

S.112

An act relating to creating the Spousal Support and Maintenance Task Force

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

Sec. 1. SPOUSAL SUPPORT AND MAINTENANCE TASK FORCE

(a) Creation. There is created the Spousal Support and Maintenance Task Force for the purpose of reviewing and making legislative recommendations to Vermont's law concerning spousal support and maintenance.

(b) Membership. The Task Force shall be composed of the following seven members:

(1) a current member of the House of Representatives appointed by the Speaker of the House;

(2) a current member of the Senate appointed by the Committee on Committees;

(3) a Superior Court judge who has significant experience in the Family Division of Superior Court appointed by the Chief Justice;

(4) the Chief Superior Judge;

(5) two experienced family law attorneys appointed by the Family Law Section of the Vermont Bar Association; and

(6) a representative of Vermont Alimony Reform who is a resident of Vermont.

(c) Powers and duties. The Task Force shall make legislative recommendations to Vermont's spousal support and maintenance laws aimed to improve clarity, fairness, predictability, and consistency across the State in recognition of changes to the family structure in recent decades. The Task Force may hold public hearings and shall consider:

(1) perspectives from stakeholders and interested parties;

(2) the Alimony Reform Report of January 13, 2017 submitted to the House and Senate Committees on Judiciary by the Chief Superior Judge pursuant to 2016 Acts and Resolves No. 167, Sec. 8a; and

(3) the Massachusetts Alimony Reform Act of 2011 and any report providing analysis on distinctions between Vermont law and practice and Massachusetts law and practice.

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

(e) Recommendation. On or before January 15, 2018, the Task Force shall submit its recommendations for any legislative action to the Senate and House Committees on Judiciary.

(f) Meetings.

(1) The Superior Court judge appointed in accordance with subdivision (b)(3) of this section shall serve as chair.

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

(3) The Task Force shall cease to exist on March 1, 2018.

(g) Reimbursement.

(1) For attendance at meetings during adjournment of the General Assembly, legislative members of the Task Force shall be entitled to per diem compensation and reimbursement of expenses pursuant to 2 V.S.A. § 406 for no more than four regular meetings and two public hearings. No meeting shall be held on the same day as a public hearing, and the Task Force shall endeavor to hold the public hearings in geographically diverse parts of the State.

(2) Other members of the Task Force who are not employees of the State of Vermont and who are not otherwise compensated or reimbursed for their attendance shall be entitled to per diem compensation and reimbursement of expenses pursuant to 32 V.S.A. § 1010 for no more than four regular meetings and two public hearings.

Sec. 2. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on passage.