

MICHIGAN MARRIAGE AND FATHERHOOD COMMISSION



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FISCAL ANALYSIS

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HOUSE BILL 5545 (H-2)

Sponsor: Rep. Doug Hart

Committee: Family and Children Services

FLOOR ANALYSIS - 9/25/02

Analyst(s): Robin Risko

SUMMARY

House Bill 5545 (H-2) would establish a Michigan Marriage and Fatherhood Commission as an independent unit in the Legislative Council. Members of the Commission would consist of the following: two members appointed by the Senate Majority Leader and two members appointed by the Speaker of the House to serve 4 year terms; one member appointed by the Senate Minority Leader and one member appointed by the Minority Leader of the House to serve 3 year terms; and two members appointed by the Governor and two members appointed by the Chief Justice of the Michigan Supreme Court to serve 5 year terms. Members of the Commission could be appointed for multiple terms and are to reflect the cultural and ethnic diversities within the communities of the state. Vacancies would be filled in the same manner as the original appointments for the balance of unexpired terms. A director would be appointed by and would serve at the pleasure of the Legislative Council, and could be appointed for multiple terms.

The Commission would be charged with the following: analyzing the status of marriage and fatherhood in the state; collecting, analyzing, and compiling information regarding how society and government foster stable, healthy marriages; and creating a database for the public to access by the Internet that would include - resources for counseling, mediation, conflict resolution, instruction on the importance of marriage to children, how to have a healthy marriage, and successful parenting; resources providing information about the importance of communication, shared parental responsibility for children, child support responsibilities, domestic violence, and child abuse and neglect; community resources for parents or children of parents who are unmarried, divorced or separated; and marriage and parenting education courses across the state.

The Commission would be authorized to hire employees and support staff, but would not have the authority to promulgate rules. The bill would require the Commission to submit an annual report which includes, but is not limited to, the following: recommendations based on its studies and identification of specific state policies that impede the creation of a climate that nurtures and enhances healthy, positive, and caring family interaction; the status of Michigan families, describing the distribution of the different family structures; and effective legislation that other states have implemented to help promote, strengthen, and increase awareness of the importance of marriage and fatherhood.

FISCAL IMPACT

House Bill 5545 (H-2) would limit the amount of state funding appropriated for the Commission to \$200,000 annually. Costs would be incurred for operation and maintenance of the Commission, office of the director, and staff hired to assist in carrying out the duties of the Commission. The following types of costs could be expected: salaries and fringe benefits, travel, telephones, postage, training, education, office supplies, printing, equipment and maintenance, contractual services, rent, and technology-related costs.