

1 TO THE HONORABLE SENATE:

2 The Committee on Health and Welfare to which was referred Senate Bill  
3 No. 189 entitled “An act relating to foster parents’ rights and protections”  
4 respectfully reports that it has considered the same and recommends that the  
5 bill be amended by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in  
6 lieu thereof the following:

7 Sec. 1. FOSTER PARENT WORKING GROUP; REPORT

8 (a) Creation. There is created a Foster Parent Working Group to  
9 recommend legislation, rules, or policies, or any combination thereof,  
10 pertaining to rights and protections for foster parents in Vermont.

11 (b) Membership. The Working Group shall be composed of the following  
12 six members:

13 (1) the Commissioner for Children and Families or designee;

14 (2) the Deputy Commissioner for Children and Families’ Family  
15 Services Division;

16 (3) a representative of the Vermont Foster and Adoptive Family  
17 Association;

18 (4) the Chief Superior Court Judge or designee; and

19 (5) two fosters parents from different regions of the State, appointed by  
20 the Governor.

1        (c) Powers and duties. The Working Group shall examine the relationship  
2        between foster parents, the Department for Children and Families, and the  
3        court system to assess whether any laws, rules, or policies should be amended  
4        or implemented to better support the work of foster parents, including the  
5        following:

6            (1) access to the Department for Children and Families on evenings and  
7        weekends;

8            (2) access to the Department for Children and Families' records about a  
9        particular foster child or foster family;

10           (3) scheduling court-ordered visits and appointments with the  
11        Department for Children and Families;

12           (4) fear of reprisal for refusal of a placement or raising concerns about  
13        the Department for Children and Families or the foster care system; and

14           (5) any regional differences identified in the State's foster care system.

15        (d) Assistance. The Working Group shall have the administrative,  
16        technical, and legal assistance of the Department for Children and Families.

17        (e) Report. On or before January 15, 2017, the Working Group shall  
18        submit a written report to the House Committee on Human Services and the  
19        Senate Committee on Health and Welfare with its findings and any proposed  
20        changes to law, rule, or policy.

21        (f) Meetings.

1           (1) The Commissioner shall call the first meeting of the Working Group  
2           to occur on or before September 1, 2016.

3           (2) The Working Group shall select a chair from among its members at  
4           the first meeting.

5           (3) The Working Group shall cease to exist on January 31, 2017.

6           (g) Reimbursement. Members of the Working Group who are not  
7           employees of the State of Vermont and who are not otherwise compensated or  
8           reimbursed for their attendance shall be entitled to both per diem compensation  
9           and reimbursement of expenses pursuant to 32 V.S.A. § 1010 for no more than  
10          three meetings.

11          (h) Appropriation. The sum of \$1,080.00 is appropriated to the Department  
12          for Children and Families from the General Fund in fiscal year 2017 for per  
13          diem compensation and reimbursement of expenses for members of the  
14          Working Group.

15          Sec. 2. EFFECTIVE DATE

16          This act shall take effect on July 1, 2016.

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21          (Committee vote: \_\_\_\_\_)

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Senator \_\_\_\_\_

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FOR THE COMMITTEE