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124th MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION-2009

Legislative Document

No. 1115

H.P. 770

House of Representatives, March 20, 2009

Resolve, To Establish the Task Force on Kinship Families

(EMERGENCY)

Reference to the Committee on Health and Human Services suggested and ordered printed.

Millient M. Mac Jailand

MILLICENT M. MacFARLAND Clerk

Presented by Representative CAIN of Orono.

Cosponsored by Senator ROSEN of Hancock and

Representatives: BERRY of Bowdoinham, CAMPBELL of Newfield, MILLER of Somerville, PRIEST of Brunswick, ROTUNDO of Lewiston, SUTHERLAND of Chapman, WEBSTER of Freeport.

Emergency preamble. Whereas, acts and resolves of the Legislature do not 1 become effective until 90 days after adjournment unless enacted as emergencies; and 2 3 Whereas, the Task Force on Kinship Families is created in this resolve in order to 4 study issues facing kinship families; and 5 Whereas, the task force must be initiated before the 90-day period expires in order that the study may be completed and a report submitted in time for submission to the next 6 legislative session; and 7 8 Whereas, in the judgment of the Legislature, these facts create an emergency within 9 the meaning of the Constitution of Maine and require the following legislation as immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and safety; now, 10 therefore, be it 11 12 Sec. 1. Task force established. Resolved: That the Task Force on Kinship Families, referred to in this resolve as "the task force," is established; and be it further 13 14 Sec. 2. Task force membership. Resolved: That the task force consists of 13 15 members appointed as follows: 16 1. Four members appointed by the President of the Senate as follows: 17 A. Two Senators; and 18 B. One member representing a private nonprofit agency that provides services to 19 kinship families and one member who is a state-licensed pediatrician; 20 2. Seven members appointed by the Speaker of the House as follows: 21 A. Five Representatives; and 22 B. One member who is currently providing primary care for a relative's child and one 23 member representing the Probate Court; and 24 3. The Commissioner of Health and Human Services or the commissioner's 25 designee; and 4. The Commissioner of Education or the commissioner's designee; and be it further 26 27Sec. 3. Chairs. Resolved: That the first-named Senate member is the Senate 28 chair and the first-named House of Representatives member is the House chair of the task 29 force; and be it further 30 Sec. 4. Appointments; convening of task force. Resolved: That all 31 appointments must be made no later than 30 days following the effective date of this 32 resolve. The appointing authorities shall notify the Executive Director of the Legislative Council once all appointments have been completed. Within 15 days after appointment 33 34 of all members, the chairs shall call and convene the first meeting of the task force, which 35 must be no later than August 1, 2009; and be it further

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Sec. 5. Duties. Resolved: That the task force shall examine the issues facing kinship families, defined here as family members who care for a relative's child, and how state policies and practices can be crafted to meet the special needs of kinship families. In examining this issue, the task force shall identify existing resources within the State for kinship families, determine the needs of kinship families and gaps in services, review legal and custody issues and concerns for kinship families and create strategies for sustaining and maintaining resources for kinship families; and be it further

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Sec. 6. Staff assistance. Resolved: That the Legislative Council shall provide necessary staffing services to the task force; and be it further

Sec. 7. Report. Resolved: That, no later than December 2, 2009, the task force shall submit a report that includes its findings and recommendations, including suggested legislation, for presentation to the Second Regular Session of the 124th Legislature. The Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services is authorized to introduce a bill related to the subject matter of the report to the Second Regular Session upon receipt of the report.

Emergency clause. In view of the emergency cited in the preamble, this legislation takes effect when approved.

SUMMARY

This resolve establishes a task force to study issues concerning kinship families, which are families who are caring for a relative's child. The task force shall examine the issues facing kinship families and how state policies and practices can be crafted to meet their special needs. In examining this issue, the task force shall identify existing resources within the State for kinship families, determine the needs of kinship families and gaps in services, review legal and custody issues and concerns for kinship families. The task force will report its findings and suggested legislation to the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services, which is authorized to report out a bill on the suggestions.