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HOUSE BILL NO. 1511

Offered January 23, 2026

A BILL to amend the Code of Virginia by adding in Article 1 of Chapter 2 of Title 63.2 a section numbered 63.2-214.4, by adding a section numbered 63.2-319.1, and by adding in Title 63.2 a chapter numbered 24, consisting of a section numbered 63.2-2400, relating to Fatherhood Initiative; fatherhood needs assessment; Fatherhood Initiative Grants Program and Fund established.

Patrons—Feggans and Thomas

Referred to Committee on Health and Human Services

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding in Article 1 of Chapter 2 of Title 63.2 a section numbered 63.2-214.4, by adding a section numbered 63.2-319.1, and by adding in Title 63.2 a chapter numbered 24, consisting of a section numbered 63.2-2400, as follows:

§ 63.2-214.4. Fatherhood Initiative.

A. The Department shall develop and implement the Fatherhood Initiative (the Initiative). The Initiative shall focus on the recognition of fathers as essential partners in child and family well-being, addressing a critical gap in family support services and promoting positive father involvement linked to improved maternal, child, and family outcomes.

B. The initiative shall, at a minimum, involve the establishment of a statewide father engagement media and education campaign.

C. The Department shall collaborate with other relevant agencies of the Commonwealth to develop and implement the initiative.

§ 63.2-319.1. Fatherhood needs assessment.

A. Each local board shall ensure that it is addressing the unique needs of the fathers of children who are served by the local department of social services.

B. Each local board shall:

1. Conduct an initial assessment of its engagement with such fathers and provision of and referral to father-oriented services.

2. Create an action plan to address any gaps identified through the assessment and implement the action plan.

C. The Department shall annually review how the local board is meeting the needs of fathers, including, at a minimum, how the local board is helping fathers establish positive, stable relationships with their children and assisting fathers in receiving needed services. The local board shall provide any relevant information on how it is meeting the needs of these fathers to the Department.

CHAPTER 24.

FATHERHOOD INITIATIVE GRANTS PROGRAM AND FUND.

§ 63.2-2400. Fatherhood Initiative Grants Program and Fund.

A. From the funds appropriated for such purpose and from the gifts, donations, grants, bequests, and other funds received on its behalf, there is established (i) the Fatherhood Initiative Grants Program (the Program), to be administered by the Department, and (ii) a special nonreverting fund to be known as the Fatherhood Initiative Grants Fund (the Fund). The Fund shall be established on the books of the Comptroller. All moneys appropriated by the General Assembly for the Fund, and received from any other sources, public or private, shall be paid into the state treasury and credited to the Fund. Interest earned on moneys in the Fund shall remain in the Fund and be credited to it. Any moneys remaining in the Fund, including interest thereon, at the end of each fiscal year shall not revert to the general fund but shall remain in the Fund. Expenditures and disbursements from the Fund shall be made by the State Treasurer on warrants issued by the Comptroller upon written request signed by the Commissioner.

B. Subject to the authority of the Department to provide for its disbursement, the Fund shall be disbursed to award grants to nonprofit community-based organizations to address the needs of fathers. Grants shall be awarded for no more than three years, with subsequent year funding contingent on compliance with grant requirements and adequate performance. Such organizations may apply for grants from the Program on a form approved by the Department. Grant recipients shall submit reports to the Department in a format and at intervals, which shall be at least annually, prescribed by the Department.

C. The Department shall develop appropriate criteria and guidelines for the use of funding provided from the Fund and shall establish monitoring and accountability mechanisms for organizations receiving funding. Additionally, the Department shall (i) identify qualifying organizations based on criteria developed by the Department and in accordance with this section and (ii) ensure that grants provided by the Program are

59 *utilized in a manner that aligns with the Program's goals.*