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H.176

Introduced by Representatives Sullivan of Dorset, Poirier of Barre City,
Gannon of Wilmington, and Kimbell of Woodstock

Referred to Committee on

Date:

Subject: Human services; benefit cliffs; consultant

Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes that the
Commissioner of Vermont Health Access contract with an independent
consultant to assess opportunities to reduce the benefit cliffs imposed by
Vermont's public benefit structure.

An act relating to the assessment of Vermont's public benefit structure

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

Sec. 1. PURPOSE

In recognition of the hardship that benefit cliffs pose on working
Vermonters receiving public assistance, the General Assembly seeks to find a
solution that will reduce benefit cliffs and will enable individuals to transition
gradually from public assistance to self-sustaining employment. It is the
intention of the General Assembly that the solution be economically feasible
for the State, empower Vermonters to enter and remain in the workforce, and
minimize disruption to participating beneficiaries.

1 Sec. 2. PUBLIC BENEFIT CONSULTANT

2 (a) The Commissioner of Vermont Health Access shall contract with an
3 independent consultant who has expertise in the fields of finance and human
4 services to evaluate the State's public benefit structure and to recommend
5 methods for diminishing the benefit cliffs experienced by working Vermonters
6 receiving public assistance.

7 (b) The independent consultant shall deliver a report to the General
8 Assembly on or before January 15, 2018 that shall specifically:

9 (1) catalogue existing benefit cliffs embedded within Vermont's public
10 assistance benefit structure and identify where specific State policy changes
11 could diminish financial hardships experienced by working Vermonters
12 receiving public assistance; and

13 (2) recommend how Vermont's public assistance benefit structure could
14 be transformed to transition individuals gradually from public assistance to
15 self-sustaining employment.

16 Sec. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE

17 This act shall take effect on July 1, 2017.