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H.196

Representative Browning of Arlington moves that the bill be amended by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. 1. VERMONT BABY BENEFIT PROGRAM; STUDY; REPORT

(a) The Commissioner of Labor, in consultation with the Secretary of Human Services, and the Commissioners of Financial Regulation and of Taxes, shall study the potential creation of a Tax-Free Vermont Baby Benefit Program that would provide a grant or a form of income replacement to Vermont parents who take unpaid leave following the birth of a child. In particular, the Commissioner shall identify and examine:

(1) the potential costs to the State of providing a maximum benefit of between \$1,000.00 and \$2,000.00 per birth;

(2) various means of providing the benefit to new families, including through a lump-sum payment or weekly wage replacement;

(3) possible limitations on eligibility for the benefit, including residency or employment;

(4) the potential costs and other impacts of providing the benefit for bonding following adoption or the placement of a foster child;

1 (5) various models for administering the program in an efficient, cost-
2 effective, and user-friendly manner without requiring significant up-front
3 expenditures by the State; and

4 (6) possible funding sources including uncollected bottle deposits,
5 unclaimed property; legal settlements benefiting the State; an opportunity for
6 individuals to designate funds on their income tax returns; a tax on specific
7 goods or services; or an income tax surcharge.

8 (b) On or before January 15, 2018, the Commissioner of Labor shall submit
9 a written report to the General Assembly with his or her findings and a
10 recommendation for legislative action necessary to create the Tax-Free
11 Vermont Baby Benefit Program.

12 Sec. 2. EFFECTIVE DATE

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