

1 A RESOLUTION encouraging the establishment of the Fatherhood and Family  
2 Engagement Task Force.

3 WHEREAS, fathers play a vital and irreplaceable role in the emotional,  
4 educational, behavioral, and economic well-being of children; and

5 WHEREAS, extensive research demonstrates that children who grow up with an  
6 engaged father are more likely to succeed academically, less likely to experience poverty,  
7 less likely to engage in criminal activity, and more likely to develop healthy relationships  
8 and attain positive life outcomes; and

9 WHEREAS, father absence has been associated with increased risks of poverty,  
10 behavioral challenges, educational underachievement, substance abuse, and involvement  
11 in the juvenile and criminal justice systems; and

12 WHEREAS, strengthening father engagement has been shown to improve child  
13 well-being, reduce public assistance dependency, and strengthen families and  
14 communities; and

15 WHEREAS, the Commonwealth of Kentucky has a strong interest in promoting  
16 policies that support responsible fatherhood, remove unnecessary barriers to fathers'  
17 involvement in their children's lives, and encourage positive parental engagement; and

18 WHEREAS, understanding the specific barriers and opportunities affecting fathers  
19 in Kentucky is essential to developing informed, effective, and responsible public policy;

20 NOW, THEREFORE,

21 ***Be it resolved by the Senate of the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of***  
22 ***Kentucky:***

23 ➔Section 1. The Legislative Research Commission is hereby encouraged to  
24 establish the Fatherhood and Family Engagement Task Force to study issues related to  
25 fatherhood, father engagement, and father absence in the Commonwealth, develop  
26 recommendations to strengthen families and improve outcomes for children, and  
27 examine:

- 1 (1) The social, economic, educational, and public safety impacts of father absence  
2 on children, families, and communities within the Commonwealth;
- 3 (2) The current state of father engagement in Kentucky, including demographic  
4 trends, regional disparities, and affected populations;
- 5 (3) Barriers that prevent or discourage fathers from remaining actively involved  
6 in the lives of their children, including but not limited to legal, financial, institutional,  
7 social, and cultural barriers;
- 8 (4) The role of state agencies, courts, schools, and community organizations in  
9 supporting or hindering father engagement;
- 10 (5) The effectiveness of existing programs, policies, and initiatives in Kentucky  
11 designed to promote responsible fatherhood and family stability;
- 12 (6) Opportunities to improve father engagement through policy reforms,  
13 educational initiatives, employment programs, legal reforms, and community  
14 partnerships;
- 15 (7) Best practices from other states that have successfully implemented  
16 fatherhood initiatives or reforms;
- 17 (8) The relationship between father engagement and outcomes related to child  
18 welfare, education, public assistance, workforce participation, mental health, and criminal  
19 justice;
- 20 (9) Strategies to improve access to resources, parenting education, employment  
21 opportunities, and support services for fathers; and
- 22 (10) Recommendations for legislative, administrative, and community-based  
23 solutions to strengthen father engagement across the Commonwealth.

24 ➔Section 2. The recommended membership of the Fatherhood and Family  
25 Engagement Task Force is as follows:

- 26 (1) Two members of the Senate, appointed by the President of the Senate, one of  
27 whom shall be designated by the President of the Senate as a co-chair of the task force;

1           (2) One member of the Senate appointed by the Minority Floor Leader of the  
2 Senate;

3           (3) Two members of the House of Representatives, appointed by the Speaker of  
4 the House of Representatives, one of whom shall be designated by the Speaker of the  
5 House of Representatives as a co-chair of the task force;

6           (4) One member of the House of Representatives appointed by the Minority Floor  
7 Leader of the House of Representatives;

8           (5) The secretary of the Cabinet for Health and Family Services, or designee;

9           (6) The director of the Administrative Office of the Courts, or designee;

10          (7) The commissioner of the Kentucky Department of Education, or designee;

11          (8) The secretary of the Cabinet for Economic Development, or designee; and

12          (9) Four at-large members appointed by the Legislative Research Commission,  
13 including:

14           (a) One representative from a nonprofit organization focused on fatherhood or  
15 family engagement;

16           (b) One representative from a child advocacy organization;

17           (c) One representative with expertise in mental health or family counseling; and

18           (d) One father from the Commonwealth with lived experience relevant to the  
19 mission of the task force.

20          ➔Section 3. The Fatherhood and Family Engagement Task Force is encouraged  
21 to meet at least monthly during the 2026 Interim of the General Assembly and to submit  
22 findings and recommendations to the Legislative Research Commission for referral to the  
23 Interim Joint Committee on Families and Children by December 1, 2026.