

HOUSE BILL 333

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

Committee Report: Favorable with amendments
House action: Adopted
Read second time: March 15, 2013

CHAPTER _____

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.

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.

Underlining indicates amendments to bill.

~~Strike out~~ indicates matter stricken from the bill by amendment or deleted from the law by amendment.



1 BY adding to
2 Article – Human Services
3 Section 5–318.1
4 Annotated Code of Maryland
5 (2007 Volume and 2011 Supplement)

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

8 **Article – Human Services**

9 **5–318.1.**

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

12 (B) (1) IN COOPERATION WITH THE LOCAL DIRECTORS AND IN
13 CONSULTATION WITH THE COMMISSION ON RESPONSIBLE FATHERHOOD, THE
14 SECRETARY SHALL ESTABLISH A COUPLES ADVANCING TOGETHER PILOT
15 PROGRAM.

16 (2) THE PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAM IS TO ASSIST 100 COUPLES
17 THAT QUALIFY AS A FAMILY ELIGIBLE FOR THE FIP TO MOVE TOWARD STABLE
18 RELATIONSHIPS AND FAMILY FRIENDLY EMPLOYMENT, FOR ONE OR BOTH
19 ~~PARTNERS~~ PARENTS OF A CHILD WHO RESIDES WITH THE FAMILY, IN ORDER TO
20 IMPROVE THEIR ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES AND PROVIDE SUPPORT FOR
21 LASTING FAMILY UNITS.

22 (3) THE PROGRAM SHALL BE ESTABLISHED IN AT LEAST THREE
23 COUNTIES.

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

26 (1) IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES IN THE
27 LOCAL DEPARTMENT THAT ENCOURAGE INCREASED PARTICIPATION OF
28 FATHERS AT THE BEGINNING OF THE PROCESS FOR DETERMINING THE
29 ELIGIBILITY OF A FAMILY OR CUSTODIAL PARENT FOR FIP BENEFITS,
30 INCLUDING TEMPORARY CASH ASSISTANCE, UNLESS THE DEPARTMENT HAS
31 REASON TO BELIEVE THE FATHER HAS A HISTORY OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE;

32 (2) DEVELOPMENT OF A LOCAL DEPARTMENT REFERRAL
33 PROCESS OR INTEGRATED PARTNERSHIPS WITH OTHER LOCAL OR STATE
34 AGENCIES THROUGH WHICH COUPLES MAY JOINTLY ACCESS PROGRAMS AND

1 SERVICES THAT TARGET ECONOMIC STABILITY, HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS, AND
2 PARENTING; AND

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

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

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

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

12 (II) LEARN SKILLS THAT ARE REQUIRED TO COMPETE IN
13 THE JOB MARKET; AND

14 (III) ATTEND COUPLES-FOCUSED GROUP SESSIONS THAT:

15 1. TEACH SKILLS IN EMPLOYMENT AND FINANCIAL
16 LITERACY;

17 2. AID COUPLES IN ACHIEVING ECONOMIC
18 STABILITY; AND

19 3. BUILD HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS.

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

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

24 (1) DISCRETIONARY GRANTS AVAILABLE FROM THE FEDERAL
25 OFFICE OF CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT;

26 (2) RESPONSIBLE FATHERHOOD AND HEALTHY MARRIAGE
27 GRANTS AVAILABLE FROM THE FEDERAL DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND
28 HUMAN SERVICES, OFFICE OF FAMILY ASSISTANCE; AND

29 (3) ANY OTHER FUNDS AVAILABLE IN THE FEDERAL BUDGET
30 CONCERNING FATHERHOOD OR HEALTHY MARRIAGE INITIATIVES.

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

5 **(1) THE NUMBER OF COUPLES PARTICIPATING IN THE PROGRAM;**

6 **(2) THE NUMBER OF COUPLES SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETING THE**
 7 **PROGRAM; ~~AND~~**

8 **(3) FACTORS THAT AFFECT PROGRAM PARTICIPATION;**

9 **(4) THE NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS WHO OBTAIN EMPLOYMENT;**
 10 **AND**

11 **(5) FOR EACH PARTICIPANT WHO OBTAINS EMPLOYMENT:**

12 **(I) THE TYPE OF EMPLOYMENT OBTAINED;**

13 **(II) THE NUMBER OF HOURS IN THE PARTICIPANT'S**
 14 **WORKWEEK;**

15 **(III) THE PARTICIPANT'S HOURLY RATE OF PAY; AND**

16 **(IV) ANY BENEFITS RECEIVED BY THE PARTICIPANT.**

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

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