

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2024 REGULAR SESSION

Introduced

House Bill 4635

By Delegate Young

[Introduced January 11, 2024; Referred to the
Committee on Government Organization]

1 A BILL to amend the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, by adding thereto a new article,
 2 designated §5-31-1, §5-31-2, §5-31-3, §5-31-4, §5-31-5, and §5-31-6, all relating to
 3 establishing the Intergenerational Poverty Task Force; giving criteria for members;
 4 establishing duties for the task force; providing for the power of the task force; creating a
 5 report to be submitted to the Joint Committee on Government and Finance; and creating a
 6 termination date.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

ARTICLE 31. INTERGENERATIONAL POVERTY TASK FORCE.

§5-31-1. Intergenerational Poverty Task Force created; members.

1 (a) The Intergenerational Poverty Task Force is created. The executive committee of the
 2 task force shall consist of the following voting members:

3 (1) The chairpersons of the Health and Human Resources Committee of the Legislature;

4 (2) The chairpersons of the Finance Committee of the Legislature; and

5 (3) Three at-large members appointed by the Governor.

6 (4) The voting members of the executive committee shall choose a chairperson and vice-
 7 chairperson from among the voting members.

8 (5) The chief executive officer of the Department of Health and Human Resources or his or
 9 her designee, the Department of Labor, and the Commissioner of the West Virginia Department of
 10 Education shall be nonvoting, ex officio members of the executive committee of the task force.

11 (b) The remaining members of the task force shall be nonvoting members appointed by the
 12 executive committee of the task force through an application and selection process, representing

13 (1) advocacy groups that focus on childhood poverty issues and education issues, (2) academic
 14 experts in childhood poverty or education, (3) service providers, (4) educational institutions, (5)
 15 workforce development agencies, and (6) experts in early childhood education. The members
 16 appointed pursuant to this subsection shall constitute the advisory committee to the task force.

§5-31-2. Intergenerational Poverty Task Force; duties.

1 The Intergenerational Poverty Task Force shall, with respect to programs, including, but
2 not limited to, the aid to dependent children program, the federal Supplemental Nutrition
3 Assistance Program established pursuant to 7 U.S.C. 2011 *et seq.*, child-care assistance
4 programs, and other relevant programs within the West Virginia Department of Health and Human
5 Resources:

6 (1) Share, examine, and analyze data and information regarding intergenerational poverty
7 in the state with a primary focus on data and information regarding children who are at risk of
8 continuing the cycle of poverty unless outside intervention is made and develop effective and
9 efficient plans, programs, and recommendations to help such children escape the cycle of poverty;

10 (2) Encourage participation and input from academic experts, advocacy groups, nonprofit
11 corporations, local governments, and faith-based institutions in exploring strategies and solutions
12 to help children who are victims of intergenerational poverty escape the cycle of poverty;

13 (3) Study, evaluate, and report on the status and effectiveness of policies, procedures, and
14 programs implemented by other states and by nongovernmental entities that address the needs of
15 and that provide services to children affected by intergenerational poverty;

16 (4) Identify policies, procedures, and programs, including any lack of interagency data
17 sharing, lack of policy coordination, or current federal requirements, that are impeding efforts to
18 help children in the state affected by intergenerational poverty escape the cycle of poverty and
19 recommend changes to those policies and procedures;

20 (5) Create a long-range strategic plan containing:

21 (A) Measurable goals and benchmarks, including future action needed to attain those
22 goals and benchmarks, for decreasing the incidence of intergenerational poverty among the
23 state's children and increasing the number of the state's children who escape the cycle of poverty;
24 and

25 (B) Recommended data-supported changes to policies, procedures, and programs to
26 address the needs of children affected by intergenerational poverty and to help those children

27 escape the cycle of poverty, including the steps that will be required to make the recommended
28 changes and whether further action is required by the Legislature or the federal government; and

29 (6) Protect the privacy of individuals living in poverty by using and distributing the data it
30 collects or examines in compliance with federal requirements and with relevant sections of West
31 Virginia Code.

32 (7) Collaborate with the advisory committee created in section four of this article to develop
33 and monitor strategies to prevent and address adverse childhood experiences and reduce
34 intergenerational poverty;

35 (8) Seek input on best practices for poverty reduction from task force, service providers,
36 community-based organizations, legislators, state agencies, stakeholders, and subject matter
37 experts; and

38 (9) Collaborate with partner agencies and the advisory committee to analyze available
39 data and information regarding intergenerational poverty in the state, with a primary focus on data
40 and information regarding children who are at risk of continuing the cycle of poverty and welfare
41 dependency unless outside intervention occurs.

§5-31-3. Intergenerational Poverty Task Force; powers.

