

**SENATE
STATE OF MINNESOTA
NINETY-SECOND SESSION**

S.F. No. 1607

(SENATE AUTHORS: MATHEWS)

DATE
03/01/2021

D-PG

615 Introduction and first reading

Referred to Civil Law and Data Practices Policy

OFFICIAL STATUS

1.1 A bill for an act
1.2 relating to family law; creating the Commission on Fatherhood; requiring an annual
1.3 report on issues related to family relationships and economic stability; appropriating
1.4 money for the Commission on Fatherhood.

1.5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

1.6 Section 1. **COMMISSION ON FATHERHOOD.**

1.7 Subdivision 1. **Creation and duties.** (a) A Commission on Fatherhood is established
1.8 and consists of 12 members. Members must be appointed by August 1, 2021.

1.9 (b) The Commission on Fatherhood must examine:

1.10 (1) how to enhance the well-being of children by providing opportunities for fathers to
1.11 become better parents, partners, and providers;

1.12 (2) the potential for improved economic stability when fathers have stable and adequate
1.13 employment;

1.14 (3) how to improve access to skills-based classes and provide mentors to fathers; and

1.15 (4) how to promote healthy relationships through conflict resolution and communication
1.16 skills.

1.17 (c) The Commission on Fatherhood must (1) engage community and local government
1.18 leaders, (2) develop policy and funding recommendations, and (3) share the recommendations
1.19 in a report with the house of representatives and senate committees having jurisdiction over
1.20 judiciary, civil law, and human services. The report must be submitted no later than February
1.21 15 each year.

2.1 Subd. 2. **Membership.** (a) The Commission on Fatherhood consists of the following
2.2 individuals or the individuals' designees:

2.3 (1) two members of the senate, one appointed by the majority leader and one appointed
2.4 by the minority leader;

2.5 (2) two members of the house of representatives, one appointed by the speaker of the
2.6 house and one appointed by the minority leader;

2.7 (3) the commissioner of the Department of Human Services;

2.8 (4) the commissioner of economic development;

2.9 (5) one representative from the judicial branch, appointed by the chief justice of the
2.10 supreme court; and

2.11 (6) five representatives from the public who work with or for father-focused nonprofits,
2.12 legal nonprofit organizations, and nonprofit organizations working to help employ fathers,
2.13 appointed by the governor.

2.14 (b) Members of the commission serve at the pleasure of the appointing authority or until
2.15 the commission expires. Vacancies in commissioner-appointed positions must be filled by
2.16 the commissioner consistent with the qualifications of the vacating member required by
2.17 this subdivision.

2.18 Subd. 3. **Officers; meetings.** (a) The commission members must annually elect a chair
2.19 and vice-chair from among the commission's members and may elect other officers as
2.20 necessary. The commission must meet at least quarterly, or upon the call of its chair, and
2.21 may hold meetings throughout the state. The commission must meet frequently enough to
2.22 accomplish the tasks identified in this section, but must meet at least four times each year.
2.23 Meetings of the commission are subject to Minnesota Statutes, chapter 13D. The commission
2.24 must seek out and enlist the cooperation and assistance of nongovernmental organizations,
2.25 community and advocacy organizations working with fathers, and academic researchers
2.26 and experts that specialize in providing education and research to assist fathers.

2.27 (b) The commissioner of human services must convene the first meeting of the
2.28 commission no later than September 30, 2021. The Legislative Coordinating Commission
2.29 must provide meeting space and administrative assistance as necessary for the commission
2.30 to conduct its work.

2.31 Subd. 4. **Report.** The commission must report to the chairs and ranking minority members
2.32 of the legislative committees with jurisdiction over judiciary, family law, and human services
2.33 on the work of the commission, including but not limited to the issues to be examined in

3.1 subdivision 1, and must include in the report policy recommendations and funding proposals.

3.2 The report must be submitted to the legislative committees by February 15 each year.

3.3 Subd. 5. **Expiration.** Notwithstanding Minnesota Statutes, section 15.059, the commission
3.4 expires March 15, 2023.

3.5 Sec. 2. **FUNDING FOR THE COMMISSION ON FATHERHOOD;**
3.6 **APPROPRIATION.**

3.7 \$50,000 in fiscal year 2022 and \$50,000 in fiscal year 2023 are appropriated from the
3.8 general fund to the Legislative Coordinating Commission to implement section 1 relating
3.9 to the Commission on Fatherhood. Unexpended funds from fiscal year 2022 do not cancel
3.10 and may be spent in fiscal year 2023.