

1 HOUSE BILL NO. 466
2 INTRODUCED BY J. GILLETTE

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4 A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE MONTANA FATHER INCLUSION AND
5 ENGAGEMENT ADVISORY COUNCIL; PROVIDING COUNCIL DUTIES; REQUIRING COUNCIL REPORTS;
6 AND PROVIDING A TERMINATION DATE."

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8 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

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10 NEW SECTION. Section 1. Montana father inclusion and engagement advisory council -- duties
11 -- membership. (1) There is a Montana father inclusion and engagement advisory council. The council consists
12 of the following 14 members:

- 13 (a) a legislator jointly appointed by the president of the senate and speaker of the house who shall
14 serve as the presiding officer; and
- 15 (b) the following individuals appointed by the governor:
 - 16 (i) an adult education expert;
 - 17 (ii) a licensed addiction counselor;
 - 18 (iii) a licensed mental health professional;
 - 19 (iv) an early childhood development expert;
 - 20 (v) an employment and workforce development expert;
 - 21 (vi) an attorney who practices family law, including child custody cases;
 - 22 (vii) an expert in fatherhood programs or initiatives;
 - 23 (viii) an individual with expertise in housing and independent living;
 - 24 (ix) an individual with expertise in parenting and coparenting;
 - 25 (x) an individual with expertise in home visiting;
 - 26 (xi) a representative of the department of corrections;
 - 27 (xii) a representative of the child and family services division of the department of public health and
28 human services; and

1 (xiii) a representative of the early childhood and family support division of the department of public
2 health and human services.

3 (2) The department of public health and human services shall provide staff assistance to the
4 council.

5 (3) The council shall:

6 (a) collaborate, coordinate, and consult with state, local, and tribal governments, state and national
7 experts in fatherhood initiatives and families, academic institutions, and other entities to evaluate and research
8 the contributions of fathers in improving societal outcomes and reducing government dependence for children
9 and families;

10 (b) evaluate new and existing government programs and initiatives that impact fatherhood and
11 make recommendations regarding needed improvements and existing impediments to successfully
12 implementing those programs and initiatives;

13 (c) develop a comprehensive state plan to support the early connection of fathers with their
14 children, beginning in the gestational stage of child development and continuing throughout the life of the child.
15 The plan must include approaches to:

16 (i) support healthy, lasting marriages through efforts that may include but are not limited to
17 premarital counseling, domestic violence and child abuse prevention, substance use disorder prevention and
18 treatment, skills-based marriage education and financial planning, and divorce education and reduction;

19 (ii) promote responsible parenting through efforts that may include but are not limited to
20 counseling and mentoring, healthy parenting and coparenting practices, and timely child support payments; and

21 (iii) help fathers and families achieve economic stability through efforts that may include but are not
22 limited to workforce development programs that assist fathers in preparing for, finding, and securing
23 employment;

24 (d) (i) propose changes to policies and administrative rules that impede or will enhance the
25 development or implementation of father involvement programs and initiatives to the following agencies:

26 (A) the department of corrections;

27 (B) the department of public health and human services; and

28 (C) the department of labor and industry.

- 1 (ii) Upon approval by the governor, the agencies shall adopt the proposed changes.
- 2 (e) identify additional sources of funding, including nongovernment sources, to support programs
- 3 that directly support fathers and responsible fatherhood; and
- 4 (f) make recommendations regarding the possible establishment of a long-term or permanent
- 5 father inclusion and engagement commission or program and its powers, duties, and funding.
- 6 (4) (a) Appointments made under subsection (1) must be made within 30 days of [the effective
- 7 date of this act]. A vacancy on the council must be filled in the manner of the original appointment.
- 8 (b) The council must hold its first meeting no later than 30 days after the appointments under
- 9 subsection (1) are made.
- 10 (5) Council members must be reimbursed for travel expenses as provided in 2-18-501 through 2-
- 11 18-503. Members of the council who are full-time salaried officers or employees of the state or any political
- 12 subdivision are entitled to their regular compensation.
- 13 (6) The council shall provide updates to the children, families, health, and human services interim
- 14 committee.
- 15 (7) (a) By September 1 of each year, the council shall submit a report to the governor.
- 16 (b) The council shall submit a report to the legislature as provided in 5-11-210.
- 17 (c) All reports must include a description of the council's proceedings and the council's
- 18 recommendations.
- 19 (8) Using the process established in legislative rules for executive agency legislative requests, the
- 20 council may request legislation to enact changes to increase father engagement and inclusion.

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22 NEW SECTION. Section 2. Codification instruction. [Section 1] is intended to be codified as an

23 integral part of Title 53, chapter 1, part 6, and the provisions of Title 53, chapter 1, part 6, apply to [section 1].

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25 NEW SECTION. Section 3. Termination. [Section 1] terminates December 31, 2026.

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