CONSENT CALENDAR

April 19, 2022

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

REPORT OF COMMITTEE

The Committee on Children and Family Law to which was referred SB 336,

AN ACT relative to family mediator interns. Having considered the same, report the same with the recommendation that the bill OUGHT TO PASS.

Rep. Jodi Nelson

FOR THE COMMITTEE

Original: House Clerk

Cc: Committee Bill File

COMMITTEE REPORT

Committee:	Children and Family Law
Bill Number:	SB 336
Title:	relative to family mediator interns.
Date:	April 19, 2022
Consent Calendar:	CONSENT
Recommendation:	OUGHT TO PASS

STATEMENT OF INTENT

This bill establishes qualifications and appropriate instances for inclusion of qualified family mediator interns. It also defines a quorum for the Board of Family Mediator certification. It is commonly accepted that family mediators are invaluable, and we need more of them. However, qualified people have been deterred from becoming certified due to the difficulty of fulfilling required internship hours after the classroom training and by statutes that do not allow interns to co-mediate with already certified mediators in court cases. By receiving at least some training with court-referred cases, interns are provided with experiences in diverse cases and it ensures that the interns are provided with enough hours to complete their internship in a timely manner.

Vote 14-0.

 $\begin{array}{c} \text{Rep. Jodi Nelson} \\ \text{FOR THE COMMITTEE} \end{array}$

Original: House Clerk

Cc: Committee Bill File

CONSENT CALENDAR

Children and Family Law

SB 336, relative to family mediator interns. OUGHT TO PASS.

Rep. Jodi Nelson for Children and Family Law. This bill establishes qualifications and appropriate instances for inclusion of qualified family mediator interns. It also defines a quorum for the Board of Family Mediator certification. It is commonly accepted that family mediators are invaluable, and we need more of them. However, qualified people have been deterred from becoming certified due to the difficulty of fulfilling required internship hours after the classroom training and by statutes that do not allow interns to co-mediate with already certified mediators in court cases. By receiving at least some training with court-referred cases, interns are provided with experiences in diverse cases and it ensures that the interns are provided with enough hours to complete their internship in a timely manner. Vote 14-0.

Original: House Clerk

Cc: Committee Bill File

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND FAMILY LAW

EXECUTIVE SESSION on SB 336

BILL TITLE: relative to family mediator interns.

DATE: April 19, 2022

LOB ROOM: 206-208

MOTIONS: OUGHT TO PASS

Moved by Rep. J. Nelson Seconded by Rep. D. Smith Vote: 14-0

CONSENT CALENDAR: YES

Statement of Intent: Refer to Committee Report

Respectfully submitted,

Rep Peter Petrigno, Clerk

OFFICE OF THE HOUSE CLERK



1/10/2022 8:54:52 AM Roll Call Committee Registers Report

2022 SESSION

Ch	ild	ren	and	Fam	ilv	Law

OTP

Bill #:	SB	336	Motion:

MAKE SEAK

AM #:

Exec Session Date:

4/19

<u>Members</u>	YEAS	<u>Nays</u>	<u>NV</u>
Rice, Kimberly A. Chairman	V		
DeSimone, Debra L. Vice Chairman			
Yokela, Josh S.	V		
Nelson, Jodi	V		
Belanger, Cody M.	V		
Cross, Kenna E. Dawn Johnson	V		
Litchfield, Melissa A. Wayne McDona	dV		
Smith, Denise M.	V		
Long, Patrick T.	V		
Alicea, Caroletta C. Clerk	V		
Grossman, Gaby M.	V		
Levesque, Cassandra N.	V		
Wazir, Safiya Megan Murray	V		
Petrigno, Peter elenc	V		
Altschiller, Debra			V
TOTAL VOTE:	14	0	



HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND FAMILY LAW

PUBLIC HEARING ON SB 336

BILL TITLE: relative to family mediator interns.

