

**House File 2174 - Introduced**

HOUSE FILE 2174  
BY LOHSE

**A BILL FOR**

- 1 An Act providing for a task force to address legal services for
- 2 indigent parties.
- 3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF IOWA:

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1 Section 1. NEW SECTION. **602.1615 Legal services for**  
2 **indigent parties task force.**

3 1. The judicial branch shall establish a task force that  
4 shall do all of the following:

5 a. Identify how legal services are delivered in this state  
6 to indigent parties in criminal, juvenile, and child abuse and  
7 neglect proceedings statewide.

8 b. Recommend improvements to the delivery of legal services  
9 to indigent parties.

10 c. Recommend methods for providing legal services in cases  
11 involving conflicts of interest where local public defenders may  
12 be unable to accept representation.

13 d. Evaluate and recommend ways to ensure indigent parties  
14 receive competent representation.

15 e. Identify potential funding options to support the delivery  
16 of legal services for indigent parties.

17 f. Identify strategies to increase the number of qualified  
18 attorneys needed to provide legal representation to all residents  
19 of this state.

20 2. The task force shall consist of the following members:

21 a. A member appointed by the chief justice of the supreme  
22 court.

23 b. A member appointed by the governor.

24 c. A member appointed by the attorney general.

25 d. A member appointed by the state public defender.

26 e. A member in good standing with the Iowa state bar  
27 association appointed by the association.

28 f. A member in good standing with the Iowa association for  
29 justice appointed by the association.

30 g. A county attorney appointed by the Iowa county attorneys  
31 association.

32 h. A member appointed by the dean of the Drake university law  
33 school.

34 i. A member appointed by the dean of the university of Iowa  
35 college of law.

1 j. A member of the house of representatives appointed by the  
2 speaker of the house.

3 k. A member of the senate appointed by the majority leader of  
4 the senate.

5 3. For the period beginning July 1, 2026, and ending  
6 November 15, 2030, the task force shall convene at least once  
7 each calendar year, and may convene more frequently as deemed  
8 necessary by a majority vote of the task force.

9 4. For the period beginning July 1, 2026, and ending November  
10 15, 2030, the judicial branch shall submit a report to the  
11 governor and the general assembly containing the task force's  
12 findings and recommendations on or before November 15 annually.

13 5. Members of the task force shall serve without compensation  
14 but may be reimbursed for actual expenses in the performance  
15 of their duties. Task force members who are members of the  
16 general assembly shall be paid in accordance with section  
17 2.32A. The remaining task force members shall be reimbursed from  
18 moneys appropriated for the purpose of this section or otherwise  
19 appropriated to the judicial branch.

20 6. This section is repealed November 15, 2030, and the task  
21 force shall dissolve on that date.

22 EXPLANATION

23 The inclusion of this explanation does not constitute agreement with  
24 the explanation's substance by the members of the general assembly.

25 This bill directs the judicial branch to establish a task  
26 force to investigate the statewide delivery of legal services  
27 to indigent parties in criminal, juvenile, and child abuse and  
28 neglect proceedings and to develop recommendations to improve  
29 service delivery, address public defender conflicts of interest,  
30 ensure competent representation, identify sustainable funding,  
31 and increase the number of qualified attorneys available to serve  
32 indigent Iowans.

33 The required members of the task force are specified in the  
34 bill. The bill provides that for the period beginning July 1,  
35 2026, and ending November 15, 2030, the task force must convene

1 at least once per year. The bill requires the judicial branch  
2 to submit a report to the governor and the general assembly by  
3 November 15 each year through 2030.

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