By: Delegates Metzgar and McComas  
Introduced and read first time: February 11, 2022  
Assigned to: Health and Government Operations

A BILL ENTITLED

AN ACT concerning

Human Services – Commission on Fatherhood
(Fatherhood Protection Act)

FOR the purpose of establishing the Commission on Fatherhood in the Department of Human Services to study and make recommendations relating to the status of fatherhood in the State; and generally relating to the Commission on Fatherhood.

BY adding to
Article – Human Services
Section 2–601 through 2–606 to be under the new subtitle “Subtitle 6. Commission on Fatherhood”
Annotated Code of Maryland
(2019 Replacement Volume and 2021 Supplement)

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

Article – Human Services


2–601.

In this subtitle, “Commission” means the Commission on Fatherhood.

2–602.

There is a Commission on Fatherhood in the Department.
(A) The Commission consists of 25 members appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate.

(B) (1) Of the 25 members of the Commission:

   (i) 12 shall be appointed from among applicants who have been nominated and recommended for appointment by organizations located in the State whose missions include a focus on fatherhood or supporting fathers; and

   (ii) 13 shall be appointed from among members of the general public applying on their own behalf.

(2) In selecting members of the public applying on their own behalf, the Governor shall give priority to applicants who have advocated, volunteered, or otherwise worked to promote fathers and fatherhood for at least 18 months.

(3) In selecting applicants, the Governor shall, to the extent practicable, nominate members whose residencies reflect the full geographic diversity of the State.

(C) In addition to the members appointed under subsection (B) of this section, the Secretary and the Secretary of Health, or their designees, may participate in the Commission as ex officio nonvoting members.

(D) (1) The term of a member is 4 years.

   (2) A member may not serve for more than two consecutive terms.

   (3) At the end of a term, a member continues to serve until a successor is appointed and qualifies.

   (4) A member who is appointed after a term has begun shall serve for the remainder of the term or until a successor is appointed and qualifies.

(E) A member who fails to attend at least 50% of the regularly scheduled meetings of the Commission during any 12–month period
SHALL BE CONSIDERED TO HAVE RESIGNED.

(F) A MAJORITY OF THE MEMBERS PRESENT AT THE MEETING SHALL CONSTITUTE A QUORUM.

(G) (1) Subject to paragraph (2) of this subsection, the Commission shall determine the times, places, and frequency of its meetings.

(2) The Commission shall meet at least six times each year.

(H) A member of the Commission:

(1) may not receive compensation as a member of the Commission; but

(2) is entitled to reimbursement for expenses under the Standard State Travel Regulations, as provided in the State budget.

2–604.

(A) The Commission annually shall elect the chair and vice chair of the Commission.

(B) The Commission may appoint any officers that it considers necessary.

2–605.

(A) The Secretary shall appoint an Executive Director of the Commission.

(B) The Executive Director shall be a merit employee of the Department.

(C) The Executive Director is entitled to:

(1) compensation in accordance with the State budget; and

(2) reimbursement for expenses under the Standard State Travel Regulations, as provided in the State budget.

2–606.
(A) (1) The Commission shall:

   (I) study and review the status of fatherhood in the state;

   (II) strengthen home life by directing attention to critical problems confronting men as husbands and fathers;

   (III) recommend methods of overcoming attitudes denigrating fatherhood;

   (IV) recommend alternatives to family law outcomes that harm the ability of men to offer loving supportive homes for their children;

   (V) highlight outstanding examples of fathers and their accomplishments and contributions to the state; and

   (VI) inform the Executive and Legislative branches of State government on current issues that impact fathers, including by offering testimony on proposed regulations and legislation.

(2) The Commission may develop surveys and appoint advisory committees in fields including education, social services, labor and employment, law enforcement, health and safety, legal rights, family relations, human relations, and volunteer services.

(3) The Commission may not adopt regulations.

(B) On or before December 1 each year, the Commission shall submit a report on its findings and recommendations to the Governor and, in accordance with § 2–1257 of the State Government Article, the General Assembly on the activities of the Commission.

Section 2. And be it further enacted, That this Act is an emergency measure, is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public health or safety, has been passed by a yea and nay vote supported by three-fifths of all the members elected to each of the two Houses of the General Assembly, and shall take effect from the date it is enacted.