

1 Introduced by Committee on Judiciary

2 Date:

3 Subject: Family law; spousal support

4 Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to create a
5 spousal support and maintenance task force.

6 An act relating to creating a spousal support and maintenance task force

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

8 Sec. 1. SPOUSAL SUPPORT AND MAINTENANCE TASK FORCE

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

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

14 (1) a current member of the House of Representatives who shall be
15 appointed by the Speaker of the House;

16 (2) a current member of the Senate who shall be appointed by the
17 Committee on Committees;

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

20 (4) the Chief Superior Court Judge;

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

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

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

10 (1) perspectives from stakeholders and interested parties;

11 (2) the Alimony Reform Report of January 13, 2017 submitted to the
12 House and Senate Committees on Judiciary by the Chief Superior Judge
13 pursuant to section 8a of 2016 Act 167; and

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

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

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

1 (f) Meetings.

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

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

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

6 (g) Reimbursement.

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

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

18 Sec. 2. EFFECTIVE DATE

19 This act shall take effect on passage.