

HOUSE BILL 333

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By: **Delegates Rosenberg and Haynes**
Introduced and read first time: January 24, 2013
Assigned to: Appropriations

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Family Investment Program – Couples Advancing Together Pilot Program**

3 FOR the purpose of requiring the Secretary of Human Resources to establish the
4 Couples Advancing Together Pilot Program in the Department of Human
5 Resources; requiring the Program to be established for a certain number of
6 couples in at least a certain number of counties in the State in order to assist
7 the participating couples to move toward stable relationships and family
8 friendly employment; requiring the Secretary to cooperate with certain local
9 directors of social services and to consult with the Commission on Responsible
10 Fatherhood regarding the establishment of the Program; establishing the intent
11 of the Program; providing for the components of the Program including the
12 implementation of certain policies and procedures in certain local departments,
13 the development of a certain referral process or certain integrated partnerships
14 for certain couples, and the implementation of certain program requirements;
15 establishing certain age requirements for eligibility to participate in the
16 Program; requiring the Secretary to attempt to access certain federal grants
17 and funds; requiring the Secretary to submit a certain annual report to the
18 Senate Finance Committee and the House Appropriations Committee; providing
19 for the contents of the annual report; requiring the Secretary to submit a
20 certain report to the Senate Finance Committee and the House Appropriations
21 Committee on the Department's efforts to secure certain federal grants and
22 funds; defining a certain term; providing for the termination of this Act; and
23 generally relating to the Couples Advancing Together Pilot Program and the
24 Family Investment Program.

25 BY adding to
26 Article – Human Services
27 Section 5–318.1
28 Annotated Code of Maryland
29 (2007 Volume and 2011 Supplement)

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF
2 MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

3 **Article – Human Services**

4 **5–318.1.**

5 (A) IN THIS SECTION, “PROGRAM” MEANS THE COUPLES ADVANCING
6 TOGETHER PILOT PROGRAM IN THE DEPARTMENT.

7 (B) (1) IN COOPERATION WITH THE LOCAL DIRECTORS AND IN
8 CONSULTATION WITH THE COMMISSION ON RESPONSIBLE FATHERHOOD, THE
9 SECRETARY SHALL ESTABLISH A COUPLES ADVANCING TOGETHER PILOT
10 PROGRAM.

11 (2) THE PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAM IS TO ASSIST 100 COUPLES
12 THAT QUALIFY AS A FAMILY ELIGIBLE FOR THE FIP TO MOVE TOWARD STABLE
13 RELATIONSHIPS AND FAMILY FRIENDLY EMPLOYMENT, FOR ONE OR BOTH
14 PARTNERS, IN ORDER TO IMPROVE THEIR ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES AND
15 PROVIDE SUPPORT FOR LASTING FAMILY UNITS.

16 (3) THE PROGRAM SHALL BE ESTABLISHED IN AT LEAST THREE
17 COUNTIES.

18 (C) THE PROGRAM SHALL INCLUDE, IN ADDITION TO THE FIP
19 REQUIREMENTS FOR RECIPIENTS UNDER § 5–309(B) OF THIS SUBTITLE:

20 (1) IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES IN THE
21 LOCAL DEPARTMENT THAT ENCOURAGE INCREASED PARTICIPATION OF
22 FATHERS AT THE BEGINNING OF THE PROCESS FOR DETERMINING THE
23 ELIGIBILITY OF A FAMILY OR CUSTODIAL PARENT FOR FIP BENEFITS,
24 INCLUDING TEMPORARY CASH ASSISTANCE, UNLESS THE DEPARTMENT HAS
25 REASON TO BELIEVE THE FATHER HAS A HISTORY OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE;

26 (2) DEVELOPMENT OF A LOCAL DEPARTMENT REFERRAL
27 PROCESS OR INTEGRATED PARTNERSHIPS WITH OTHER LOCAL OR STATE
28 AGENCIES THROUGH WHICH COUPLES MAY JOINTLY ACCESS PROGRAMS AND
29 SERVICES THAT TARGET ECONOMIC STABILITY, HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS, AND
30 PARENTING; AND

31 (3) IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS UNDER
32 SUBSECTION (D) OF THIS SECTION.

1 **(D) (1) THE PROGRAM SHALL INCLUDE A 6-WEEK PARTICIPATION**
2 **PERIOD DURING WHICH COUPLES RECEIVE EDUCATION ON, AND ARE PROVIDED**
3 **WITH THE TOOLS NEEDED FOR, ACHIEVING SUCCESS AT HOME, IN THE**
4 **WORKPLACE, AND IN SOCIETY.**

5 **(2) WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF SUBJECT MATTER EXPERTS**
6 **IDENTIFIED BY THE SECRETARY AND LOCAL DIRECTORS, COUPLES SHALL:**

7 **(I) DEVELOP A WRITTEN FAMILY-FOCUSED CAREER PLAN;**

8 **(II) LEARN SKILLS THAT ARE REQUIRED TO COMPETE IN**
9 **THE JOB MARKET; AND**

10 **(III) ATTEND COUPLES-FOCUSED GROUP SESSIONS THAT:**

11 **1. TEACH SKILLS IN EMPLOYMENT AND FINANCIAL**
12 **LITERACY;**

13 **2. AID COUPLES IN ACHIEVING ECONOMIC**
14 **STABILITY; AND**

15 **3. BUILD HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS.**

16 **(E) TO BE ELIGIBLE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE PROGRAM, AN INDIVIDUAL**
17 **MUST BE AN ADULT UNDER THE AGE OF 36 YEARS.**

18 **(F) IN ADDITION TO ANY OTHER FUNDS AVAILABLE TO FUND THE**
19 **PROGRAM, THE SECRETARY SHALL ATTEMPT TO ACCESS FUNDS FROM:**

20 **(1) DISCRETIONARY GRANTS AVAILABLE FROM THE FEDERAL**
21 **OFFICE OF CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT;**

22 **(2) RESPONSIBLE FATHERHOOD AND HEALTHY MARRIAGE**
23 **GRANTS AVAILABLE FROM THE FEDERAL DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND**
24 **HUMAN SERVICES, OFFICE OF FAMILY ASSISTANCE; AND**

25 **(3) ANY OTHER FUNDS AVAILABLE IN THE FEDERAL BUDGET**
26 **CONCERNING FATHERHOOD OR HEALTHY MARRIAGE INITIATIVES.**

27 **(G) THE SECRETARY SHALL REPORT ANNUALLY TO THE SENATE**
28 **FINANCE COMMITTEE AND THE HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE, IN**
29 **ACCORDANCE WITH § 2-1246 OF THE STATE GOVERNMENT ARTICLE, ON THE**
30 **EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROGRAM, INCLUDING:**

- 1 **(1) THE NUMBER OF COUPLES PARTICIPATING IN THE PROGRAM;**
2 **(2) THE NUMBER OF COUPLES SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETING THE**
3 **PROGRAM; AND**
4 **(3) FACTORS THAT AFFECT PROGRAM PARTICIPATION.**

5 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That the Secretary of Human
6 Resources shall report on or before October 1, 2013, to the Senate Finance Committee
7 and the House Appropriations Committee, in accordance with § 2-1246 of the State
8 Government Article, on the Department of Human Resources efforts to secure funding
9 for the Couples Advancing Together Pilot Program from federal grants or other funds
10 available in the federal budget under Section 1 of this Act.

11 SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
12 June 1, 2013. It shall remain effective for a period of 2 years and 1 month and, at the
13 end of June 30, 2015, with no further action required by the General Assembly, this
14 Act shall be abrogated and of no further force and effect.