DATE: April 5, 2022

LOB ROOM: 206-208 Time Public Hearing Called to Order: 1:00pm

Time Adjourned: 1:25pm

<u>Committee Members</u>: Reps. Rice, DeSimone, Petrigno, Yokela, J. Nelson, Belanger, Cross, Litchfield, D. Smith, Long, Grossman, Levesque, Wazir, Altschiller and Alicea

Bill Sponsors:

Sen. PrentissSen. WattersSen. WhitleySen. SoucySen. GannonSen. KahnSen. CavanaughSen. ShermanRep. Nordgren

Rep. Gordon

TESTIMONY

Senator Prentiss

- Introduced bill
- Requested from Judiciary Board intern requires the intern not be alone at hearings

Mary Ann Dempsey - Info Only - General Counsel Judicial Branch

Question: Rep. Altschiller: Will this help in keeping mediators in state?

Answer: Yes

*Honey Hastings

- Supports
- Written Testimony Atty Francis Lane, Chair NH Mediator Certification Board

Esther Tandy-Wolfe - Certified Mediator

- Support
- Provide opportunities with interest to co-mediate, delivering best services for NH families.

Respectfully submitted,

Rep. Peter Petrigno

^{*} Use asterisk if written testimony and/or amendments are submitted.

SIGN UP SHEET

To Register Opinion If Not Speaking

Bill #:	SB 336		Date: <u>4/5/22</u>			
Committee:	С	hildren and Family	Law			
		** Please	Print All Information **			
Name		Address	Phone	Representing	Pro	Con
REAL CHRIST						

House Remote Testify

Children and Family Law Committee Testify List for Bill SB336 on 2022-04-05

Support: 3 Oppose: 1 Neutral: 0 Total to Testify: 0

Export to Excel

<u>Name</u>	City, State Email Address	<u>Title</u>	Representing	Position	<u>Testifying</u>	Non-Germane	Signed Up
Cavanaugh, Senator Kevin	Manchester, NH kevin.cavanaugh@leg.state.nh.us	An Elected Official	Myself	Support	No	No	3/25/2022 9:58 AM
Watters, Senator David	Dover, NH david.watters@leg.state.nh.us	An Elected Official	Myself	Support	No	No	3/30/2022 8:36 AM
Hallock, Linda	Cornish, NH LINDASH@MAIL.COM	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No	No	4/4/2022 6:35 PM
Sherman, Senator	SD 24, NH jennifer.horgan@leg.state.nh.us	An Elected Official	SD24	Support	No	No	4/5/2022 10:05 AM

To: The New Hampshire House Child and Family Law Committee

Re: Why I support SB 336

My name is Francis Lane. I am a resident of the Town of Newfields.

I am the chair of the New Hampshire Family Mediator Certification Board which has voted unanimously to support this bill. This bill will allow interns to co-mediate cases in the Family Court, thus both increasing internship opportunities and exposing interns to the challenges unique to court cases.

This May will mark my 42nd year as a practicing attorney in New Hampshire.

In the course of my career, in addition to maintaining an active and extensive practice representing individuals, companies and municipalities in a broad range of legal matters I also developed a large family Law practice representing clients in divorce and separation proceedings, as well as the broad range of domestic issues including parental rights, child support, domestic violence, and grand parental rights.

Although my practice over this period was largely concentrated on Litigation, early in my career I also recognized the importance of developing alternate methods to settle and bring closure in cases in a manner which would avoid unnecessary long-term damage, recrimination, and burdensome financial expense to the parties, which so often results from the adversarial conflict which occurs in the courtroom.

Having completed the necessary comprehensive training, I became certified as a Family Mediator by the State of New Hampshire Marital Mediator Certification Board in 2009, and have been appointed by the New Hampshire Family Division Court to serve as a Court Family Mediator. In 1993, I was appointed by the New Hampshire Superior Court to also serve as a Mediator

in the Civil Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) program, and I actively participated in this program until this past year.

In addition, in 2019 I was appointed a member of the State Family Mediator Certification Board by the Governor and Council. I currently serve as the Chairperson of that Board.

As a result of my experience I have come to believe that there is a fundamental premise accepted and embraced by our Courts, and shared by mental health Counselors as well as professional Mediators, that it is in the best interests of families, and especially children, that the resolution of a Divorce, or other Family legal proceeding, is handled in a fair, timely and respectful manner, with the ideal of seeking to avoid "Bad faith", and the unnecessary and long lasting acrimony so often resulting from high conflict adversarial Court proceedings.

