WHEREAS, Children living in single parent households are more likely to be living in poverty; and
WHEREAS, Fatherless children are at a significantly greater risk for drug and alcohol abuse; and
WHEREAS, Fatherless children are twice as likely to drop out of school; and
WHEREAS, The vast majority of homeless and runaway children are from fatherless homes; and
WHEREAS, Iowans intuitively understand that children need to receive the support and guidance of both parents; and
WHEREAS, The absence of one parent from a child’s life can place that child at greater risk of health, emotional, educational, and behavioral problems associated with the child’s development; and
WHEREAS, For most children, the absent parent is the father:

NOW, THEREFORE, I, THOMAS J. VILSACK, Governor of the State of Iowa, by the power vested in me under the laws and the constitution of the State of Iowa do hereby order the creation of the TASK FORCE FOR RESPONSIBLE FATHERHOOD.

I. Purpose. The purpose of the Task Force is to further the understanding of the importance of two parents being actively involved in the lives of a child, with particular emphasis of fathers. The Task Force is charged with the following:

1. Identify promising best practices that support and engage both parents in the emotional and financial support of their children;
2. Identify obstacles that impede or prevent the involvement of fathers in the lives of their children;
3. Raise public awareness of the consequences the absence of the father causes in a child’s life;
4. Make recommendations for policy and practice both within and without state government that sustain and re-engage fathers in their children’s lives; and
5. Report its findings and recommendations to the Governor by March 31, 2002.

II. Organization. The Task Force shall be appointed by the Governor. It is comprised of the following members:

Elaine Szymoniak, Chair
Harry Brod
Tom Klaus
Nancylee Ziese
Ana Lopez-Dawson
Odell McGhee
Matt Mohrfeld
Cindy Schulte
Mike Carver
Phyllis Mulkey
Joseph Cress
K.D. Burkett
Carol Reed

Des Moines
Cedar Falls
Carlisle
Cedar Rapids
Reasnor
Des Moines
Fort Madison
State Center
Urbandale
Mason City
Bettendorf
New Providence
Fort Dodge

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 13th day of February in the year of our Lord Two Thousand One.

Thomas J. Vilsack
Governor

ATTEST:
Chester J. Culver
Secretary of State