

**CHAPTER 153--S.F.No. 2428**

*An act relating to human services; extending the legislative task force on child protection; amending Laws 2015, chapter 71, article 1, section 125.*

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

Section 1. Laws 2015, chapter 71, article 1, section 125, is amended to read:

**Sec. 125. LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE; CHILD PROTECTION.**

(a) A legislative task force is created to:

(1) review the efforts being made to implement the recommendations of the Governor's Task Force on the Protection of Children, including a review of the roles and functions of the Office of Ombudsperson for Families;

(2) expand the efforts into related areas of the child welfare system;

(3) work with the commissioner of human services and community partners to establish and evaluate child protection grants to address disparities in child welfare pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, section 256E.28; and

(4) identify additional areas within the child welfare system that need to be addressed by the legislature;

(5) review and recommend alternatives to law enforcement responding to a maltreatment report by removing the child, and evaluate situations in which it may be appropriate for a social worker or other child protection worker to remove the child from the home; and

(6) clarify the definition of "substantial child endangerment," and provide language in bill form by January 1, 2017.

(b) Members of the legislative task force shall include:

(1) ~~the four legislators who served as members of the Governor's Task Force on the Protection of Children;~~

(2) ~~two~~ six members from the house of representatives appointed by the speaker, ~~one~~ three from the majority party and ~~one~~ three from the minority party; and

(3) ~~two~~ (2) six members from the senate, including three members appointed by the senate majority leader, ~~one from the majority party and one from the minority party~~ three members appointed by the senate minority leader.

Members of the task force shall serve a term that expires on December 31 of the even-numbered year following the year they are appointed. The speaker and the majority leader shall each appoint a chair and vice-chair from the membership of the task force. The gavel chair shall rotate after each meeting, and the house of representatives shall assume the leadership of the task force first. The task force must meet at least quarterly.

(c) The task force may provide oversight and monitoring of:

(1) the efforts by the Department of Human Services, counties, and tribes to implement laws related to child protection;

(2) efforts by the Department of Human Services, counties, and tribes to implement the recommendations of the Governor's Task Force on the Protection of Children;

(3) efforts by agencies, including but not limited to the Minnesota Department of Education, the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency, the Minnesota Department of Corrections, and the Minnesota Department of Public Safety, to work with the Department of Human Services to assure safety and well-being for children at risk of harm or children in the child welfare system; and

(4) efforts by the Department of Human Services, other agencies, counties, and tribes to implement best practices to ensure every child is protected from maltreatment and neglect and to ensure every child has the opportunity for healthy development.

(d) The task force, in cooperation with the commissioner of human services, shall issue a an annual report to the legislature and governor by February 1, 2016. The report must contain information on the progress toward implementation of changes to the child protection system, recommendations for additional legislative changes and procedures affecting child protection and child welfare, and funding needs to implement recommended changes.

~~(e) The task force shall convene upon the effective date of this section and shall continue until the last day of the 2016 legislative session.~~

(e) The task force may establish a work group to review the Minnesota Assessment of Parenting Children and Youth, the tool used by Minnesota county and tribal social service agencies to determine Northstar Care for Children supplemental payment benefits. Members of the work group shall be appointed by the cochairs of the task force and include:

(1) two legislators;

(2) two foster care providers;

(3) one therapist who has experience providing services to foster children or foster families;

(4) one county social services agency staff member;

(5) one tribal social services agency staff member; and

(6) one staff member from the Department of Human Services who has experience with the assessment tool.

(f) The work group shall review use of the assessment tool and the results produced in determining supplemental benefits. The work group may make recommendations to the task force on changes that should be made to the assessment tool. The work group shall issue its findings, recommendations, and a report to the task force by December 1, 2016.

(g) This section expires December 31, 2020.

**EFFECTIVE DATE.** This section is effective the day following final enactment.

Sec. 2. **REVISOR'S INSTRUCTION.**

The revisor of statutes, in consultation with the commissioner of human services; the Office of Senate Counsel, Research, and Fiscal Analysis; and House Research, shall recodify the Maltreatment of Minors Act, Minnesota Statutes, section 626.556, and related statutes in order to create internal consistency, eliminate redundant language, separate provisions governing investigations of maltreatment in institutions, and otherwise reorganize the statutes to facilitate interpretation and application of the law. The recodification must be drafted in bill form for introduction in the 2017 session.

Presented to the governor May 20, 2016

Signed by the governor May 22, 2016, 4:54 p.m.