The Mediation process, when conducted properly, is particularly well suited to attain these goals. Our informal mediation process is designed with an attentive focus on the parties involved, to encourage their open communication and exploration of mutual concerns and considerations, in a joint effort to come to a solution and settlement, which is fair and meets their individual needs and interests, and importantly those of the children so often involved.

The success, or failure of this process however is quite dependent upon the disposition, experience and skill set of the individual Mediator engaged. Based upon my work as both a Mediator and a Lawyer I can say without reservation that our system of training and certification of Family Mediators in our State has been exemplary, but is now experiencing challenges in the internship process.

As an integral part of our system of core mediation education and training required for State Certification, applicants are required to complete a certain

number of hours serving as "Interns" under the supervision of experienced, certified Mediators in actual mediation sessions between parties.

Our Court has taken the position, based upon its interpretation of current Legislation, that "Interns" cannot participate in Court appointed Mediation sessions.

This policy has posed a significant impediment to the ability of prospective applicants who have completed all of the required Core educational training to also complete the necessary Internship training, as a final step in our certification process.

This issue came to the attention of a group of experienced professional Mediators this past year, who over a series of conferences examined the issue and collaboratively fashioned a proposed solution, which would effectuate a well-considered and prudent framework for the engagement of "Qualified Interns", as participants in Court appointed Mediation sessions. The terms of the solution which they came to is incorporated within SB 336.

In my opinion this Bill will correct this problem in a very satisfactory manner, and I hope very much that you will support its passage.

Thank you for your kind consideration.

Very truly yours

Francis F. Lane, Esquire

April 5, 2022

Honey Hastings, Mediator

From: Honey Hastings, Mediator

Sent: Monday, April 4, 2022 8:41 AM

To: CFL@leg.state.nh.us

Subject: I support SB336-hearing on 5 April at 1 pm

Importance: High

4 April 2022

TO: House Children & Family Law Committee

FROM: Honey Hastings, CFM #75-Temple, NH (654.5000)

RE: I support SB 336—Family Mediator Interns

I have been a Certified Family Mediator since 2000. From 1982 to 2016, I was also a family law lawyer in Hillsborough County.

Background -- Parenting cases and divorces with minor children filed without an agreed-on final decree are referred to a Certified Family Mediator. The Certified Mediator works with the parties to improve communications and facilitate settlement. Many cases are settled in mediation.

Problem – Qualified NH folks have had been deterred from becoming certified because of the difficulty of getting the internship hours required after the classroom training. SB 336 solves this problem by amending statutes to allow interns to co-mediate with already-Certified mediators in court cases.

Mediator certification is handled by the Family Mediator Certification Board that is part of the NH Office of Professional Licensing and Certification. To become certified, family mediators must complete 48 hours of training and 20 hours of internship (10 hours for family lawyers and therapists).

For many years, a substantial number of mediators completed their internships in court cases. Court policy then changed and currently interns are allowed only to observe court mediations. The court has explained that specific statutory provisions prevent the use of interns in court cases. (This bill would eliminate these statutory barriers.)

Why does this matter? (1) Court cases are different and often more difficult to resolve than "private" mediation cases. They may involve parties who are taking adversarial positions, who have already received temporary or final court orders, and who were never-married to each other. (2) The difficulty of getting internships since the court's policy change has left uncertified many people who have completed mediation training and wanted to be certified.

Having interns receive at least some of their internship training in court-referred cases serves two important goals:

- 1. Provides interns experience in diverse cases;
- 2. Ensures a continuing supply of new certified mediators available to contract with the court.

SB 336 is the Solution - SB 336 would amend the divorce, parenting, and certified mediator statutes to allow interns to co-mediate in court cases. The changes would make certification a two-step process.

This bill is the product of the Future of Certified Family Mediators Committee set up by the chair of the NH Conflict Resolution Association. The Future Committee has done its work independently of the Association, which is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

This bill breaks the mediator certification process into two steps, summarized as follows:

- a. Complete all steps other than the internship and submit the application through that step. If the requirements are met, the Family Mediator Certification Board designates the person as a "qualified intern."
- b. Complete the internship hours, submit the balance of the application with required documents, and request certification.

