

Regular Session, 2013

HOUSE BILL NO. 572

BY REPRESENTATIVE WESLEY BISHOP

Prefiled pursuant to Article III, Section 2(A)(4)(b)(i) of the Constitution of Louisiana.

1 AN ACT

2 To amend and reenact Subpart C of Part II of Chapter 3 of Title 46 of the Louisiana Revised
3 Statutes of 1950, comprised of R.S. 46:261, relative to the Fatherhood First
4 Initiative; to establish the Fatherhood First Initiative; to establish a Fatherhood First
5 Council; to provide for membership and duties of the council; to provide for a
6 research and demonstration program; to require reporting; and to provide for related
7 matters.

8 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

9 Section 1. Subpart C of Part II of Chapter 3 of Title 46 of the Louisiana Revised
10 Statutes of 1950, comprised of R.S. 46:261, is hereby amended and reenacted to read as
11 follows:

12 SUBPART C. FATHERHOOD FIRST INITIATIVE

13 §261. Fatherhood first initiative; establishment

14 A. The secretary of the Department of Children and Family Services, ~~within~~
15 ~~available appropriations~~ to the extent that funds are available and appropriated by the
16 legislature, shall establish a program to be known as the "Fatherhood First Initiative".
17 This program shall promote the positive involvement and interaction of fathers with
18 their children with an emphasis on children eligible or formerly eligible for services
19 funded by the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant. This
20 program shall identify those services that effectively encourage and enhance
21 responsible and skillful parenting and those services that increase the ability of
22 fathers to meet the financial and medical needs of their children through employment

1 services and child support enforcement measures. The objectives of the program
 2 shall be to:

3 (1) Promote public education concerning the financial and emotional
 4 responsibilities of fatherhood.

5 (2) Assist men in preparation for the legal, financial, and emotional
 6 responsibilities of fatherhood.

7 (3) Promote the establishment of paternity at childbirth.

8 (4) Encourage fathers, regardless of marital status, to foster their emotional
 9 connections to and financial support of their children.

10 (5) Establish support mechanisms for fathers in their relationships with their
 11 children, regardless of their marital and financial status.

12 (6) Integrate state and local services available for families.

13 (7) Promote public education and increase public awareness of resources for
 14 the following areas:

15 (a) Substance abuse and addiction.

16 (b) Anger management and conflict resolution.

17 (c) Fiscal awareness and financial literacy.

18 (d) Parenting skills, child development, and family studies.

19 B. The secretary of the Department of Children and Family Services shall
 20 convene and chair a Fatherhood First Council. The secretary shall convene the
 21 council no later than October 1, 2013. The secretary shall seek the advice and
 22 participation of any person, organization, or state or federal agency deemed
 23 necessary to carry out the provisions of this Section. The secretary may designate
 24 a working group from among the members of the council to carry out specific duties
 25 required pursuant to this Section.

26 C. The Fatherhood First Council shall perform the following functions:

27 (1) Develop a comprehensive plan to promote the positive involvement and
 28 interaction of fathers with their children.

29 (2) Conduct an evaluation of state programs, government policies, and
 30 community initiatives relative to fatherhood.

1 (3) Advise the secretary of the Department of Children and Family Services
2 on the development of a fatherhood research and demonstration program relative to
3 design, implementation, and evaluation pursuant to this Section.

4 D. The membership of the council shall be appointed by the secretary and
5 shall include but not be limited to:

6 (1) The secretary of the Department of Children and Family Services or his
7 designee.

8 (2) The secretary of the Louisiana Workforce Commission or his designee.

9 (3) The superintendent of the Department of Education or his designee.

10 (4) The secretary of the Department of Public Safety and Corrections or his
11 designee.

12 (5) Two representatives of the Children's Cabinet Advisory Board.

13 (6) One representative of the Louisiana District Attorneys Association.

14 (7) One representative of a regional workforce investment board.

15 (8) One representative of the clergy.

16 (9) One representative of the New Orleans Fatherhood Consortium of Loyola
17 University of New Orleans.

18 (10) One member with expertise in male psychology and health.

19 (11) One representative of the Second Time Around Grandparents Support
20 Group.

21 (12) The member of the Louisiana House of Representatives representing
22 House District Number 99 or his designee.

23 (13) One member of the Louisiana Senate appointed by the president.

24 E. The Fatherhood First Council shall establish a comprehensive plan for the
25 implementation of the Fatherhood First Initiative and the research and demonstration
26 program. The plan may include but shall not be limited to the following:

27 (1) A planning process that gathers input from the public through public
28 hearings or other means.

