

1 H.95

2 Introduced by Representative Mrowicki of Putney

3 Referred to Committee on

4 Date:

5 Subject: Human services; commission; fatherhood

6 Statement of purpose: This bill proposes to create a commission on fatherhood  
7 to examine the barriers to responsible fatherhood and recommend policies to  
8 support fathers and healthy family relationships.

9 An act relating to commission on fatherhood

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

11 Sec. 1. 3 V.S.A. chapter 2 is added to read:

12 CHAPTER 2. VERMONT COMMISSION ON FATHERHOOD

13 § 31. COMMISSION; PURPOSE

14 The Vermont commission on fatherhood is created in the agency of human  
15 services to examine the barriers to responsible fatherhood, to make  
16 recommendations to the governor and general assembly on methods of  
17 improving services to fathers, and to serve in an advisory capacity to state  
18 agencies to promote healthy family relationships and fatherhood.

1     § 32. MEMBERS

2           (a) The commission shall consist of the following 11 members or their  
3     designees:

4           (1) the chair of the senate committee on health and welfare;

5           (2) the chair of the house committee on human services;

6           (3) the commissioners of the departments for children and families; of  
7     health; of education; and of labor;

8           (4) the court administrator;

9           (5) one family court judge appointed by the chief justice of the supreme  
10    court;

11          (6) three representatives, appointed by the governor, of nonprofit  
12    community organizations serving fathers or families.

13          (b) The following members shall service a term of four years: the family  
14    court judge and the three representatives of nonprofit community  
15    organizations. The governor shall stagger the terms of the representatives of  
16    the nonprofit organizations.

17          (c)(1) The commissioner for children and families shall call the first  
18    meeting of the commission. The commission, at its first meeting, shall elect a  
19    chair or cochairs.

20          (2) The agency of human services shall provide administrative and staff  
21    support to the commission.

1        (d) Funds from private and public sources may be accepted and utilized by  
2        the commission to fulfill its duties under section 33 of this title.

3        (e) Legislative members of the commission shall be entitled to  
4        compensation and reimbursement for expenses under 2 V.S.A. § 406. All  
5        other members not receiving compensation for service on the commission from  
6        another source are entitled to compensation under 32 V.S.A. § 1010.

7        § 33. DUTIES

8        (a) The commission shall examine the barriers to responsible fatherhood,  
9        including:

10        (1) identifying significant personal, institutional, and legal barriers to  
11        fathers' involvement in the lives of their children;

12        (2) identifying the availability of private and public services to enhance  
13        the parenting ability of fathers; and

14        (3) determining which services are missing and necessary to support  
15        fathers.

16        (b) The commission shall make recommendations to the governor and  
17        general assembly on methods of improving services to fathers, including:

18        (1) identifying promising best practices that support and engage both  
19        parents in the emotional and financial support of their children;

20        (2) proposing policies that sustain and engage fathers in the lives of their  
21        children;

1           (3) promoting programs designed to educate and train young men who  
2           are either current or future fathers as to effective parenting skills, behaviors,  
3           and attitudes; and

4           (4) supporting programs that support responsible fatherhood.

5           (c) The commission shall serve in an advisory capacity to state agencies to  
6           promote healthy family relationships and fatherhood, including:

7           (1) acting as a central clearinghouse and coordinating body for  
8           governmental and nongovernmental activities and information relating to the  
9           promotion of healthy families;

10           (2) raising public awareness of the consequences that the absence of the  
11           father in a child's life may cause; and

12           (3) recommending changes to align supports for fathers across state  
13           agencies.

14           (d) The commission shall consult with experts, with fathers, and with  
15           providers of services to fathers, children, or families. The commission shall  
16           hold at least one public hearing annually.

17           Sec. 2. EFFECTIVE DATE

18           This act shall take effect upon passage.