

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 541 Session of
2009

INTRODUCED BY D. O'BRIEN, BROWN, COHEN, CREIGHTON, DALLY,
DeLUCA, FRANKEL, GINGRICH, KAUFFMAN, KORTZ, MANDERINO,
MARSICO, MELIO, MURT, O'NEILL, SIPTROTH, VULAKOVICH, WALKO
AND YOUNGBLOOD, FEBRUARY 19, 2009

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY, FEBRUARY 19, 2009

AN ACT

1 Providing for the creation and operation of the Domestic
2 Relations Court Judges Commission in the Office of General
3 Counsel; and prescribing its powers and duties.

4 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
5 hereby enacts as follows:

6 Section 1. Short title.

7 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Domestic
8 Relations Court Judges Commission Act.

9 Section 2. Definitions.

10 The following words and phrases when used in this act shall
11 have the meanings given to them in this section unless the
12 context clearly indicates otherwise:

13 "Commission." The Domestic Relations Court Judges Commission
14 established in section 3.

15 Section 3. Domestic Relations Court Judges Commission.

16 (a) Creation.--The Domestic Relations Court Judges
17 Commission is created in the Office of General Counsel as an

1 administrative agency.

2 (b) Chief administrative officer.--The General Counsel shall
3 serve as chief administrative officer of the commission.

4 (c) Appointment.--The commission shall consist of nine
5 judges who shall be appointed by the Governor from a list of
6 judges, serving in domestic relations courts, submitted by the
7 Chief Justice of Pennsylvania.

8 (d) Term.--Three of the first nine judges appointed shall
9 serve for three years, three for two years and three for one
10 year. Thereafter, the term for all members shall be for three
11 years.

12 (e) Chairman.--The commission shall annually select one
13 member to be chairman and one member to be secretary.

14 (f) Quorum.--Five members of the commission shall constitute
15 a quorum.

16 (g) Meetings.--The commission shall meet at least quarterly
17 and as the chairman deems necessary. Each commissioner attending
18 a meeting shall be paid only his necessary expenses incurred for
19 attendance.

20 Section 4. Employees.

21 The chairman, with the approval of the majority of the
22 commission, may appoint and fix the compensation of employees as
23 are necessary to enable the commission to perform the powers and
24 duties vested in it. The compensation of the employees shall be
25 fixed within limitations set by the commission and employees
26 shall be eligible to apply for membership in the State
27 Employees' Retirement System. No assistant shall engage,
28 directly or indirectly, in the practice of law in any domestic
29 relations court of the Commonwealth during the assistant's term
30 of employment.

1 Section 5. Powers and duties.

2 The commission shall have the power and its duty shall be to:

3 (1) Advise the domestic relations court judges of the
4 Commonwealth in all matters pertaining to the proper care and
5 maintenance of adoption, custody, divorce, domestic
6 relations, domestic violence and support.

7 (2) Examine the administrative methods and judicial
8 procedure used in domestic relations courts throughout the
9 State, establish standards and make recommendations on the
10 methods and procedures to the courts.

11 (3) Collect, compile and publish statistical and other
12 data as may be needed to accomplish reasonable and efficient
13 administration of the domestic relations courts.

14 Section 40. Effective date.

15 This act shall take effect immediately.