

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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S.B. 1130
By: West
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AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Research by the Child and Family Research Partnership at The University of Texas Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs shows that involved fatherhood is linked to better outcomes on nearly every measure of child wellbeing. Children who grow up with involved fathers are 39 percent more likely to earn mostly A's in school, 45 percent less likely to repeat a grade, 60 percent less likely to be suspended or expelled from school, twice as likely to attend college and find stable employment after high school, 75 percent less likely to have a teen birth, and 80 percent less likely to spend time in jail. Additionally, healthy father involvement can serve as a protective factor against maltreatment. Fathers who take on early important parenting responsibilities develop connections with their children that guard against potential maltreatment.

Unfortunately, research shows that fathers are all too often not present in a child's life. In 2016, 40 percent of all births were to unmarried women. Unmarried parents together at the time of their baby's birth often have high hopes for marriage, but these relationships are fragile and about half of parents who were unmarried and living together at their child's birth have parted ways by the time their child is five years old. When unmarried parents split, half of fathers do not see their newborns.

To better understand and promote the healthy family outcomes associated with involved fathers, S.B. 1130 creates a task force on father engagement. The task force will be appointed by the governor, include members of the legislature and representatives of the judiciary, state agencies, and relevant policy fields, and will be charged to: evaluate services and supports available to fathers in this state, study the impact of father engagement on children, families, and communities in this state, and develop a statewide plan for expanding services and supports available to fathers and other strategies to strengthen father engagement in this state. The task force will report to the legislature by September 1, 2020, and will be abolished on September 1, 2021.

As proposed, S.B. 1130 amends current law relating to the establishment of a task force on father engagement in this state.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Chapter 265, Family Code, by adding Subchapter E, as follows

SUBCHAPTER E. TASK FORCE ON FATHER ENGAGEMENT

Sec. 265.201. DEFINITION. Defines "task force."

Sec. 265.202. ESTABLISHMENT. Establishes the task force on father engagement (task force) to evaluate service and supports available to fathers in this state, study the impact of father engagement on children, families, and communities in this state, and develop a

statewide plan for expanding services and supports available to fathers and other strategies to strengthen father engagement in this state.

Sec. 265.203. COMPOSITION. (a) Requires the governor to determine the number of members of the task force.

(b) Provides that the task force is composed of:

(1) members appointed by the governor, which may include certain enumerated members and other members that the governor considers appropriate;

(2) one member of the house of representatives, appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives, or the member's designee; and

(3) one member of the senate, appointed by the lieutenant governor, or the member's designee.

Sec. 265.204. PRESIDING OFFICER. Requires the governor to designate a member of the task force to serve as the presiding officer.

Sec. 265.205. VACANCY. Requires a vacancy on the task force to be filled in the same manner as the original appointment.

Sec. 265.206. MEETINGS. Requires the task force to meet at the call of the presiding officer.

Sec. 265.207. DUTIES. Requires the task force to:

(1) receive reports and testimony from individuals and certain public and private entities regarding father engagement and evidence-based father education programs;

(2) study the social and economic impact of father engagement on children, including in regard to health care, education, child support, child welfare, and the juvenile justice system; and

(3) identify and develop strategies to address barriers to father engagement and to otherwise strengthen father engagement in this state.

Sec. 265.208. REPORT. (a) Requires the task force to prepare a report that includes a description of the task force's activities, the task force's findings, and recommendations for proposed legislation and a statewide plan to expand services and supports to fathers in this state.

(b) Requires the task force, not later than September 1, 2020, to provide a copy of the report to the governor, the lieutenant governor, the speaker of the house of representatives, and each standing committee of the senate and the house of representatives with primary jurisdiction over the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS).

Sec. 265.209. COMPENSATION; REIMBURSEMENT. Prohibits members of the task force from being compensated for their service and from being reimbursed for travel or other expenses incurred while conducting the business of the task force.

Sec. 265.210. ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT. Requires DFPS to provide administrative support to the task force, including reasonably necessary administrative and technical support.

Sec. 265.211. APPLICABILITY OF OTHER LAW. Provides that Chapter 2110 (State Agency Advisory Committees), Government Code, does not apply to the task force.

Sec. 265.212. EXPIRATION. Provides that the task force is abolished and this subsection expires September 1, 2021.

SECTION 2. Requires the governor, the lieutenant governor, and the speaker of the house of the representatives, as soon as practicable after the effective date of this Act, to appoint the members of the task force on father engagement as required by Subchapter E, Chapter 265, Family Code, as added by this Act.

SECTION 3. Effective date: September 1, 2019.