In addition to allowing interns to work in court cases, the process outlined in the bill may increase the number of certified mediators who are willing to supervise interns as Family Mediator Certification Board would have approved the background, training, and criminal background check of "qualified interns."

Quorum Provision— Due to lack of a quorum, the FMCB met only twice from May 2021 to January 2022. Its scheduled April meeting has been postponed because of no quorum. This provision in this bill would give the FMCB the same quorum provision as were applied in 2021 to many other occupational regulatory boards overseen by OPLC. That legislation replaced an existing statutory quorum stated as a specific number of members with this language:

A majority of the members of the board appointed by the governor and council shall constitute a quorum.

The bill would give FMCB the same provision and protection. As two of FMCB's members are appointed by the Judicial Branch, with the passage of this bill the quorum would be reduced by one. The April meeting would have had a quorum had this now been the law.

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Francis F. Lane, Esquire

April 5, 2022

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SB 336 - AS AMENDED BY THE SENATE

02/16/2022 0669s

2022 SESSION

22-3084 07/04

SENATE BILL 336

AN ACT relative to family mediator interns.

SPONSORS: Sen. Prentiss, Dist 5; Sen. Watters, Dist 4; Sen. Whitley, Dist 15; Sen. Soucy, Dist

18; Sen. Gannon, Dist 23; Sen. Kahn, Dist 10; Sen. Cavanaugh, Dist 16; Sen.

Sherman, Dist 24; Rep. Nordgren, Graf. 12; Rep. Gordon, Graf. 9

COMMITTEE: Judiciary

AMENDED ANALYSIS

This bill establishes the qualifications and appropriate instances of inclusion of qualified family mediator interns, as well as establishes the quorum for the board of family mediator certification.

.....

Explanation: Matter added to current law appears in **bold italics**.

Matter removed from current law appears [in brackets and struckthrough.]

Matter which is either (a) all new or (b) repealed and reenacted appears in regular type.

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22-3084 07/04

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

In the Year of Our Lord Two Thousand Twenty Two

AN ACT relative to family mediator interns.

Be it Enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court convened:

- 1 Family Mediators; Definitions. RSA 328-C:2 is repealed and reenacted to read as follows: 2 328-C:2 Definitions. In this chapter:
 - I. "Board" means the board of family mediator certification established by RSA 328-C:4.
- 4 II. "Certified family mediator" means a person certified under the provisions of this chapter to act as a family mediator.
 - III. "Certified family mediator training program" means a program that has been certified under this chapter to provide the instructional training required for certified family mediators.
 - IV. "Contracted supervisor" means a supervisor who has contracted with the court to participate in court-referred mediation.
 - V. "Family mediation" means a process by which an impartial third person or persons, with the consent of the parties, assists and enables the parties to a divorce or parental rights and responsibilities case to work together to reach a mutually satisfactory settlement of the issues involved in such case.
 - VI. "Family mediator" means an impartial third person who, with the consent of the parties to a divorce or parental rights and responsibilities case, assists and enables the parties to work together to reach a mutually satisfactory settlement of the issues in a dispute.
 - VII. "Qualified intern" means a person authorized under the provisions of this chapter to participate in mediation under the direct supervision of a certified family mediator.
 - VIII. "Supervisor" means a person who has been a certified family mediator for at least two years, has mediated at least thirty-six divorce cases, and commits to comply with RSA 328-C:5, VI.
 - 2 New Paragraph; Family Mediators; Duties of the Board; Qualified Interns. Amend RSA 328-C:4-a by inserting after paragraph VII the following new paragraph:
 - VIII. Establish procedures, fees, standards, and other requirements for qualified interns.
- 3 Family Mediators; Qualifications; Qualifications of Qualified Interns. Amend RSA 328-C:5 to read as follows:
 - 328-C:5 Qualifications.
 - I. To be eligible for certification, conditional certification, reinstatement of certification, renewal of certification and temporary renewal of certification as a family mediator, an applicant shall be of good character.
 - II. To be eligible for certification or conditional certification as a family mediator, an applicant shall meet the following requirements:

SB 336 - AS AMENDED BY THE SENATE - Page 2 -

- (a) Satisfactory completion of a program of instruction approved by the board and at least 48 hours in length, including at least 8 hours in domestic violence, and components in family dynamics and relevant law.
- (b) Completion of an internship approved by the board and at least 20 hours in length with a certified family mediator or certified family mediation program.
 - (c) Submission of a completed application to the board.

