
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 1731 Session of
2021

INTRODUCED BY MIZGORSKI, HENNESSEY, HERSHEY, JONES, B. MILLER,
ROTHMAN, RYAN, ZIMMERMAN AND HILL-EVANS, JULY 20, 2021

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH, JULY 20, 2021

AN ACT

1 Establishing the Pennsylvania Advisory Committee on Greater
2 Father Involvement within the Joint State Government
3 Commission and providing for 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 Greater
8 Father Involvement 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 Joint State Government Commission.

14 "Committee." The Pennsylvania Advisory Committee on Greater
15 Father Involvement.

16 Section 3. Findings and declaration of policy.

17 The General Assembly finds and declares as follows:

18 (1) Fathers are role models, caretakers, providers and

1 advocates. Research shows that father involvement is
2 associated with better outcomes for child well-being.

3 (2) When a child has the benefit of access to both
4 parents, the child is more likely to exhibit healthy
5 behaviors, excel in school and achieve emotional well-being.

6 (3) Fathers should be fully present and engaged in
7 providing the emotional, social, physical, intellectual,
8 spiritual and financial contributions that their children
9 need to ensure safety, stability and well-being.

10 (4) Father involvement is a protective factor for
11 children that aids in the development of resilience and
12 mitigates certain psychological and social risks in
13 adulthood.

14 (5) Approximately 24,000,000 of the nation's children
15 are being raised in single-parent households, some without
16 access to their fathers and their emotional and financial
17 support.

18 (6) A father's absence or noninvolvement can have a
19 negative impact on a child's well-being from birth forward,
20 increasing the risks of abuse, substance use, educational
21 underachievement and incarceration.

22 (7) In the absence of public policy that promotes
23 greater father involvement, many children will be less likely
24 to receive the level of parental support needed to achieve
25 economic stability, emotional well-being and independence.

26 (8) Societal and institutional barriers to greater
27 father involvement may include stigma linked to seeking
28 behavioral health services, child support orders that create
29 obstacles to fathers engaging with children, housing programs
30 that do not encourage fathers living with children and

1 educational and support services systems that do not foster
2 co-parenting.

3 (9) The public policy of the Commonwealth is to end
4 institutional barriers that may impede fathers in fostering
5 supportive connections with their children, establish support
6 mechanisms to enhance the ability of fathers to assume a
7 beneficial parenting role and assist men in preparing for the
8 legal, financial and emotional responsibilities of
9 fatherhood.

10 Section 4. Pennsylvania Advisory Committee on Greater Father
11 Involvement.

12 (a) Establishment.--The commission shall establish the
13 Pennsylvania Advisory Committee on Greater Father Involvement
14 within the commission.

15 (b) Membership.--The committee shall consist of the
16 following members:

17 (1) Six members shall be appointed by the Governor, not
18 more than three of whom may be registered in the same
19 political party.

20 (2) One member shall be appointed by the Chief Justice
21 of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania.

22 (3) Six members shall be appointed by the General
23 Assembly as follows:

24 (i) One by the President pro tempore of the Senate.

25 (ii) One by the Majority Leader of the Senate.

26 (iii) One by the Minority Leader of the Senate.

27 (iv) One by the Speaker of the House of
28 Representatives.

29 (v) One by the Majority Leader of the House of
30 Representatives.

1 (vi) One by the Minority Leader of the House of
2 Representatives.

3 (c) Terms.--Members of the committee shall serve terms of
4 three years, except that the initial terms of the members shall
5 be as follows:

6 (1) Two members appointed by the Governor, the member
7 appointed by the Majority Leader of the House of
8 Representatives and the member appointed by the Minority
9 Leader of the House of Representatives shall each be
10 appointed for an initial term of one year.

11 (2) Two members appointed by the Governor, the member
12 appointed by the Majority Leader of the Senate and the member
13 appointed by the Minority Leader of the Senate shall each be
14 appointed for an initial term of two years.

15 (3) The remaining members shall each be appointed for an
16 initial term of three years.

17 (d) Reimbursement.--The commission shall reimburse members
18 of the committee for all necessary and reasonable expenses
19 incurred in connection with the performance of their duties as
20 members of the committee.

21 (e) Vacancies.--A vacancy on the committee that occurs prior
22 to the expiration of a term shall be filled in the manner of the
23 original appointment.

24 (f) Forfeiture for nonattendance.--A member of the committee
25 who fails to attend two consecutive meetings of the committee
26 shall forfeit the seat, unless the chairperson of the committee
27 receives written notification from the member that the absence
28 was due to personal illness or the death or illness of an
29 immediate family member.

30 (g) Chairperson.--The Governor shall designate one of the

1 members of the committee to be the chairperson of the committee.

2 The following apply:

3 (1) The chairperson shall preside at all meetings of the
4 committee and perform all the duties and functions of the
5 chairperson.

6 (2) The committee may designate one of the members to be
7 the acting chairperson during the absence or incapacity of
8 the chairperson.

9 (h) Other officers.--The committee may select other officers
10 as necessary to carry out the powers and duties of the
11 committee.

12 (i) Meetings.--

13 (1) The first meeting of the committee shall be held in
14 Harrisburg with all members physically present.

15 (2) Subsequent meetings of the committee may be held in
16 any manner or at any location that the committee deems
17 appropriate.

18 (j) Quorum and official action.--

19 (1) A majority of the committee shall constitute a
20 quorum to conduct business.

21 (2) A majority of those present at a meeting of the
22 committee shall be sufficient for official action to be taken
23 by the committee.

24 (k) Open meetings.--The meetings of the committee shall be
25 conducted in accordance with the provisions of 65 Pa.C.S. Ch. 7
26 (relating to open meetings).

27 Section 5. Powers and duties of committee.

28 (a) Responsibilities.--The committee shall:

29 (1) Work with State and local governments and other
30 entities through collaboration, coordination, research and

1 consultation to recognize and promote the contributions that
2 fathers make to improving societal outcomes for children and
3 families.

4 (2) Evaluate governmental programs and initiatives that
5 impact fatherhood and make recommendations regarding needed
6 improvements and existing impediments to successful
7 implementation of those programs and initiatives.

8 (3) Develop a comprehensive plan that will support early
9 connection of fathers to their children beginning in the
10 gestational stage of child development and continuing
11 throughout the life of the child.

12 (4) Promote and continue to support programs and
13 entities that foster the following:

14 (i) Workforce development programs that assist
15 fathers in preparing for, finding and securing
16 employment.

17 (ii) Parenting through skills-based educational
18 programs that foster quality co-parenting relationships.

19 (iii) Development of conflict resolution skills
20 training.

21 (5) Propose changes to statutes, regulations,
22 administrative rules and policies that impede the development
23 or implementation of greater father involvement measures or
24 that will enhance the prospect of success of those measures.

25 (6) Identify additional sources of funding, including
26 nongovernmental sources, to support the following:

27 (i) The work of the committee.

28 (ii) Programs that directly support fathers and
29 responsible fatherhood.

30 (7) Issue an annual report to the Governor and the

1 General Assembly regarding responsible fatherhood programs
2 and issues within this Commonwealth.

3 (b) Staff and grants.--Subject to available resources, the
4 committee may employ staff and award grants as necessary to
5 perform its duties and functions prescribed in this act.

6 (c) Reports.--The committee may issue reports regarding
7 responsible fatherhood programs and issues that will aid in
8 understanding, evaluating or improving the successful
9 implementation of these programs and issues.

10 Section 6. Effective date.

11 This act shall take effect in 60 days.