

§§1 - 5
C. 26:2-170
To
26:2-174
§6
Approp.

P.L. 1997, CHAPTER 229, *approved August 25, 1997*
Senate, No. 1388

1 **AN ACT** establishing an Advisory Council on Adolescent Pregnancy,
2 supplementing Title 26 of the Revised Statutes and making an
3 appropriation.
4

5 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State
6 of New Jersey:

7
8 1. The Legislature finds and declares that:

9 a. Out-of-wedlock adolescent births are a serious problem facing
10 the State of New Jersey and the nation;

11 b. A large number of adolescents ages 10-19 are having children
12 with approximately one million adolescents in the United States
13 becoming pregnant each year;

14 c. Adolescent pregnancy has serious medical consequences,
15 including the following: adolescents are less likely than older mothers
16 to obtain prenatal care as only half of the pregnant adolescents in New
17 Jersey receive early prenatal care; pregnant teenagers are at excess risk
18 for anemia, cervical trauma, premature delivery, prolonged or abrupt
19 labor and maternal mortality; and children of adolescent mothers are
20 more likely to have low birth weight, require further hospitalization
21 and die in infancy;

22 d. Out-of-wedlock adolescent pregnancy has serious social
23 consequences, including the following: adolescent mothers are more
24 likely to live in poverty, receive public assistance, be a high school
25 dropout and be unemployed as nearly 75% of all single mothers under
26 age 25 live in poverty, approximately half of all women receiving
27 AFDC from 1976-1992 were or had been teenage mothers, only
28 slightly more than half of adolescents who become mothers finish high
29 school and children of adolescent mothers experience excess rates of
30 dropping out of school, incarceration, depression, premature sexual
31 activity and out-of-wedlock births. As of 1992, 84% of all births to
32 mothers under the age of 20 in New Jersey were out-of-wedlock, the
33 sixth highest rate in the country;

34 e. Out-of-wedlock adolescent pregnancy imposes large economic
35 costs to federal, state and local governments;

36 f. There is a need for a permanent body to confront the issue of
37 out-of-wedlock adolescent pregnancy and to review policy proposals,

1 such as the findings and recommendations presented in the 1988 report
2 of the New Jersey Task Force on Adolescent Pregnancy; and

3 g. It is therefore necessary to establish an advisory council to
4 determine the best methods of coordination and improvement of the
5 services of State and local governmental, private and voluntary
6 agencies, community organizations, and schools which seek to serve
7 adolescents at high risk of pregnancy, pregnant adolescents, adolescent
8 parents, and their families.

9

10 2. a. There is established in the Executive Branch of the State
11 Government an Advisory Council on Adolescent Pregnancy. For the
12 purposes of complying with the provisions of Article V, Section IV,
13 paragraph 1 of the New Jersey Constitution, the advisory council is
14 allocated within the Department of Health, but notwithstanding that
15 allocation, the advisory council shall be independent of any supervision
16 or control by the department or by any board or officer thereof.

17 b. The advisory council shall consist of 23 members as follows: the
18 Commissioners of the Departments of Health, Human Services,
19 Education, Community Affairs, and Labor, who shall serve as ex
20 officio members, and 18 public members, four of whom shall be
21 teenagers, including two teenage parents and two teenagers who are
22 not parents, and fourteen of whom shall be representatives of
23 community based religious, health and social service organizations
24 which serve adolescents and health professionals and educators with
25 recognized expertise in the field of adolescent pregnancy. Of the
26 public members, three shall be appointed by the President of the
27 Senate, no more than two of whom shall be of the same political party;
28 three shall be appointed by the Speaker of the General Assembly, no
29 more than two of whom shall be of the same political party; and 12
30 shall be appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the
31 Senate, no more than six of whom shall be of the same political party.
32 The advisory council shall organize within 30 days after the
33 appointment of its members. The members shall select one person
34 from among them to serve as the chairperson and the members shall
35 select a secretary, who need not be a member of the advisory council.

36 c. Each ex officio member may designate an employee of the
37 member's department to represent the member at hearings of the
38 advisory council. All designees may lawfully vote and otherwise act
39 on behalf of the member for whom they constitute the designee.

40 d. Each public member shall be appointed for a term of three years,
41 but of the members first appointed, six shall serve for a term of one
42 year, six for a term of two years and six for a term of three years.
43 Members shall serve until their successors are appointed and qualified.
44 Vacancies shall be filled in the same manner as the original
45 appointments were made.

