



Substitute House Bill No. 6297

Special Act No. 17-6

AN ACT ESTABLISHING A TASK FORCE TO STUDY VOLUNTARY ADMISSIONS TO THE DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

Section 1. (*Effective from passage*) (a) There is established a task force to study the voluntary services program operated by the Department of Children and Families. The task force shall consider and make recommendations concerning (1) whether the general statutes should be amended to prohibit the Commissioner of Children and Families from requesting or requiring that the parent or guardian of a child or youth admitted to the department on a voluntary basis terminate such parent or guardian's parental rights or transfer legal custody of the child or youth to the department, (2) methods of increasing access to voluntary services provided by the department, including, but not limited to, closing gaps in private insurance coverage that prevent children and youths from accessing such services and aiding parents and guardians in accessing such services on behalf of children and youths without relinquishing custody of such children and youths to the department, (3) methods of improving the voluntary services provided by the department, (4) methods of improving the department's case management services and communication with other state agencies regarding case management, and (5) the ability of

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service providers that provide such voluntary services to meet the needs of children and youths admitted to the department on a voluntary basis, including, but not limited to, whether the number of available service providers is adequate to meet such needs.

(b) The task force shall consist of the following members:

(1) Two appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives, one of whom shall be a pediatrician who serves adolescents and one of whom shall be a representative of a school-based health center;

(2) Two appointed by the president pro tempore of the Senate, one of whom shall be a child psychiatrist and one of whom shall be a primary care provider who serves children and youths;

(3) Two appointed by the majority leader of the House of Representatives, one of whom shall be a school psychologist and one of whom shall be a representative of a community health center;

(4) Two appointed by the majority leader of the Senate, one of whom shall be a judge of probate and one of whom shall be a parent or guardian of a child or youth who has utilized the department's voluntary services program;

(5) Two appointed by the minority leader of the House of Representatives, one of whom shall be a representative of an organization that specializes in the issue of custody relinquishment prevention and one of whom shall be a representative of an organization that advocates for consumers of the department's voluntary services program;

(6) Two appointed by the minority leader of the Senate, one of whom shall be a health insurer and one of whom shall be a representative of a service provider that provides voluntary services through the department;

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(7) One appointed by the Governor, who shall be a representative of a child advocacy organization;

(8) The Commissioner of Children and Families, or the commissioner's designee;

(9) The Commissioner of Mental Health and Addiction Services, or the commissioner's designee;

(10) The Commissioner of Public Health, or the commissioner's designee;

(11) The Commissioner of Education, or the commissioner's designee;

(12) The Commissioner of Developmental Services, or the commissioner's designee;

(13) The Insurance Commissioner, or the commissioner's designee;
and

(14) The Child Advocate, or the Child Advocate's designee.

(c) All appointments to the task force shall be made not later than thirty days after the effective date of this section. Any vacancy shall be filled by the appointing authority.

(d) The speaker of the House of Representatives and the president pro tempore of the Senate shall select the chairpersons of the task force from among the members of the task force. Such chairpersons shall schedule the first meeting of the task force, which shall be held not later than sixty days after the effective date of this section. A majority of members of the task force shall constitute a quorum. A majority vote of a quorum shall be required for any official action of the task force. A tie vote shall be decided by the chairpersons. The task force shall meet monthly and at other times upon the call of the chairpersons or a

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quorum of the task force.

(e) The administrative staff of the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to children shall serve as administrative staff of the task force.

(f) Not later than February 1, 2018, the task force shall submit a report on its findings and recommendations to the Governor, speaker of the House of Representatives, president pro tempore of the Senate, minority leader of the House of Representatives, minority leader of the Senate and the joint standing committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to appropriations, children, education, human services, insurance and public health, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes. The task force shall provide additional information regarding its findings and recommendations at the request of the Governor or a member of the General Assembly. The task force shall terminate on July 1, 2018.

Approved June 20, 2017