

1 H.578

2 Introduced by Representatives Mrowicki of Putney, Donahue of Northfield,
3 and Webb of Shelburne

4 Referred to Committee on

5 Date:

6 Subject: Human services; health; childhood trauma; toxic stress

7 Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to improve
8 systems that support persons who have experienced childhood trauma and
9 toxic stress by establishing the Coordinator of Trauma-Informed Systems in
10 the Agency of Human Services and the Childhood Trauma Tri-Branch
11 Commission.

12 An act relating to establishing the Coordinator of Trauma-Informed
13 Systems and the Childhood Trauma Tri-Branch Commission

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

15 Sec. 1. 33 V.S.A. chapter 34 is amended to read:

16 CHAPTER 34. PROMOTION OF CHILD AND FAMILY RESILIENCE

17 * * *

18 § 3402. DEFINITIONS

19 As used in this chapter:

1 (1) “Toxic stress” means strong, frequent, or prolonged experience of
2 adversity without adequate support.

3 (2) “Trauma-informed” means a type of program, organization, or
4 system that recognizes the widespread impact of trauma and potential paths for
5 recovery; recognizes the signs and symptoms of trauma in clients, families,
6 staff, and others involved in a system; responds by fully integrating knowledge
7 about trauma into policies, procedures, and practices; and seeks actively to
8 resist retraumatization and build resilience among the population served.

9 § 3403. COORDINATION OF TRAUMA-INFORMED SYSTEMS

10 (a) The Coordinator of Trauma-Informed Systems is established within the
11 Agency of Human Services. The Coordinator shall direct the Agency’s
12 response on behalf of clients who have experienced childhood trauma and
13 toxic stress, including:

14 (1) implementing and eliminating or reducing ongoing sources of
15 childhood trauma and toxic stress;

16 (2) establishing new programs and strengthening existing programs
17 within the Agency that build resilience among individuals who have
18 experienced childhood trauma and toxic stress and provide support for affected
19 families in coordination with the Childhood Trauma Tri-Branch Commission
20 established pursuant to section 3404 of this chapter;

1 (3) facilitating communication and coordination between the Agency's
2 departments with regard to childhood trauma, toxic stress, and the promotion
3 of resilience building;

4 (4) collaborating with community partners to build trauma-informed
5 systems and serving as a conduit between providers;

6 (5) coordinating the Agency's approach to childhood trauma, toxic
7 stress, and resilience building with any similar efforts occurring elsewhere in
8 State government; and

9 (6) conducting outreach to inform the public about childhood trauma
10 and toxic stress, including their prevalence, effects, and related financial and
11 human costs.

12 (b) The Coordinator of Trauma-Informed Systems shall provide advice and
13 support to the Secretary and to each of the Agency's departments in addressing
14 childhood trauma, toxic stress, and resilience building. The Coordinator shall
15 also support the Secretary and departments in connecting communities and
16 organizations with the appropriate resources for recovery when traumatic
17 events occur.

18 § 3404. CHILDHOOD TRAUMA TRI-BRANCH COMMISSION

19 (a) Creation. There is created the Childhood Trauma Tri-Branch
20 Commission to examine current services for persons who have experienced

1 childhood trauma or toxic stress and to promote new services that overcome
2 gaps and barriers.

3 (b) Membership. The Commission shall be composed of the following
4 20 members:

5 (1) the Chief Justice of the Vermont Supreme Court or designee;

6 (2) the Chief Superior Judge or designee;

7 (3) a member appointed by Vermont Legal Aid;

8 (4) a member appointed by the Vermont Bar Association;

9 (5) the Secretary of Education or designee;

10 (6) the Agency of Human Services' Coordinator of Trauma-Informed

11 Systems;

12 (7) the Commissioner for Children and Families or designee;

13 (8) the Commissioner of Health or designee;

14 (9) the Commissioner of Corrections or designee;

15 (10) the Commissioner of Mental Health or designee;

16 (11) the Senate President Pro Tempore or designee;

17 (12) the Chair of the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare or

18 designee;

19 (13) the Chair of the Senate Committee on Education or designee;

20 (14) the Chair of the House Committee on Human Services or designee;

21 (15) the Chair of the House Committee on Education or designee;

1 (16) the Chair of the House Committee on Health Care or designee;

2 (17) a member appointed by Prevent Child Abuse Vermont;

3 (18) a member appointed by the Vermont Council of Developmental and
4 Mental Health Services;

5 (19) a member appointed by Vermont's parent-child centers; and

6 (20) a pediatrician appointed by the Vermont Chapter of the American
7 Academy of Pediatrics.

8 (c) Powers and duties. The Commission shall examine current services for
9 persons who have experienced childhood trauma or toxic stress and promote
10 new services that overcome gaps and barriers by:

11 (1) identifying and mapping current services by region;

12 (2) providing oversight and evaluation of current services, including the
13 development of a metric for use in evaluating services;

14 (3) promoting new evidence-based services in regions of the State where
15 mapping indicates gaps in or barriers to services;

16 (4) examining financial costs in Vermont associated with childhood
17 trauma and toxic stress; and

18 (5) integrating services throughout State government.

19 (d) Assistance. The Commission shall have the administrative, technical,
20 and legal assistance of the Agency of Human Services.

1 (e) Report. Annually, on or before January 15, beginning on January 15,
2 2019, the Commission shall submit a written report to the Governor and the
3 General Assembly with its summary of activities, findings, and any
4 recommendations for legislative action.

5 (f) Meetings.

6 (1) The Chief Justice of the Vermont Supreme Court or designee shall
7 call the first meeting of the Commission to occur on or before August 1, 2018.

8 (2) The Committee shall select a chair from among its members at the
9 first meeting. The Chair shall serve a two-year term. In the event the Chair is
10 not able to complete his or her term, a new chair shall be selected from among
11 the Commission's members to serve for the remainder of the term.

12 (3) A majority of the membership shall constitute a quorum.

13 (4) The Commission shall convene once each quarter.

14 (g) Reimbursement.

15 (1) For attendance at meetings during adjournment of the General
16 Assembly, legislative members of the Commission shall be entitled to per diem
17 compensation and reimbursement of expenses pursuant to 2 V.S.A. § 406.

18 (2) Other members of the Commission who are not employees of the
19 State of Vermont and who are not otherwise compensated or reimbursed for
20 their attendance shall be entitled to per diem compensation and reimbursement

1 of expenses pursuant to 32 V.S.A. § 1010 for not more than four meetings
2 annually.

3 Sec. 2. EFFECTIVE DATE

4 This act shall take effect on July 1, 2018.