- (d) Submission of at least 3 recommendations satisfactory to the board from persons who have participated with the applicant in family mediation work. These recommendations shall meet any additional requirements established by rules adopted by the board pursuant to RSA 541-A.
- III. Notwithstanding subparagraphs II(a) and (b), the board may accept applicants found to have training and internship experience equivalent to the programs of instruction and internship approved by the board.
- 13 IV. Qualified interns shall meet the requirements of RSA 328-C:5, I and II(a) and 14 (c).
 - V. A supervisor shall plan the responsibilities of the intern prior to beginning a mediation and spend time with the intern in pre-mediation planning and post-mediation debriefing. The debriefing shall include a critique of the intern's part in the mediation.
 - [IV.] VI. Certification of a mediator or a mediator training program shall be valid for 3 years from the date of issuance, and shall expire 3 years from the date of issuance, unless renewed pursuant to rules adopted by the board pursuant to RSA 541-A.
 - [V.] VII. If timely and sufficient application has been made in accordance with board rules for renewal of certification, the existing certification shall not expire until the board has taken final action on the application for renewal. If the application is either untimely or insufficient, it shall lapse and be subject to reinstatement in accordance with rules adopted by the board pursuant to RSA 541-A.
 - 4 Family Mediators; Confidentiality of Information; Qualified Interns Included. Amend RSA 328-C:5-a, I to read as follows:
 - I. Unless waived by the person to whom the information pertains, the following information relative to certified family mediators, applicants for certification, *qualified interns*, and formerly certified family mediators which may be in the possession of the board shall be confidential and shall not be subject to disclosure, except as provided in paragraph II, absent an order of the court:
 - 5 Family Mediators; Disciplinary Action; Qualified Interns Included. Amend RSA 328-C:7, II to read as follows:
 - II. The board shall investigate and resolve complaints against certified family mediators, *qualified interns*, and certified family mediator training programs. The board shall hold a hearing in compliance with rules adopted under RSA 541-A prior to taking any disciplinary action specified

SB 336 - AS AMENDED BY THE SENATE - Page 3 -

- under this section. In the alternative, the board may informally resolve complaints by agreement of the parties.
 - 6 Family Mediators; Disciplinary Action; Qualified Interns Included. Amend RSA 328-C:7, IV to read as follows:
 - IV. The board shall establish disciplinary procedures, penalties, and sanctions for certified family mediators and qualified interns which may include revocation of certification or qualification, suspension of certification or qualification, written warning, fine, written reprimand, imposition of supplemental training requirements or supervised training requirements, supplemental education, treatment and counseling, including treatment and counseling for alcohol and substance abuse.
- 7 New Paragraph; Family Mediators; Rulemaking Authority; Including Qualified Interns.
 Amend RSA 328-C:8 by inserting after paragraph II the following new paragraph:
- 13 III. The board may adopt rules for qualified interns pursuant to RSA 541-A, relative to the 14 all matters that it may for certified family mediators.
 - 8 Family Mediators; Fees; Inclusion of Qualified Intern Fees. Amend RSA 328-C:11, I(a) to read as follows:
 - (a) Applications, certification, conditional certification, *qualification of interns*, renewal of certification, temporary renewal of certification, and reinstatement of certification.
 - 9 Annulment, Divorce, and Separation; Mediation; Definitions. Amend RSA 458:15-c, I to read as follows:
 - I. In this section:

