



# State of Iowa

## Executive Department

IN THE NAME AND BY THE AUTHORITY OF THE STATE OF IOWA

### EXECUTIVE ORDER NUMBER FIFTEEN

- WHEREAS,** Iowans have traditionally recognized that strong families are essential to ensuring that our children will enjoy a secure future; and
- WHEREAS,** Iowans intuitively understand that children need to receive the support and guidance of both parents; and
- WHEREAS,** an emerging set of scientific data supports our belief that a healthy bond between a child and the child's parents has a direct impact on the future success of the child; and
- WHEREAS,** the absence of one parent from a child's life can place that child at greater risk of health, emotional, educational, and behavior problems associated with the child's development; and
- WHEREAS,** for most children, the absent parent is the father; and
- WHEREAS,** studies reveal that children with an absent parent are more likely to develop substance abuse problems, drop out of school, become teenage parents, and engage in criminal behavior than children who maintain healthy bonds with both parents; and
- WHEREAS,** children with two parents who actively and positively engage in their life by providing financial support, love, guidance, and discipline, have a greater chance for success than children who receive active involvement from only one parent.

**NOW, THEREFORE,** I, Thomas J. Vilsack, Governor of the State of Iowa, by the power vested in me by the laws of the constitution of the State of Iowa do hereby order the creation of the INTER-AGENCY WORK GROUP ON RESPONSIBLE PARENTHOOD.

- I. Purpose. The Inter-Agency Work Group on Responsible Parenthood is established to complete the following tasks:
  1. Identify barriers within state policy and procedures that may act to impede the development of strong emotional and financial bonds of support between both parents and their children;
  2. Identify opportunities that may exist among programs administered by departments to assist the absent parent in providing emotional and financial support for their children;
  3. Propose adjustments to state policy and procedures to reduce barriers that discourage parents from developing a strong foundation of support for their children;
  4. Identify promising practices that support and engage both parents in the emotional and financial support of their children;
    - a. Identify services that have been successful in keeping young fathers actively involved in strong parenting role.
    - b. Identify successful approaches for ensuring that fathers obtain and maintain full employment, learn how to be active parents, and develop skills for coping with difficult relationships
  5. Attempt to quantify the benefits that can be gained by increasing the level of active support that children receive from both parents;



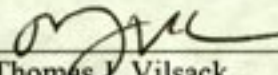
6. Make recommendations for additional steps that the State of Iowa should take to remove the barriers that prevent children from receiving the emotional and financial support of both parents.

The work-group shall submit a written report to the governor outlining its finding, conclusions, and recommendations by December 31, 2000.

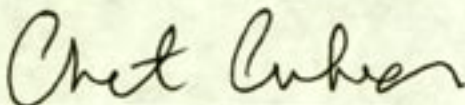
- II. Organization. The director for the Iowa Department of Human Services will chair the Inter-Agency Work Group on Responsible Parenthood. The work group will consist of representatives from the following state agencies:
  - A. Department of Public Health;
  - B. Department of Workforce Development;
  - C. Department of Education;
  - D. Department of Corrections.



**IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF**, I have hereunto subscribed my name and caused the Great Seal of Iowa to be affixed. Done in Des Moines, Iowa this 14<sup>th</sup> day of March in the year of our Lord two thousand.

  
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Thomas J. Vilsack  
Governor

ATTEST:



Chester J. Culver  
Secretary of State