

2015 Act No. 60 (An act relating to improving Vermont's system for protecting children from abuse and neglect) as amended by 2018 Act No. 207 (An act relating to the Advisory Council on Child Poverty and Strengthening Families)

Sec. 23. JOINT LEGISLATIVE CHILD PROTECTION OVERSIGHT

COMMITTEE

(a) Creation. There is created a Joint Legislative Child Protection Oversight Committee.

(b) Membership. The Committee shall be composed of the following six members, who shall be appointed each biennial session of the General Assembly:

(1) Three current members of the House of Representatives, not all from the same political party, who shall be appointed by the Speaker of the House.

(2) Three current members of the Senate, not all from the same political party, who shall be appointed by the Committee on Committees.

(c) Powers and duties.

(1) The Committee shall exercise oversight over Vermont's systems for youth justice and protecting children from abuse and neglect, including:

(A) evaluating whether the branches, departments, agencies, and persons that are responsible for protecting children from abuse and neglect are effective;

(B) determining if there are deficiencies in the system and the causes of those deficiencies;

(C) evaluating which programs are the most cost-effective; and

(D) determining whether there is variation in policies, procedures, practices, and outcomes between different areas of the State and the causes and results of any such variation.

(2) The Committee may review and make recommendations to the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations regarding budget proposals and appropriations relating to protecting children from abuse and neglect.

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

(e) Retaliation. No person who is an employee of the State of Vermont, or of any State, local, county, or municipal department, agency, or person involved in child protection, and who testifies before, supplies information to, or cooperates with the Committee shall be subject to retaliation by his or her employer. Retaliation shall include job termination, demotion in rank, reduction in pay, alteration in duties and responsibilities, transfer, or a negative job performance evaluation based on the person's having testified before, supplied information to, or cooperated with the Committee.

(f) Meetings.

(1) The first meeting of the Committee shall be called by the first Senator appointed to the Committee.

(2) The Committee shall select a Chair, Vice Chair, and Clerk from among its members and may adopt rules of procedure. The Chair shall rotate biennially between the House and the Senate members. A quorum shall consist of five members.

(3) When the General Assembly is in session, the Committee shall meet at the call of the Chair. The Committee may meet six times during adjournment, and may meet more often subject to approval of the Speaker of the House and the President Pro Tempore of the Senate.

(g) Reimbursement. For attendance at meetings during adjournment of the General Assembly, members of the Committee shall be entitled to per diem compensation and reimbursement of expenses pursuant to 2 V.S.A. § 406.

(h) Sunset. On June 1, 2022, this section (creating the Joint Legislative Child Protection Oversight Committee) is repealed and the Committee shall cease to exist.