29 (2) The establishment of an inventory and evaluation of state and federal
30 programs, community initiatives, government policies, and any other services

1 identified that encourage and enhance responsible and skillful parenting through
2 positive involvement and interaction with fathers and those services that increase the
3 ability of fathers to meet the financial and medical needs of their children. In
4 establishing the inventory and evaluation, the council may collect and assess data to
5 determine the scope of concerns, review fatherhood programs in other jurisdictions,
6 identify private, state, and federal funding opportunities, or collect any other
7 information the council deems necessary.

8 (3) The identification of the services that can be provided to fathers
9 including but not limited to employment services, parenting skills, teen pregnancy
10 prevention services, educational services, child support enforcement services,
11 paternity establishment services, custody and visitation services, conflict
12 management services, family mediation, and any other community-based support
13 programs providing assistance to fathers.

14 (4) The identification of the characteristics that will be used to target the
15 population to be served in each demonstration program.

16 (5) A system that establishes mechanisms for voluntary and mandatory
17 access to the services provided in the program for those individuals identified for
18 participation including procedures for establishing and assessing the eligibility of an
19 individual for the services provided in the program and procedures for providing
20 guidance to courts ordering a noncustodial parent's participation in the program in
21 addition to a child support or medical support obligation.

22 (6) The identification of a case management system for the full range of
23 services offered in the program including mechanisms for referring program
24 participants to community-based support programs.

25 F. The secretary of the Department of Children and Family Services, in
26 consultation with the executive director of the Louisiana Workforce Commission,
27 shall establish a research and demonstration program that specifically evaluates the
28 effectiveness and outcomes of services provided to fathers. The research and
29 demonstration program shall be administered in not more than three research and
30 demonstration sites from specific geographic regions or judicial districts and no more

1 than one hundred fathers may participate in each site. The research and
 2 demonstration sites shall have an ability to:

- 3 (1) Utilize existing local, state, and federal resources.
- 4 (2) Collaborate with broad-based constituencies representing schools,
 5 municipal entities, nonprofit organizations, and other neighborhood, religious,
 6 health, and community organizations.
- 7 (3) Provide a safe, caring environment for participants. The sites shall have
 8 experience serving the targeted population. Each site shall provide services that
 9 recognize the cultural diversity of the population served. The secretary of the
 10 Department of Children and Family Services shall seek assistance in evaluating the
 11 effectiveness and outcomes from an institution of higher education, a consortium of
 12 institutes of higher education, or another qualified entity. The evaluation shall
 13 measure the effectiveness and outcomes of services in the following areas:
- 14 (a) Child support and medical support.
- 15 (b) Job placement and retention.
- 16 (c) Increased earnings.
- 17 (d) Increased visitation.
- 18 (e) Family reunification.
- 19 (f) Paternity establishment or adjudication.
- 20 (g) The need of a custodial parent for public and medical assistance.
- 21 (h) Teen pregnancy prevention.
- 22 (i) Effect on fathers under the age of twenty-three years.
- 23 (j) Low-income or unemployed fathers.
- 24 (k) Educational levels.
- 25 (l) Measures of emotional involvement of fathers.
- 26 (m) The overall cost effectiveness, including a cost-benefit analysis of the
 27 services provided on an aggregate and case-by-case basis.
- 28 (n) Substance abuse and addiction treatment.
- 29 (o) Anger management and conflict resolution.
- 30 (p) Fiscal awareness and financial literacy.

1 (q) Parenting skills, child development, and family studies.

2 G.(1) No later than March 1, 2014, the Fatherhood First Council shall submit
3 an interim report relative to the status of the comprehensive plan established
4 pursuant to this Section to the secretary of the Department of Children and Family
5 Services. The secretary shall add his assessments thereto and present the findings
6 to the House and Senate committees on health and welfare, the House Committee on
7 Appropriations, and the Senate Committee on Finance prior to the start of the 2014
8 Regular Session of the Legislature.

9 (2) No later than March 1, 2015, the council shall submit a final report to the
10 secretary on the comprehensive plan which may include:

11 (a) Recommendations for the continued implementation of the Fatherhood
12 First Initiative.

13 (b) Recommendations for the expansion or statewide implementation of
14 fatherhood programs.

15 (3) The secretary shall add his assessments thereto and present the findings
16 to the House and Senate committees on health and welfare, the House Committee on
17 Appropriations, and the Senate Committee on Finance prior to the start of the 2015
18 Regular Session of the Legislature.

19 (4) After the presentation by the secretary to the legislative committees as
20 provided in Paragraph (3) of this Subsection, the department may, to the extent that
21 funds are available and appropriated by the legislature, continue to implement the
22 Fatherhood First Initiative.

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF LOUISIANA

APPROVED: _____