



General Assembly

Substitute Bill No. 218

February Session, 2024



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AN ACT ESTABLISHING TASK FORCES TO STUDY BEREAVEMENT AND GRIEF COUNSELING SERVICES AND SOCIAL ISOLATION AND LONELINESS.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. (*Effective from passage*) (a) There is established a task force
2 to develop recommendations for the creation and administration of a
3 state-wide program for the delivery of bereavement and grief
4 counseling services to children and families at no cost to participants.
5 The task force shall make recommendations for (1) the appropriate
6 agency or agencies to administer such program, (2) the scope of services
7 offered by such program, including, but not limited to, the provision of
8 culturally informed services and services to marginalized communities,
9 (3) the role that existing bereavement and grief counseling services
10 programs and school-based health centers should have in the delivery
11 of services under such program, (4) the delivery of services by such
12 program in areas of the state where such services do not currently exist
13 or are not sufficient, and the resources that will be needed to deliver
14 services to such areas, (5) long-term funding sources for such program,
15 and (6) any additional considerations identified by the task force.

16 (b) The task force shall consist of the following members:

17 (1) One appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives,

18 who shall be a representative of a bereavement and grief counseling
19 services program that serves children and families;

20 (2) One appointed by the president pro tempore of the Senate, who
21 shall be a representative of a state-wide association of school-based
22 health centers;

23 (3) One appointed by the majority leader of the House of
24 Representatives, who shall be a representative of a state-wide
25 association of school counselors;

26 (4) One appointed by the majority leader of the Senate, who shall be
27 a representative of the state chapter of a national nonprofit organization
28 that works to improve the lives of children and families;

29 (5) One appointed by the minority leader of the House of
30 Representatives, who shall be a representative of a child study center
31 affiliated with a medical school in the state;

32 (6) One appointed by the minority leader of the Senate, who shall be
33 a psychologist licensed pursuant to chapter 383 of the general statutes,
34 who has expertise in treating bereaved children;

35 (7) The Commissioner of Public Health, or the commissioner's
36 designee;

37 (8) The Commissioner of Children and Families, or the
38 commissioner's designee;

39 (9) The Commissioner of Mental Health and Addiction Services, or
40 the commissioner's designee;

41 (10) The Commissioner of Education, or the commissioner's designee;
42 and

43 (11) The executive director of the Commission on Women, Children,
44 Seniors, Equity and Opportunity, or the executive director's designee.

45 (c) Any member of the task force appointed under subdivision (1),
46 (2), (3), (4), (5) or (6) of subsection (b) of this section may be a member
47 of the General Assembly.

48 (d) All initial appointments to the task force shall be made not later
49 than thirty days after the effective date of this section. Any vacancy shall
50 be filled by the appointing authority.

51 (e) The speaker of the House of Representatives and the president pro
52 tempore of the Senate shall select the chairpersons of the task force from
53 among the members of the task force. Such chairpersons shall schedule
54 the first meeting of the task force, which shall be held not later than sixty
55 days after the effective date of this section.

56 (f) The administrative staff of the Commission on Women, Children,
57 Seniors, Equity and Opportunity shall serve as administrative staff of
58 the task force.

59 (g) Not later than July 1, 2025, the task force shall submit a report on
60 its findings and recommendations to the joint standing committees of
61 the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to public
62 health and children, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a
63 of the general statutes. The task force shall terminate on the date that it
64 submits such report or July 1, 2025, whichever is later.

65 Sec. 2. (*Effective from passage*) (a) There is established a task force to
66 study social isolation and loneliness experienced by residents of the
67 state. The task force shall (1) examine the risks to mental and physical
68 health posed by social isolation and loneliness, (2) identify populations
69 in the state that are at increased risk for social isolation and loneliness,
70 and (3) make recommendations for the implementation of a state-wide
71 program to reduce social isolation and loneliness among such residents,
72 which shall include, but not be limited to (A) improvements in social
73 services, (B) the establishment of community-based programs to foster
74 social relationships between residents, and (C) the implementation of
75 media campaigns to increase awareness of and reduce stigmas

76 associated with social isolation and loneliness. For the purposes of this
77 section, "loneliness" means, with respect to an individual, a subjective
78 distressing experience resulting from perceived isolation or inadequate
79 social interaction, and "social isolation" means, with respect to an
80 individual, the experience of having few social relationships, social roles
81 or group memberships or infrequent social interaction.

82 (b) The task force shall consist of the following members:

83 (1) Two appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives,
84 one of whom shall be a caregiver, as defined in section 8-1bb of the
85 general statutes, and one of whom shall be a representative of a
86 nonprofit organization advocating for the rights of persons with
87 disabilities;

88 (2) Two appointed by the president pro tempore of the Senate, one of
89 whom shall be a health care provider, as defined in section 38a-477aa of
90 the general statutes, and one of whom shall be a representative of a
91 community action agency, as defined in section 17b-885 of the general
92 statutes;

93 (3) One appointed by the majority leader of the House of
94 Representatives, who shall be a representative of a nonprofit
95 organization advocating for policies to reduce social isolation and
96 loneliness;

97 (4) One appointed by the majority leader of the Senate, who shall be
98 a representative of a state or federally recognized Native American
99 tribe;

100 (5) One appointed by the minority leader of the House of
101 Representatives, who shall be a representative of a nonprofit
102 organization advocating for veterans services;

103 (6) One appointed by the minority leader of the Senate, who shall be
104 a representative of a youth service bureau established pursuant to
105 section 10-19m of the general statutes;

106 (7) The Commissioner of Public Health, or the commissioner's
107 designee;

108 (8) The Commissioner of Social Services, or the commissioner's
109 designee;

110 (9) The Commissioner of Mental Health and Addiction Services, or
111 the commissioner's designee;

112 (10) The Commissioner of Aging, or the commissioner's designee;

113 (11) The chairpersons of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and
114 Queer Justice and Opportunity Network, established pursuant to
115 section 46a-175 of the general statutes, or the chairpersons' designees;
116 and

117 (12) The executive director of the Commission on Women, Children,
118 Seniors, Equity and Opportunity, established pursuant to section 2-127
119 of the general statutes, or the executive director's designee.

120 (c) Any member of the task force appointed under subdivision (1),
121 (2), (3), (4), (5) or (6) of subsection (b) of this section may be a member
122 of the General Assembly.

123 (d) All initial appointments to the task force shall be made not later
124 than thirty days after the effective date of this section. Any vacancy shall
125 be filled by the appointing authority.

126 (e) The speaker of the House of Representatives and the president pro
127 tempore of the Senate shall select the chairpersons of the task force from
128 among the members of the task force. Such chairpersons shall schedule
129 the first meeting of the task force, which shall be held not later than sixty
130 days after the effective date of this section.

131 (f) The administrative staff of the joint standing committee of the
132 General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to children
133 shall serve as administrative staff of the task force.

134 (g) Not later than January 1, 2025, the task force shall submit a report
135 on its findings and recommendations to the joint standing committees
136 of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to
137 children, aging and public health, in accordance with the provisions of
138 section 11-4a of the general statutes. The task force shall terminate on
139 the date that it submits such report or January 1, 2025, whichever is later.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 2	<i>from passage</i>	New section

KID *Joint Favorable Subst.*