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Resolve, To Establish the Task Force on Kinship Families

Emergency preamble. Whereas, acts and resolves of the Legislature do not become effective until 90 days after adjournment unless enacted as emergencies; and

Whereas, the Task Force on Kinship Families is created in this resolve in order to study issues facing kinship families; and

Whereas, the task force must be initiated before the 90-day period expires in order that the study may be completed and a report submitted in time for submission to the next legislative session; and

Whereas, in the judgment of the Legislature, these facts create an emergency within the meaning of the Constitution of Maine and require the following legislation as immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and safety; now, therefore, be it

Sec. 1 Task force established. Resolved: That the Task Force on Kinship Families, referred to in this resolve as "the task force," is established; and be it further

Sec. 2 Task force membership. Resolved: That the task force consists of 13 members appointed as follows:

1. Four members appointed by the President of the Senate as follows:

A. Two Senators; and

B. One member representing a private nonprofit agency that provides services to kinship families and one member who is a state-licensed pediatrician;

2. Seven members appointed by the Speaker of the House as follows:

A. Five Representatives; and

B. One member who is currently providing primary care for a relative's child and one member representing the Probate Court; and

3. The Commissioner of Health and Human Services or the commissioner's designee; and

4. The Commissioner of Education or the commissioner's designee; and be it further

Sec. 3 Chairs. Resolved: That the first-named Senate member is the Senate chair and the first-named House of Representatives member is the House chair of the task force; and be it further

Sec. 4 Appointments; convening of task force. Resolved: That all appointments must be made no later than 30 days following the effective date of this resolve. The appointing authorities shall notify the Executive Director of the Legislative Council once all appointments have been completed. Within 15 days after appointment of all members, the chairs shall call and convene the first meeting of the task force, which must be no later than August 1, 2009; and be it further

Sec. 5 Duties. Resolved: That the task force shall examine the issues facing kinship families, defined here as family members who care for a relative's child, and how state policies and practices can be crafted to meet the special needs of kinship families. In examining this issue, the task force shall identify existing resources within the State for kinship families, determine the needs of kinship families and gaps in services, review legal and custody issues and concerns for kinship families and create strategies for sustaining and maintaining resources for kinship families; and be it further

Sec. 6 Staff assistance. Resolved: That the Legislative Council shall provide necessary staffing services to the task force; and be it further

Sec. 7 Report. Resolved: That, no later than December 2, 2009, the task force shall submit a report that includes its findings and recommendations, including suggested legislation, for presentation to the Second Regular Session of the 124th Legislature. The Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services is authorized to introduce a bill related to the subject matter of the report to the Second Regular Session upon receipt of the report.

Emergency clause. In view of the emergency cited in the preamble, this legislation takes effect when approved.

SUMMARY

This resolve establishes a task force to study issues concerning kinship families, which are families who are caring for a relative's child. The task force shall examine the issues facing kinship families and how state policies and practices can be crafted to meet their special needs. In examining this issue, the task force shall identify existing resources within the State for kinship families, determine the needs of kinship families and gaps in services, review legal and custody issues and concerns for kinship families and create strategies for sustaining and maintaining resources for kinship families. The task force will report its findings and suggested legislation to the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services, which is authorized to report out a bill on the suggestions.