

House Research Act Summary

CHAPTER: 273

SESSION: 2004 Regular Session

TOPIC: Minnesota Healthy Marriage Initiative; Marriage Administrative Provisions; Parenting Classes

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Analyst: Deborah K. McKnight, 651-296-5056

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Overview

The act creates and provides for funding of a Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood initiative, changes terminology in marriage license laws, and changes the timing for parents to enroll in class required as part of divorce.

Section

1 Minnesota Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood Initiative.

Subd. 1. Establishment. Requires the commissioner of human services to develop and implement this initiative, using federal grants, state appropriations, and in-kind services.

Subd. 2. Purpose. To test a strategy for promoting marriage and responsible fatherhood among unmarried urban parents who expect or recently had a child

Subd. 3. Implementation. Target population is parents of babies born in Minneapolis and St. Paul hospitals. Must not include couples with a history of domestic violence. The university and community-based programs may do implementation. The commissioner will enter contracts or manage grants, provide technical assistance, and develop and implement evaluation.

2 Definition. Amends the marriage statute to include the definition of “local registrar” that applies in the vital records law.

3 License. Provides that marriage licenses are to be obtained from the local registrar rather

Section

than the court administrator for the county.

4 Term of license. Changes district court administrator to local registrar.

5 Disposition of license fee. Change marriage license fee (for those who do not take the premarital education discount) disposition as follows:

- the local registrar pays \$70 to the state rather than the current \$65. Of this amount, \$5 would go to a special revenue fund and be appropriated to the Healthy Marriage Initiative. The fee increases and disposition are contingent on receipt of federal funds for the purposes of section 1.

6 Report. Requires the local registrar to annually report to the Department of Health the number of marriage licenses issued and the fees paid.

7 Certificate; witnesses. Terminology change.

8 Penalty for failure. Terminology change.

9 Terminology change.

10 Summons. Prior law required parties to a marriage dissolution, legal separation, or parenting proceeding where child custody is contested to attend parenting class. The act requires class to start within 30 days after the first filing with the court or as soon as classes are available, and provides for putting this information on a notice that comes with a marriage dissolution summons.

11 Attendance. Specifies that marriage dissolution parenting classes must last at least eight hours and must start within 30 days after the first filing with the court or as soon as class are available.

12 Appropriation. \$100,000 from the general fund to DHS for the healthy marriage initiative. Requires the first \$100,000 collected from marriage licenses for this purpose to be deposited in the general fund.

13 Effective date. July 1, 2004.