- (a) "Contracted supervisor" means a mediator meeting the requirements of RSA 328-C:2 and RSA 328-C:5, VI who has contracted with the court to participate in court-referred mediation under this chapter.
- [(a)] (b) "Mediation" means a process in which a neutral third party facilitates settlement discussions between parties.
- [(b)] (c) "Mediator" means a family mediator, certified pursuant to RSA 328-C, who has contracted with the court to participate in court-referred mediation under this section.
- (d) "Qualified intern" means a person meeting the requirements of RSA 328-C:2 who participates in mediation under the direct supervision of a contracted supervisor.
- 10 Annulment, Divorce, and Separation; Service on Correspondent; Allowing Qualified Interns. Amend RSA 458:15-c, II to read as follows:
- II. The court may order the parties to participate in mediation upon the request of either party or at the discretion of the court. If the parties are ordered to participate in mediation under this section, all issues relevant to their case, including but not limited to property settlement and alimony also shall be mediated unless the court orders otherwise. Mediation may not be ordered pursuant to this section if the case involves minor children and the parties are eligible for mediation

SB 336 - AS AMENDED BY THE SENATE - Page 4 -

- under RSA 461-A:7. If the mediator is a contracted supervisor, a qualified intern may participate with the supervisor in the mediation in the supervisor's presence.
- 3 11 Parental Rights and Responsibilities; Definitions; Including Contracted Supervisors and 4 Qualified Interns. Amend RSA 461-A:1 to read as follows:
- 5 461-A:1 Definitions. In this chapter:

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- I. "Contracted supervisor" means a mediator meeting the requirements RSA 328-C:2 and RSA 328-C:5, VI who has contracted with the court to participate in court-referred mediation under this chapter.
- [4] II. "Decision-making responsibility" means the responsibility to make decisions for the child. It may refer to decisions on all issues or on specified issues.
- 11 [H.] III. "Mediation" means a process in which a neutral third party facilitates settlement discussions between parties.
- 13 [III.] IV. "Mediator" means a family mediator, certified pursuant to RSA 328-C, who has contracted with the court to participate in court-referred mediation under this chapter.
- 15 [IV.] V. "Parental rights and responsibilities" means all rights and responsibilities parents 16 have concerning their child.
- 17 [V.] **VI.** "Parenting plan" means a written plan describing each parent's rights and responsibilities.
- 19 [VI.] VII. "Parenting schedule" means the schedule of when the child is in the care of each 20 parent.
 - VIII. "Qualified intern" means a person meeting the requirements of RSA 328-C:2 who participates in mediation under the direct supervision of a contracted supervisor.
 - [VII.] IX. "Residential responsibility" means a parent's responsibility to provide a home for the child.
 - 12 Parental Rights and Responsibilities; Mediation of Cases Involving Children; Use of Qualified Interns. Amend RSA 461-A:7, III to read as follows:
 - III. In all cases involving disputed parental rights and responsibilities or grandparents' visitation rights, including requests for modification of prior orders, the court may order the parties to participate in mediation. If the parties are ordered to participate in mediation under this section, all issues relevant to their case, including but not limited to child support and issues relative to property settlement and alimony under RSA 458, shall also be mediated unless the court orders otherwise. If the mediator is a contracted supervisor, a qualified intern may participate with the supervisor in the mediation in the supervisor's presence.
- 34 13 Office of Mediation and Arbitration; Inclusion of Qualified Interns. Amend RSA 490-E:5 to read as follows:
- 490-E:5 Immunity From Civil Liability. No mediator, arbitrator, or other neutral party involved in dispute resolution under contract with the New Hampshire judicial branch *or qualified intern*

SB 336 - AS AMENDED BY THE SENATE - Page 5 -

- 1 acting under the direct supervision of a supervisor under contract with the New
- 2 Hampshire judicial branch shall be held liable for civil damages for any aspect of judicial branch
- 3 dispute resolution processes, unless such person acted willfully.
- 4 14 New Paragraph; Family Mediators; Board; Quorum Established. Amend RSA 328-C:4 by 5 inserting after paragraph III the following new paragraph:
- 6 IV. A majority of the members of the board appointed by the governor and council shall constitute a quorum.
- 8 15 Effective Date.

- I. Section 14 of this act shall take effect upon its passage.
- II. The remainder of this act shall take effect 60 days after its passage.