46 e. Members of the advisory council shall serve without

1 compensation but, within the limits of funds appropriated or otherwise
2 made available to it, shall be eligible for reimbursement of necessary
3 expenses incurred in the performance of their duties.

4 f. The Department of Health shall provide such staff as the
5 advisory council requests to carry out the purposes of this act.

6

7 3. It shall be the duty of the advisory council to:

8 a. Review past policy proposals, including those contained in the
9 1988 report of the New Jersey Task Force on Adolescent Pregnancy;

10 b. Develop policy proposals for the State to prevent adolescent
11 pregnancy, reduce out-of-wedlock births among adolescents and
12 improve services to at-risk, pregnant, and parenting adolescents;

13 c. Assist with and promote a coordinated and comprehensive
14 approach to the social, economic, and health problems of adolescent
15 pregnancy and parenthood among public and private groups;

16 d. Collect information on ongoing and new efforts aimed at
17 preventing adolescent pregnancy and improving services to at-risk,
18 pregnant, and parenting adolescents;

19 e. Promote and encourage broad community input, communication
20 and education regarding adolescent pregnancy;

21 f. Provide advice to local public and private agencies and schools
22 seeking to mobilize local efforts designed to prevent adolescent
23 pregnancies and assist adolescent parents; and

24 g. Coordinate activities generated by the National Campaign to
25 Prevent Teen Pregnancy and the Family Planning Program in the State
26 Department of Health.

27

28 4. The advisory council may call to its assistance and avail itself of
29 the services of the Legislature and officials and employees of any
30 State, county or municipal department, board, bureau, commission,
31 task force, or agency as may be required and made available for its
32 purposes. It may also, within the limits of funds appropriated or
33 otherwise made available to it, incur travel and miscellaneous expenses
34 necessary for the performance of its duties.

35

36 5. The advisory council shall report to the Governor and the
37 Legislature biannually, or more frequently if deemed appropriate, on
38 its activities, findings and recommendations for legislation,
39 administrative action or other methods for preventing adolescent
40 pregnancy, reducing out-of-wedlock births among adolescents and
41 improving services related to adolescent pregnancy.

42

43 6. There is appropriated \$95,000 from the General Fund to the
44 Advisory Council on Adolescent Pregnancy to effectuate the purposes
45 of this act.

1 7. This act shall take effect immediately.

2

3

4

STATEMENT

5

6 This bill establishes a permanent Advisory Council on Adolescent
7 Pregnancy in, but not of, the Department of Health. The advisory
8 council would consist of 23 members including the Commissioners of
9 the Departments of Health, Human Services, Education, Community
10 Affairs, and Labor, ex officio, or their designees, and 18 public
11 members including four teenagers and 14 members representing
12 community based religious, health and social service organizations
13 which serve adolescents as well as health professionals and educators.
14 Of the 18 public members, three are to be appointed by the President
15 of the Senate, three by the Speaker of the Assembly and 12 by the
16 Governor. The public members would serve a term of three years.

17 The advisory council would have the following duties: (1) to
18 review past policy proposals; (2) to develop policy proposals to
19 prevent adolescent pregnancy, reduce out-of-wedlock births and
20 improve services to at-risk, pregnant, and parenting adolescents; (3)
21 to assist with and promote a coordinated and comprehensive approach
22 to the social, economic, and health problems of adolescent pregnancy
23 and parenthood; (4) to collect information on ongoing and new efforts
24 aimed at preventing adolescent pregnancy and improving services to
25 adolescent parents; (5) to promote and encourage community input,
26 communication and education regarding adolescent pregnancy; (6) to
27 provide advice to local agencies and schools seeking to prevent
28 adolescent pregnancies and assist adolescent parents; and (7) to
29 coordinate activities generated by the National Campaign to Prevent
30 Teen Pregnancy and the Family Planning Program in the State
31 Department of Health.

32 The advisory council would report on its activities, findings and
33 recommendations biannually, or more frequently if appropriate, to the
34 Governor and the Legislature.

35 The bill also appropriates \$95,000 to the advisory council to carry
36 out the purposes of this act.

37

38

39

40

41 Establishes Advisory Council on Adolescent Pregnancy; appropriates
42 \$95,000.