



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

HB 1363 Two Generation Family Economic Security Commission (Cabinet)

March 3, 2020

Chairwoman Kelly, Vice Chair Brian Feldman and Members of the Finance Committee,

The purpose of this bill is to establish a statewide Two-Generation approach to integrating service delivery for families. The Two-Generation approach seeks to end multigenerational poverty and build whole family well-being by intentionally linking programs, policies, and systems that serve parents and children. To be effective, a Two-Generation approach must not be adopted by a single state agency, but by all state agencies that serve parents or children. The Two-Generation approach must be larger than a program; rather it is a shared statewide philosophy that when a parent does well, their child is better off and when a child does well, their parent is better off.

To implement this policy, programs, policies, and services of state agencies serving families must be coordinated through a Two-Generation Cabinet to ensure effective, efficient, and comprehensive service delivery, to ensure all social supports necessary, and to produce economic and health outcomes for whole families. Definition of “parent” – A parent may be custodial or noncustodial, a grandparent, or another relative connected by blood or by legal status.

Now for a little bit of history, Governor Larry Hogan established the Two-Generation Family Economic Security Commission and Pilot Program by signing Executive Order 01.01.2017.03 on 03/09/2017.

Under the provisions of the Executive Order, the Commission was charged with investigating policy challenges, opportunities, and recommendations regarding the mitigation of multigenerational poverty.

The Commission, chaired by Lieutenant Governor Boyd K. Rutherford, held eight public meetings, commencing on June 28, 2017. Through a combination of constituent, research partner and practitioner feedback, the Commission identified areas in which Two-Generational interventions can improve upon our current service delivery models to align them with a more holistic family model. Throughout these meetings constituents often cited the lack of communication between service providers. This extended beyond intra-agency coordination to include a need for enhanced coordination between government agencies and private, non-profit agencies as well. Constituents also expressed they were not aware of the availability of services and that obtaining that information often depended on the success of a single interaction with a caseworker.

The Commission recognized that a primary cause of the difficulty experienced by the constituents was rooted in the traditional service delivery model which addresses either a parent or child’s needs in a soloed fashion versus addressing the needs of the whole family. The Commission focused discussions on four key areas for interventions: education, family economic stability, early childhood development and health. The Commission identified that current independent programs address all four of these indicators

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and also determined that the success of the entire family is dependent upon realigning current service delivery models into a more holistic family model.

As a learned more about the Two Gen Commission from the Executive branch's public meetings and organizations that serve clients served by the State of Maryland; I became a supporter of this initiative. However, I found there was a disconnect or (buy in) between the Executive Branch and the Legislative Branch of Government and the Department of Human Services. This bill would codify in statue the policy, programs, policies, and services of state agencies serving families must be coordinated through a Two-Generation Cabinet.

The Commission to Study Economic Stability, a Special Committee in the House of Delegates, held a meeting between advocates, organizations and more than 150 individuals who participated in a August 28th Listening Session held in Cumberland. This event was part of a series of sessions across the state designed to gather insight from front-line service providers, community leaders and those using public assistance on how we strengthen Maryland's middle class. It was important to me that Western Maryland voices were heard loud and clear by my colleagues on the study group.

The Commission heard that our citizens need well-paying jobs that allow them to stay in their community and raise their families. State and local governments must work together to attract businesses of all sizes and help develop the skilled workforce and infrastructure they need. Federal, state and local service providers need to work together to give families a path to financial self-sufficiency.

This is why I am an advocate for the creation of Two Generation Commission Cabinet and approach that places the family at the center of how public assistance is delivered. 2Gen does not involve creating a new government program, it links existing policies, systems and programs to serve parents and children together. With a family's self-sufficiency as the goal, 2Gen focuses on education, workforce development, economic stability, high-quality childcare, health and wellbeing, and family engagement. Recent pilot programs in Western Maryland have shown that this approach works, and I'm an advocate for this bill that would codify a coordination through a Two-Generation Cabinet within the Department of Human Services.

I believe that we should be judged not on how many families receive public assistance, but how many families we help achieve financial independence. Therefore, I urge a favorable report of HB1363

Respectfully,

Delegate Mike McKay

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