

Amendment No. CA9

First Conference Committee Amendment to Assembly Bill No. 51 Second Reprint (BDR 11-457)

Proposed by: First Conference Committee

Amendment Box:

Resolves Conflicts with: N/A

Amends: Summary: No Title: Yes Preamble: No Joint Sponsorship: No Digest: Yes

Amend section 1, pages 3 through 5, by deleting lines 2 through 40 on page 3, lines 1 through 43 on page 4 and lines 1 through 16 on page 5, and inserting:

“125.480 1. In determining custody of a minor child in an action brought under this chapter, the sole consideration of the court is the best interest of the child. If it appears to the court that joint custody would be in the best interest of the child, the court may grant custody to the parties jointly.

2. Preference must not be given to either parent for the sole reason that the parent is the mother or the father of the child.

3. The court shall award custody in the following order of preference unless in a particular case the best interest of the child requires otherwise:

(a) To both parents jointly pursuant to NRS 125.490 or to either parent. If the court does not enter an order awarding joint custody of a child after either parent has applied for joint custody, the court shall state in its decision the reason for its denial of the parent’s application. ~~When awarding custody to either parent, the court shall consider, among other factors, which parent is more likely to~~

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Date: 6/4/2005

A.B. No. 51—Makes various changes to provisions relating to domestic relations.



~~allow the child to have frequent associations and a continuing relationship with the noncustodial parent.]~~

(b) To a person or persons in whose home the child has been living and where the child has had a wholesome and stable environment.

(c) To any person related within the third degree of consanguinity to the child whom the court finds suitable and able to provide proper care and guidance for the child, regardless of whether the relative resides within this State.

(d) To any other person or persons whom the court finds suitable and able to provide proper care and guidance for the child.

4. In determining the best interest of the child, the court shall consider ~~§~~ *and set forth its specific findings concerning*, among other things:

(a) The wishes of the child if the child is of sufficient age and capacity to form an intelligent preference as to his custody . ~~§~~

(b) Any nomination by a parent or a guardian for the child . ~~§ and~~

(c) *Which parent is more likely to allow the child to have frequent associations and a continuing relationship with the noncustodial parent.*

(d) The level of conflict between the parents.

(e) The ability of the parents to cooperate to meet the needs of the child.

(f) The mental and physical health of the parents.

(g) The physical, developmental and emotional needs of the child.

(h) The nature of the relationship of the child with each parent.

(i) The ability of the child to maintain a relationship with any sibling.

(j) Any history of parental abuse or neglect of the child or a sibling of the child.

(k) Whether either parent or any other person seeking custody has engaged in an act of domestic violence against the child, a parent of the child or any other person residing with the child.

5. Except as otherwise provided in subsection 6 or NRS 125C.210, a determination by the court after an evidentiary hearing and finding by clear and convincing evidence that either parent or any other person seeking custody has engaged in one or more acts of domestic violence against the child, a parent of the child or any other person residing with the child creates a rebuttable presumption that sole or joint custody of the child by the perpetrator of the domestic violence is not in the best interest of the child. Upon making such a determination, the court shall set forth:

(a) Findings of fact that support the determination that one or more acts of domestic violence occurred; and

(b) Findings that the custody or visitation arrangement ordered by the court adequately protects the child and the parent or other victim of domestic violence who resided with the child.

6. If after an evidentiary hearing held pursuant to subsection 5 the court determines that each party has engaged in acts of domestic violence, it shall, if possible, then determine which person was the primary physical aggressor. In determining which party was the primary physical aggressor for the purposes of this section, the court shall consider:

(a) All prior acts of domestic violence involving either party;

(b) The relative severity of the injuries, if any, inflicted upon the persons involved in those prior acts of domestic violence;

(c) The likelihood of future injury;

(d) Whether, during the prior acts, one of the parties acted in self-defense; and

(e) Any other factors which the court deems relevant to the determination.

↪ In such a case, if it is not possible for the court to determine which party is the primary physical aggressor, the presumption created pursuant to subsection 5 applies to both parties. If it is possible for the court to determine which party is the primary physical aggressor, the presumption created pursuant to subsection 5 applies only to the party determined by the court to be the primary physical aggressor.

7. As used in this section, “domestic violence” means the commission of any act described in NRS 33.018.”.

Amend the bill as a whole by deleting sec. 13 and the text of the repealed section.

Amend the title of the bill by deleting the first through third lines and inserting:

“AN ACT relating to domestic relations; revising provisions concerning the considerations of the court in determining the best interests of a child for the purpose of determining custody of the child;”.

If this amendment is adopted, the Legislative

Counsel's Digest will be changed to read as follows:

Legislative Counsel's Digest:

Existing law provides that the best interest of the child must be the sole consideration of the court in determining the custody of a child. Existing law further requires the court to consider certain factors in determining the best interest of the child. (NRS 125.480)

This bill expands the factors that the court must consider in determining the best interest of the child. This bill also requires the court to set forth its specific findings concerning the factors considered in determining the best interest of the child.

Under existing law, the parental rights of a parent must be terminated before a child is placed for adoption. (NRS 128.150) After an adoption, the natural parents cannot exercise any rights over the child or his property. (NRS 127.160) Administrative regulations, however, implicitly authorize agreements that provide for postadoptive contacts or communications between the parties to an adoption. (NAC 127.210) The Nevada Supreme Court has held that because there is no statutory provision providing for the enforcement of an agreement for postadoptive contacts or communications, such agreements are unenforceable unless incorporated into the adoption decree. (*Birth Mother v. Adoptive Parents*, 118 Nev. 972 (2002))

This bill adopts the holding of the Nevada Supreme Court by providing that any agreement for postadoptive contacts is enforceable only if the agreement is written, signed by the parties, and incorporated in the order or decree of adoption.

This bill requires certain parties and other persons who are involved in an adoption proceeding to notify the court of the existence of an agreement for postadoptive contact. This bill further requires the court to question those parties and persons as to their knowledge of the existence of such an agreement. If the court determines that an agreement for postadoptive contact exists, the court is required to incorporate the agreement into the order or decree of adoption.

This bill also authorizes a natural parent who has entered into an agreement for postadoptive contact to petition the court to prove the existence of the agreement and to enforce the terms of the agreement. This bill further authorizes an adoptive parent who has entered into such an agreement to petition the court to enforce the terms of the agreement and to modify or terminate the agreement. This bill provides that failure to comply with an agreement for postadoptive contact may not be used as a basis for setting aside an adoption or consent to an adoption.

This bill authorizes a natural parent or adoptive parent, under certain circumstances, to inspect only the portions of the court's files and records which concern an agreement for postadoptive contact without obtaining a court order. However, those portions of the file or records that are made available for inspection by a natural parent or adoptive parent must not include any confidential information such as information that would identify the natural parent or lead to the identification of the natural parent if the identity of the natural parent is not included in the agreement.

This bill authorizes a natural parent who has entered into such an agreement to bring a civil action against certain persons who knowingly provide false information to the court concerning the existence of the agreement and thereby cause the court not to incorporate the agreement into the order or decree of adoption.