



Daytona Regional CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



ADVOCACY IN ACTION

03/03/2022

Father Engagement Bill

The Florida House of Representatives and Senate unanimously passed [HB 7065](#), a unique bill that aids in creating sustainable, safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments for children and families. It aims to allow children to grow up to meet their full potential.

The bill will set aside \$70 million to promote responsible fatherhood, protect at-risk boys, and support foster children throughout Florida.

Florida House Speaker Chris Sprowls said that “From poverty to crime to incarceration, just about every negative outcome we see that faces boys here in Florida and across the country can be linked back to an absent father in the home.”

Fatherless homes have a severe impact on children; according to the U.S. Department of Justice, children from fatherless homes account for:

- 63 percent of youth suicides
- 90 percent of all homeless and runaways youths
- 85 percent of all children that exhibit behavioral disorders
- 71 percent of all high school dropouts
- 70 percent of juveniles in state-operated institutions
- 75 percent of adolescent patients in substance abuse centers

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Father Engagement Bill

Senate President Wilton Simpson placed child welfare as one of his principal concerns and stated: “The earlier in life we can give a child a safe, permanent home, the better opportunities that child will have for the rest of their lives.” Simpson, who was adopted as a child and grew up in a house with foster children,” said, “Costs of early childhood care are consistently identified as one of the biggest barriers for would-be foster families. We will address the gap between what the voucher pays and the actual costs of early childhood care. We need to make sure more children raised by their foster relatives have access to the waiver.”

According to the U.S Census data, Volusia County has over 38% of single-parent households with children. The data also shows that Daytona Beach has 57% of all births by unwed mothers, and 54.7% of those mothers are below the poverty line.