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H.36

Introduced by Representatives Goodnow of Brattleboro and LaLonde of South  
Burlington

Referred to Committee on

Date:

Subject: Judiciary; Family Division of the Superior Court; forensic evaluators

Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to request the  
Chief Superior Judge, the Office of Professional Regulation, and the Vermont  
Psychological Association to make recommendations to the General Assembly  
regarding increasing the availability of family forensic evaluators to assist the  
court in complex cases involving child welfare and parenting matters.

An act relating to family forensic evaluators

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

Sec. 1. FAMILY FORENSIC EVALUATOR RECOMMENDATIONS

(a) Family forensic evaluators are mental health professionals who conduct  
evaluations for the purposes of providing information to attorneys, judges, and  
state agencies in child welfare and parenting matters. Such evaluators are an  
important resource in the Family Division of the Superior Court in complex  
cases involving parental rights and responsibilities. A current lack of such

1 evaluators hinders the ability of the judicial system to expeditiously resolve  
2 matters before the court in a manner that serves the best interests of children.

3 (b) The General Assembly requests that the Chief Superior Judge, the  
4 Director of the Office of Professional Regulation, and the Executive Director  
5 of the Vermont Psychological Association work collaboratively to examine the  
6 following:

7 (1) the extent of the need for and geographic distribution of family  
8 forensic evaluators in complex parental rights and responsibilities cases heard  
9 in the Family Division;

10 (2) barriers to increasing the availability of family forensic evaluators in  
11 Vermont and whether protections regarding ethical complaints are warranted;  
12 and

13 (3) strategies for increasing the number of family forensic evaluators in  
14 Vermont.

15 (c) The General Assembly requests that the parties listed in subsection (b)  
16 of this section submit their recommendations to the General Assembly on or  
17 before November 1, 2025.

18 Sec. 2. EFFECTIVE DATE

19 This act shall take effect on passage.