

H. B. 2527

(By Delegates Pasdon, Marcum, Kessinger, R. Phillips, Upson and L. Phillips)

[Introduced February 2, 2015; referred to the

Committee on Education then Finance.]

A BILL to amend the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, by adding thereto a new section, designated §18A-3A-7, relating to creating a Task Force on the Prevention of Sexual Abuse of Children within the Center for Professional Development; specifying composition of task force; including duty to make recommendations; and providing that members serve without expense reimbursement or compensation.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

That the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, be amended by adding thereto a new section, designated §18A-3A-7, to read as follows:

ARTICLE 3A. CENTER FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT.

§18A-3A-7. Task Force on the Prevention of Sexual Abuse of Children.

(a) The Task Force on the Prevention of Sexual Abuse of Children is created within the Center for Professional Development. The task force shall consist of all of the following members:

(1) One member of the West Virginia Senate and one member of the public, appointed by

1 the President of the Senate;

2 (2) One member of the West Virginia House of Delegates and one member of the public,
3 appointed by the Speaker of the House of Delegates;

4 (3) One member of the public, who is a survivor of child sexual abuse, appointed by the
5 Governor;

6 (4) The President of the State Board of Education, or his or her designee;

7 (5) The State Superintendent of Schools, or his or her designee;

8 (6) The Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Resources, or his or her designee;

9 (7) The Director of the Prosecuting Attorney's Institute, or his or her designee;

10 (8) A representative of a statewide professional teachers' organization, appointed by the head
11 of that organization;

12 (9) A representative of a different statewide professional teachers' organization, appointed
13 by the head of that organization;

14 (10) A representative of a statewide professional school service personnel organization,
15 appointed by the head of that organization;

16 (11) A representative of a statewide professional principals' organization, appointed by the
17 head of that organization;

18 (12) A representative of a statewide professional social workers' organization, appointed by
19 the head of that organization;

20 (13) A representative of a teacher preparation program from a regionally accredited
21 institution of higher education in West Virginia, appointed by the West Virginia Chancellor of the
22 Higher Education Policy Commission;

1 (14) The Director of Prevent Child Abuse West Virginia, or his or her designee;

2 (15) The Director of the West Virginia Child Advocacy Network, or his or her designee;

3 (16) The Director of the West Virginia Coalition Against Domestic Violence, or his or her
4 designee;

5 (17) The Director of the West Virginia Foundation for Rape Information and Services, or his
6 or her designee;

7 (18) The Administrative Director of the West Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals, or his or
8 her designee; and

9 (19) A representative of an organization representing law enforcement, appointed by the
10 Superintendent of the West Virginia State Police.

11 (b) Members of the task force must be individuals who are actively involved in the fields of
12 the prevention of child abuse and neglect and child welfare. The appointment of members must
13 reflect the geographic diversity of the state.

14 (c) The task force shall elect a presiding officer by a majority vote of the membership of the
15 task force. The task force shall meet at the call of the presiding officer. The task force shall make
16 recommendations for reducing child sexual abuse in West Virginia. In making those
17 recommendations, the task force shall:

18 (1) Gather information concerning child sexual abuse throughout the state;

19 (2) Receive reports and testimony from individuals, state and local agencies,
20 community-based organizations, and other public and private organizations;

21 (3) Create goals for state education policy that would prevent child sexual abuse;

22 (4) Create goals for other areas of state policy that would prevent child sexual abuse; and

1 (5) Submit a report with its recommendations to the Office of the Governor and the
2 Legislature.

3 (d) The recommendations may include proposals for specific statutory changes and methods
4 to foster cooperation among state agencies and between the state and local government. The task
5 force shall consult with employees of the Bureau for Children and Family Services, the Division of
6 Justice and Community Services, the West Virginia State Police, the West Virginia State Board of
7 Education, and any other state agency or department as necessary to accomplish the task force's
8 responsibilities under this section. The members of the task force shall serve without compensation
9 and may not be reimbursed for their expenses.

10 (e) This section may be referred to as Erin Merryn's Law.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to create a Task Force on the Prevention of Sexual Abuse of Children within the Center for Professional Development. It is named after child sexual abuse survivor, Erin Merryn. The task force is to develop recommendations and proposals for statutory changes, state education policy, and methods to foster cooperation among state agencies, local government, schools and community efforts to prevent child sexual abuse in West Virginia.

This section is new; therefore, it has been completely underscored.