
SENATE BILL 6801

State of Washington 57th Legislature

2002 Regular Session

By Senators Kastama and Kline

Read first time 02/06/2002. Referred to Committee on Human Services & Corrections.

1 AN ACT Relating to the Washington state commission for responsible
2 fatherhood; and adding a new chapter to Title 43 RCW.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that:

5 (1) Children living in single-parent households are more likely to
6 be living in poverty;

7 (2) The overwhelming percentage of children residing in poverty
8 reside in homes where fathers are not present;

9 (3) Children living in poverty are at a significantly greater risk
10 for drug and alcohol abuse;

11 (4) Children living in poverty are twice as likely to drop out of
12 school;

13 (5) The vast majority of homeless and runaway children are from
14 homes where children live in poverty;

15 (6) Washingtonians recognize that children are more likely to
16 thrive with support, guidance, and nurturing from both parents;

17 (7) The absence of one parent from a child's life can place that
18 child at a greater risk of health, emotional, educational, and
19 behavioral problems associated with the child's development;

1 (8) Many young men today are themselves fatherless, lack
2 appropriate role models, and are in need of information and education
3 regarding the appropriate roles and responsibilities of fathers; and

4 (9) Across America there is a renewed understanding of the unique
5 importance fathers play in the lives of their children, families, and
6 communities.

7 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1) The Washington state commission for
8 responsible fatherhood is established in the office of the governor.

9 (2) The commission shall consist of twenty-two members and reflect
10 the geographic and cultural diversity of the state. The membership
11 shall include:

12 (a) Secretary of the department of social and health services, or
13 his or her designee;

14 (b) Secretary of employment securities, or his or her designee;

15 (c) Secretary of office of support enforcement, or his or her
16 designee;

17 (d) Superintendent of public instruction, or his or her designee;

18 (e) Secretary of corrections, or his or her designee;

19 (f) Two members of the senate, one from each of the two major
20 political parties, appointed by the president of the senate, and two
21 members of the house of representatives, one from each of the two major
22 political parties, appointed by the speaker of the house of
23 representatives;

24 (g) One representative from the family law section of the bar,
25 appointed by the governor;

26 (h) One representative from the faith community, appointed by the
27 governor;

28 (i) One representative from the Washington association for
29 prosecuting attorneys, appointed by the governor;

30 (j) Two representatives from fatherhood programs or organizations,
31 appointed by the governor;

32 (k) One representative from domestic violence programs, appointed
33 by the governor;

34 (l) Three at-large members, appointed by the governor;

35 (m) One member from the business community, appointed by the
36 governor;

37 (n) Director of community, trade, and economic development, or his
38 or her designee;

1 (o) Head start collaboration director, or his or her designee; and
2 (p) Regional administrator for administration for children and
3 families, or his or her designee.

4 (3) All commission members shall serve at the pleasure of the
5 governor, but in no case may any member appointed by the governor serve
6 more than three years without formal reappointment by the governor.
7 All legislative members shall serve for two-year terms, and the
8 position of any legislative member shall be deemed vacated whenever
9 such member ceases to be a member of the house from which he or she was
10 appointed. Of the persons initially appointed by the governor to the
11 commission, three shall be appointed to serve one year, three to serve
12 two years, and four to serve three years. Upon expiration of such
13 terms, subsequent appointments shall be for three years. Any vacancies
14 occurring in the membership of the commission shall be filled for the
15 remainder of the unexpired term in the same manner as the original
16 appointments.

17 (4)(a) Nonlegislative members shall be reimbursed for expenses
18 incurred in the performance of their duties in accordance with RCW
19 43.03.050 and 43.03.060.

20 (b) Legislative members shall be reimbursed for expenses incurred
21 in the performance of their duties in accordance with RCW 44.04.120.

22 (5) A simple majority of the membership constitutes a quorum for
23 the purpose of conducting business.

24 (6) The governor shall appoint an executive director of the
25 commission.

26 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** The executive director shall appoint staff
27 who shall be state employees under Title 41 RCW.

28 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** The commission shall adopt rules necessary
29 to carry out the purposes of this chapter in accordance with chapter
30 34.05 RCW.

31 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** The purpose of the commission is to further
32 the understanding of the importance of two parents being actively
33 involved in the lives of a child, with particular emphasis on fathers.
34 The commission is charged with the following:

35 (1) Identify promising best practices that support and engage both
36 parents in the emotional and financial support of their children;

1 (2) Identify obstacles that impede or prevent the involvement of
2 fathers in the lives of their children;

3 (3) Raise public awareness of the consequences the absence of the
4 father may cause in a child's life;

5 (4) Make recommendations for policy and practice both within and
6 without state government that sustain and reengage fathers in the lives
7 of their children;

8 (5) Coordinate programs that promote fatherhood and counter the
9 incidence of fatherlessness in the state of Washington;

10 (6) Promote, foster, encourage, and otherwise support programs
11 designed to educate and train young men who are both current and future
12 fathers as to effective parenting skills, behaviors, and attitudes;

13 (7) Coordinate programs that counter poverty and low income by
14 increasing the capacity for fathers to overcome personal challenges and
15 become productive, independent, and financially responsible
16 contributors to their family; and

17 (8) Report its findings and recommendations to the governor
18 annually.

19 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 6.** Each state department, board, commission,
20 authority, or body within the executive branch that provides services
21 to children and families is directed to plan collaboratively with the
22 commission for services to fathers. Each body is directed to report to
23 the commission on this collaboration and improvements to services for
24 and inclusion of fathers. The commission shall determine the form of
25 such reports and the submission.

26 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 7.** The commission may receive such gifts,
27 grants, and endowments from private sources as may be made from time to
28 time in trust or otherwise for the use and benefit of the purposes of
29 the commission and to expend the same or any income therefrom according
30 to the terms of the gifts, grants, or endowments, and the purposes of
31 this chapter. The executive director shall make a report of such funds
32 received from private sources to the joint legislative audit and review
33 committee on a current basis. Such funds received from private sources
34 shall not be applied to reduce or substitute for the commission's
35 budget as appropriated by the legislature but shall be applied and
36 expended toward projects and functions authorized by this chapter that
37 were not funded by the legislature.

1 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 8.** Sections 1 through 7 of this act constitute
2 a new chapter in Title 43 RCW.

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