1 To accomplish its duties, the Intergenerational Poverty Task Force may:

2 (1) Request and receive from any state or local governmental entity or institution
3 information relating to poverty in the state, including reports, audits, data, projections, and
4 statistics; and

5 (2) Appoint special committees to advise and assist the task force. Members of any such
6 special committee shall be appointed by the chairperson of the task force and may be members of
7 the task force or individuals from the private or public sector. A special committee shall report to
8 the task force on the progress of the special committee. Members of a special committee
9 appointed under this section may not receive reimbursement or pay for work done in relation to the
10 special committee.

§5-31-4. Advisory committee established.

1 (a) To assist the task force established in this act, there is created the intergenerational
2 poverty advisory committee.

3 (b) The advisory committee must include diverse, statewide representation from public,
4 nonprofit, and for-profit entities. The committee membership must reflect regional, racial, and
5 cultural diversity to adequately represent the needs of all children and families in the state.

6 (c) The advisory committee must include representatives from:

7 (1) Advocacy groups that focus on childhood and family poverty issues;

8 (2) Advocacy groups that focus on education and early childhood education issues;

9 (3) Faith-based organizations that address early childhood and childhood poverty and
10 education;

11 (4) Local government representatives that address childhood poverty or education issues;

12 (5) A subject matter expert in mental health;

13 (6) The department of health and human resources;

14 (7) Advocacy groups that focus on racial equity;

15 (8) Advocacy groups that focus on homelessness;

16 (9) Advocacy groups that focus on economic justice;

17 (10) Advocacy groups that focus on civil rights;

18 (11) Advocacy groups that focus on immigrant justice;

19 (12) Advocacy groups that focus on caregiver services;

20 (13) Advocacy groups that promote foster care facilitation;

21 (14) Advocacy groups that promote people in reentry and families of formerly incarcerated
22 people;

23 (15) Advocacy groups that promote senior services;

24 (16) Advocacy groups that promote veteran care and needs;

25 (d) Each member of the advisory committee is appointed for a four-year term unless a

26 member is appointed to complete an unexpired term. The secretary may adjust the length of term
27 at the time of appointment or reappointment so that approximately one-half of the advisory
28 committee is appointed every two years.

29 (e) The secretary may remove an advisory committee member:

30 (1) If the member is unable or unwilling to carry out the member's assigned responsibilities;

31 or

32 (2) For good cause.

33 (f) If a vacancy occurs in the advisory committee membership for any reason, a
34 replacement may be appointed for the unexpired term.

35 (g) The advisory committee shall choose cochairs from among its membership. The
36 secretary shall convene the initial meeting of the advisory committee.

37 (h) A majority of the advisory committee constitutes a quorum of the advisory committee at
38 any meeting and the action of the majority of members present is the action of the advisory
39 committee.

40 (i) The advisory committee shall:

41 (1) Meet quarterly at the request of the task force cochairs or the cochairs of the advisory
42 committee;

43 (2) Make recommendations to the task force on how the task force and the state can
44 effectively address the needs of children affected by intergenerational poverty and achieve the
45 purposes and duties of the task force as described in this act;

46 (3) Ensure that the advisory committee's recommendations to the task force are supported
47 by verifiable data; and

48 (4) Gather input from diverse communities about the impact of intergenerational poverty on
49 outcomes such as education, health care, employment, involvement in the child welfare system,
50 and other related areas.

51 (j) The department shall provide staff support to the advisory committee and shall

52 endeavor to accommodate the participation needs of its members. Accommodations may include
 53 considering the location and time of committee meetings, making options available for remote
 54 participation by members, and convening meetings of the committee in locations with proximity to
 55 available child care whenever feasible.

56 (k) Members of the advisory committee may receive reimbursement for travel expenses.

§5-31-5. Intergenerational Poverty Task Force; reports; contents.

1 (a) On or before December 1, 2024, the Intergenerational Poverty Task Force shall submit
 2 a preliminary report and on or before December 15, 2024, the task force shall submit a final report:
 3 (1) To the Governor and (2) electronically to the Joint Committee on Government and Finance.

4 (b) The preliminary report and the final report shall:

5 (1) Include the long-range strategic plan;

6 (2) Describe how the task force fulfilled its statutory purposes and duties during the time
 7 period covered by the report;

8 (3) Describe policies, procedures, and programs that have been implemented or modified
 9 to help break the cycle of poverty for children affected or at risk of being affected by
 10 intergenerational poverty; and

11 (4) Contain recommendations on how the state should act to address issues relating to
 12 breaking the cycle of poverty for children affected or at risk of being affected by intergenerational
 13 poverty.

§5-31-6. Intergenerational Poverty Task Force; termination.

1 The Intergenerational Poverty Task Force terminates on December 31, 2024.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to establish the Intergenerational Poverty Task Force.

Strike-throughs indicate language that would be stricken from a heading or the present law and underscoring indicates new language that would be added.