

1 TO THE HONORABLE SENATE:

2 The Committee on Judiciary to which was referred House Bill No. 502
3 entitled “An act relating to modernizing Vermont’s parentage laws”
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. FINDINGS AND INTENT

8 Current Vermont law provides detailed guidance as to the legal and physical
9 rights and responsibilities of parents, with respect to their biological children
10 or stepchildren, if they marry and divorce. However, statutory law has not
11 kept pace with the changing nature of today’s families. Guidance is
12 significantly lacking with respect to the rights of unmarried parents or persons
13 who have acted as parents, and parents who have conceived children through
14 assisted reproductive technology. Through this act, the General Assembly
15 seeks to assemble attorneys and members with particular expertise in these
16 matters who can examine parentage laws in other jurisdictions and develop a
17 proposal for the General Assembly to consider during the 2018 legislative
18 session that integrates with our existing laws best practices for providing for
19 the best interest of the child in various types of parentage proceedings.

1 Sec. 2. PARENTAGE STUDY COMMITTEE

2 (a) Creation. There is created the Parentage Study Committee to examine
3 and provide recommendations with regard to modernizing Vermont's
4 parentage laws in recognition of the changing nature of the family.

5 (b) Membership. The Committee shall be composed of the following
6 members:

7 (1) a judge or Justice appointed by the Administrative Judge;

8 (2) a member appointed by the Commissioner for Children and
9 Families;

10 (3) an attorney appointed by the Director of the Office of Child Support;

11 (4) two members appointed by the Vermont Bar Association who are
12 attorneys experienced in parentage issues related to reproductive technology
13 and surrogacy; and

14 (5) one member who is a medical professional with expertise who is
15 appointed by the other members of the Committee at its first meeting.

16 (c) Powers and duties. The Committee shall study how Vermont's
17 parentage laws should be updated to address various issues that have come
18 before the courts in recent years and issues that have arisen and been addressed
19 in other New England states on these matters, including assisted reproductive
20 technology and de facto parentage.

1 (d) Report. On or before October 1, 2017, the Committee shall submit a
2 written report to the House and Senate Committees on Judiciary, the Senate
3 Committee on Health and Welfare, and the House Committee on Human
4 Services with its findings and recommendations for legislative action.

5 Sec. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE

6 This act shall take effect on passage.

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9 (Committee vote: _____)

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Senator _____

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FOR THE COMMITTEE