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State of Minnesota

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NINETY-FIRST SESSION

H. F. No. 1784

02/27/2019 Authored by Cantrell, Scott and Masin The bill was read for the first time and referred to the Committee on Ways and Means

1.1 A bill for an act
1.2 relating to family law; requiring the University of Minnesota to conduct a survey
1.3 and study of early neutral evaluation participants; requiring a report; appropriating
1.4 money.

1.5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

1.6 Section 1. EARLY NEUTRAL EVALUATION STUDY AND REPORT.

1.7 (a) The supreme court must contract with the Board of Regents of the University of
1.8 Minnesota to develop and conduct a survey and report as provided in this section.

1.9 (b) The board, through its Extension Service, must develop and conduct a survey of all
1.10 early neutral evaluation participants from November 1, 2019, to November 1, 2020. At a
1.11 minimum, the survey must seek the following information:

1.12 (1) the participant's demographic information, including age, gender, and race;

1.13 (2) a participant's satisfaction levels with the early neutral evaluation process and outcome
1.14 as it relates to the following:

1.15 (i) custody arrangements;

1.16 (ii) parenting time;

1.17 (iii) property division;

1.18 (iv) legal expenses;

1.19 (v) length of time of the process;

1.20 (vi) level of cooperation of each party; and

- 2.1 (vii) the effectiveness of the neutral or neutrals;
- 2.2 (3) the participant's opinion regarding fairness of the early neutral evaluation process,  
2.3 whether their expectations were met, whether the participant made decisions voluntarily,  
2.4 and whether the participant would recommend the early neutral evaluation to others; and
- 2.5 (4) the participant's recommendations related to the early neutral evaluation process and  
2.6 outcome.
- 2.7 (c) The Extension Service must aggregate the results of the survey and report it to the  
2.8 chairs and ranking minority members of the legislative committees having jurisdiction over  
2.9 children, families, and the judiciary by January 15, 2021. The report must include the  
2.10 following:
- 2.11 (1) the total number of early neutral evaluation participants;
- 2.12 (2) the total number of social-early neutral evaluation participants;
- 2.13 (3) the total number of financial-early neutral evaluation participants;
- 2.14 (4) all disaggregated data, including survey data, collected by judicial district;
- 2.15 (5) a description of the methods used to collect data; and
- 2.16 (6) a description of general trends, findings, and conclusions based on data collected.

2.17 **Sec. 2. APPROPRIATION.**

- 2.18 \$50,000 in fiscal year 2020 is appropriated from the general fund to the supreme court  
2.19 to contract with the Board of Regents of the University of Minnesota for its Extension  
2.20 Service to develop and conduct a survey of all early neutral evaluation participants and  
2.21 provide a report to the legislature pursuant to section 1.