



State of Tennessee

PUBLIC CHAPTER NO. 853

HOUSE BILL NO. 1666

By Representatives Lamberth, Carter, Hulsey, Hardaway, Favors, Moody

Substituted for: Senate Bill No. 1651

By Senators Stevens, Gardenhire, Gresham, Haile

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 36, Chapter 6, Part 1, relative to parental relocation.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 36-6-108(a)(4), is amended by deleting the subdivision and substituting instead the following:

(4) Statement that absent agreement between the parents or an objection by the non-relocating parent within thirty (30) days of the date notice is sent by registered or certified mail in accordance with subsection (a), the relocating parent will be permitted to do so by law.

SECTION 2. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 36-6-108, is amended by deleting subsections (b)-(j) in their entireties and substituting instead the following:

(b) Absent agreement by the parents on a new visitation schedule within thirty (30) days of the notice or upon a timely objection in response to the notice, the relocating parent shall file a petition seeking approval of the relocation. The non-relocating parent has thirty (30) days to file a response in opposition to the petition. In the event no response in opposition is filed within thirty (30) days, the parent proposing to relocate with the child shall be permitted to do so.

(c)

(1) If a petition in opposition to relocation is filed, the court shall determine whether relocation is in the best interest of the minor child.

(2) In determining whether relocation is in the best interest of the minor child, the court shall consider the following factors:

(A) The nature, quality, extent of involvement, and duration of the child's relationship with the parent proposing to relocate and with the non-relocating parent, siblings, and other significant persons in the child's life;

(B) The age, developmental stage, needs of the child, and the likely impact the relocation will have on the child's physical, educational, and emotional development, taking into consideration any special needs of the child;

(C) The feasibility of preserving the relationship between the non-relocating parent and the child through suitable visitation arrangements, considering the logistics and financial circumstances of the parties;

(D) The child's preference, if the child is twelve (12) years of age or older. The court may hear the preference of a younger child upon request. The preference of older children should normally be given greater weight than those of younger children;

(E) Whether there is an established pattern of conduct of the relocating parent, either to promote or thwart the relationship of the child and the non-relocating parent;

(F) Whether the relocation of the child will enhance the general quality of life for both the relocating parent and the child, including, but not limited to, financial or emotional benefit or educational opportunity;

(G) The reasons of each parent for seeking or opposing the relocation; and

(H) Any other factor affecting the best interest of the child, including those enumerated in § 36-6-106(a).

(3) If, upon consideration of factors in subdivision (c)(2), the court finds that relocation is in the best interest of the minor child, the court shall modify the permanent parenting plan as needed to account for the distance between the non-relocating parent and the relocating parent.

(4) If the court finds that relocation is not in the best interest of the minor child, the court shall deny the petition for approval and, utilizing the factors provided in § 36-6-106(a), enter a modified permanent parenting plan that shall become effective only if the parent proposing to relocate elects to do so despite the court's decision denying the parent's petition for approval.

(d) In fashioning a modified parenting plan under subdivisions (c)(3) and (4), the court shall consider and utilize available alternative arrangements to foster and continue the child's relationship with and access to the other parent. The court shall also assess the costs of transporting the child for visitation, and determine whether a deviation from the child support guidelines should be considered in light of all factors, including, but not limited to, additional costs incurred for transporting the child for visitation.

(e) Nothing in this section shall prohibit either parent from petitioning the court at any time to address issues other than a change of custody related to the move, including, but not limited to, visitation.


(f) Either parent in a parental relocation matter may recover reasonable attorney fees and other litigation expenses from the other parent in the discretion of the court.

(g) The procedure and best interest standard of this section shall also apply to a parent who is subject to an injunction pursuant to § 36-6-116(a)(4) or § 36-4-106(d)(5).

SECTION 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2018, the public welfare requiring it.

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PASSED: April 23, 2018


BETH HARWELL, SPEAKER
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES


RANDY MCNALLY
SPEAKER OF THE SENATE

APPROVED this 3rd day of May 2018


BILL HASLAM, GOVERNOR