputy Commissioner for Children and Families’ Family
15 Services Division;

16 (3) a representative of the Vermont Foster and Adoptive Family
17 Association;

18 (4) the Chief Superior Court Judge or designee; and

19 (5) two fosters parents from different regions of the State, appointed by
20 the Governor.

1 (c) Powers and duties. The Working Group shall examine the relationship
2 between foster parents, the Department for Children and Families, and the
3 court system to assess whether any policies should be amended or implemented
4 better to support the work of foster parents, including the following:

5 (1) access to the Department for Children and Families on evenings and
6 weekends;

7 (2) access to the Department for Children and Families' records about a
8 particular foster child or foster family;

9 (3) scheduling court-ordered visits and appointments with the
10 Department for Children and Families; and

11 (4) fear of reprisal for refusal of a placement or raising concerns about
12 the Department for Children and Families or the foster care system.

13 (d) Assistance. The Working Group shall have the administrative,
14 technical, and legal assistance of the Department for Children and Families.

15 (e) Report. On or before January 15, 2017, the Working Group shall
16 submit a written report to the House Committee on Human Services and the
17 Senate Committee on Health and Welfare with its findings, proposed policy
18 changes, and any recommendations for legislative action.

19 (f) Meetings.

20 (1) The Commissioner shall call the first meeting of the Working Group
21 to occur on or before September 1, 2016.

1 (2) The Commissioner shall be the Chair.

2 (4) The Working Group shall cease to exist on January 31, 2017.

3 (g) Reimbursement. Members of the Working Group who are not
4 employees of the State of Vermont and who are not otherwise compensated or
5 reimbursed for their attendance shall be entitled to both per diem compensation
6 and reimbursement of expenses pursuant to 32 V.S.A. § 1010 for no more than
7 three meetings.

8 (h) Appropriation. The sum of \$1,080.00 is appropriated to the Department
9 for Children and Families from the General Fund in fiscal year 2017 for per
10 diem compensation and reimbursement of expenses for members of the
11 Working Group.

12 Sec. 2. EFFECTIVE DATE

13 This act shall take effect on July 1, 2016.

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18 (Committee vote: _____)

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Senator _____

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FOR THE COMMITTEE