

ACT 232

S.B. NO. 2188

A Bill for an Act Relating to a Commission on Fatherhood.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Hawaii:

SECTION 1. Act 156, Session Laws of Hawaii 2003, as amended by Act 148, Session Laws of Hawaii 2005, is amended by amending section 2 to read as follows:

“SECTION 2. The Hawaii Revised Statutes is amended by adding a new chapter to be appropriately designated and to read as follows:

**“CHAPTER
COMMISSION ON FATHERHOOD**

§ -1 **Findings and purpose.** The legislature finds that, across the United States, there is a renewed understanding of the unique importance of fathers in the lives of their children, families, and communities. It is widely recognized that children are more likely to thrive with support, guidance, and nurturing from both parents. The absence of one parent from a child’s life can place that child at a greater risk of health, emotional, educational, and behavioral problems associated with the child’s development. However, many young men today are themselves fatherless, lack appropriate role models, and are in need of information and education regarding the appropriate roles and responsibilities of fathers.

The legislature further finds that the role of fathers in the raising of children and in the health and well-being of families is often unintentionally overlooked in government contracts, programs, and services dealing with children’s health, welfare, and education.

It is the purpose of this chapter to provide for a statewide program to promote healthy family relationships between parents and children.

§ -2 **State commission on fatherhood.** There is established the state commission on fatherhood within the department of human services for administrative purposes.

§ -3 **Members; terms; chair; quorum; compensation.** (a) The commission shall consist of fifteen members and reflect the geographic and cultural diversity of the State. The membership shall include:

- (1) Ex officio, the director of human services, superintendent of education, director of health, attorney general, [~~director of the office of children and youth,~~ director of public safety, and executive director of the office of youth services, or their designees; and
- (2) Eight voting members shall be appointed by the governor as provided in section 26-34, except as otherwise provided in this section, as follows:
 - (A) Two members shall be appointed by the governor from a list of three nominees submitted by the president of the senate, and two members shall be appointed by the governor from a list of three nominees submitted by the speaker of the house of representatives; and
 - (B) Four members shall be appointed by the governor from the community.
- (3) One voting member shall be designated by the Hawaii Coalition for Dads.

(b) Of the appointed members, there shall be at least one member from each of the counties of Kauai, Maui, and Hawaii.

(c) All members shall serve for a term of two years. Any vacancies occurring in the membership of the commission shall be filled for the remainder of the unexpired term in the same manner as the original appointments.

(d) The chair and vice chair of the board shall be selected annually from the nongovernmental members of the commission appointed pursuant to subsection (a)(2). A simple majority shall constitute a quorum, whose affirmative vote shall be necessary for all actions.

(e) The members shall serve without compensation.

(f) Any member of the commission shall be immune from civil liability as provided in section 26-35.5.

§ -4 **Duties.** The commission shall serve in an advisory capacity to state agencies to promote healthy family relationships between parents and children. In addition, the commission may make recommendations on programs, services, and contracts relating to children and families, and may:

- (1) Act as a central clearinghouse and coordinating body for governmental and nongovernmental activities and information relating to the promotion of healthy families;
- (2) Identify promising best practices that support and engage both parents in the emotional and financial support of their children;
- (3) Identify obstacles that impede or prevent the involvement of fathers in the lives of their children;
- (4) Raise public awareness of the consequences that the absence of the father may cause in a child's life;
- (5) Recommend policies and practices, both within and without state government, that sustain and reengage fathers in the lives of their children;
- (6) Promote, foster, encourage, and otherwise support programs designed to educate and train young men who are both current and future fathers as to effective parenting skills, behaviors, and attitudes;
- (7) Promote, foster, encourage, and otherwise support programs that promote fatherhood;
- (8) Promote, foster, encourage, and otherwise support programs that counter poverty and low income by increasing the capacity of fathers to overcome personal challenges and become productive, independent, and financially responsible contributors to their family; and
- (9) Do any and all things necessary to carry out its duties and the purposes of this chapter.

§ -5 **Meetings.** The meetings of the commission shall be subject to the requirements of chapter 92.

§ -6 **Exemption from administrative supervision of boards and commissions.** Notwithstanding any law to the contrary, the commission shall be exempt from section 26-35 with the exception of section 26-35(2), (3), (7), and (8).

§ -7 **Administration of funds.** The commission shall administer funds appropriated or allocated for its work and shall be authorized to accept, disburse, and allocate funds that may become available from other governmental and private sources; provided that all such funds shall be disbursed or allocated in compliance with any specific designation stated by the donor and, in the absence of any specific designation, the funds shall be disbursed or allocated on projects related to any of the purposes of this chapter.”””

SECTION 2. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed and stricken.
New statutory material is underscored.

SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

(Approved June 23, 2006.)