

**SUBSTITUTE FOR
SENATE BILL NO. 530**

A bill to amend 1982 PA 294, entitled
"Friend of the court act,"
by amending sections 9, 12, 13, 15, 22, and 26 (MCL 552.509,
552.512, 552.513, 552.515, 552.522, and 552.526), section 9 as
amended by 2004 PA 210, section 12 as amended by 1996 PA 276,
sections 13 and 15 as amended by 2009 PA 233, and section 26 as
amended by 2002 PA 571.

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF MICHIGAN ENACT:

1 Sec. 9. ~~(1) Except as otherwise provided in subsections (2)~~
2 ~~and (3), after a support order is entered in a friend of the court~~
3 ~~ease, the office shall receive each payment and service fee under~~
4 ~~the support order; shall, not less than once each month, record~~
5 ~~each support payment due, paid, and past due; and shall disburse~~

1 ~~each support payment to the recipient of support within 14 days~~
2 ~~after the office receives each payment or within the federally~~
3 ~~mandated time frame, whichever is shorter.~~

4 ~~—— (2) An office shall receive support order and service fee~~
5 ~~payments, and shall disburse support, as required by subsection (1)~~
6 ~~until the state disbursement unit implements support and fee~~
7 ~~receipt and disbursement for the cases administered by that office.~~
8 ~~At the family independence agency's direction and in cooperation~~
9 ~~with the SDU, an office shall continue support and fee receipt and~~
10 ~~support disbursement to facilitate the transition of that~~
11 ~~responsibility to the SDU as directed in, and in accordance with~~
12 ~~the transition schedule developed as required by, the office of~~
13 ~~child support act, 1971 PA 174, MCL 400.231 to 400.240.~~

14 (1) ~~(3) After SDU support and fee receipt and disbursement is~~
15 ~~implemented in a circuit court circuit, the office for that court~~
16 **THE OFFICE** may accept a support payment made in cash or by
17 cashier's check or money order. If the office accepts such a
18 payment, the office shall transmit the payment to the SDU and shall
19 inform the payer of the SDU's location and the requirement to make
20 payments through the SDU.

21 (2) ~~(4)~~ Promptly after November 3, 1999, each office shall
22 establish and maintain the support order and account records
23 necessary to enforce support orders and necessary to record
24 obligations, support and fee receipt and disbursement, and related
25 payments. Each office shall provide the SDU with access to those
26 records and shall assist the SDU to resolve support and fee receipt
27 and disbursement problems related to inadequate identifying

1 information.

2 (3) ~~(5)~~—The office shall provide annually to each party,
3 without charge, 1 statement of account upon request. Additional
4 statements of account shall be provided at a reasonable fee
5 sufficient to pay for the cost of reproduction. Statements provided
6 under this subsection are in addition to statements provided for
7 administrative and judicial hearings.

8 (4) ~~(6)~~—The office shall initiate and carry out proceedings to
9 enforce an order in a friend of the court case regarding custody,
10 parenting time, health care coverage, or support in accordance with
11 this act, the support and parenting time enforcement act, and
12 supreme court rules.

13 (5) ~~(7)~~—Upon request of a child support agency of another
14 state, the office shall initiate and carry out certain proceedings
15 to enforce support orders entered in the other state without the
16 need to register the order as a friend of the court case in this
17 state. The order shall be enforced using automated administrative
18 enforcement actions authorized under the support and parenting time
19 enforcement act.

20 Sec. 12. (1) Except as otherwise provided in this section, ~~in~~
21 ~~a format acceptable to the friend of the court, the family~~
22 ~~independence agency, and the consumer reporting agency, the office~~
23 ~~of the friend of the court~~ **THE TITLE IV-D AGENCY** shall report to a
24 consumer reporting agency the arrearage amount for each payer with
25 an arrearage of support of 2 or more months. ~~On a monthly basis and~~
26 ~~in a format acceptable to the friend of the court, the family~~
27 ~~independence agency, and the consumer reporting agency, the office~~

~~of the friend of the court~~ **THE TITLE IV-D AGENCY** may make support information available to the consumer reporting agency concerning any other payer who requests that report. The ~~office~~ **TITLE IV-D AGENCY** shall not make information available under this subsection ~~to a consumer reporting agency if the office~~ **UNLESS THE TITLE IV-D AGENCY** determines that the agency ~~does not have~~ **RECEIVING THE REPORT FURNISHES EVIDENCE SATISFACTORY TO THE TITLE IV-D AGENCY THAT IT IS A CONSUMER REPORTING AGENCY AND THAT IT HAS** sufficient capability to systematically and timely make accurate use of the information. ~~and if the agency does not furnish evidence satisfactory to the office that the agency is a consumer reporting agency.~~

(2) Before making the initial support information available under subsection (1), the ~~office of the friend of the court~~ **TITLE IV-D AGENCY** shall provide the payer with notice of all of the following:

(a) The proposed action.

(b) The amount of the arrearage, if any.

(c) The payer's right to a review, the date by which a request for a review must be made, and the grounds on which the payer may object to the proposed action.

(d) That the payer may avoid the reporting of the arrearage stated in the notice by paying the entire arrearage within 21 days after the date notice was sent.

(3) The office of the friend of the court shall provide to a payer a review to enable a payer to object to the reporting of the support information, including an arrearage, on the grounds of a

1 mistake of fact concerning the amount of the arrearage or the
2 identity of the payer. If a payer requests a review within the time
3 specified in the notice given under subsection (2), the ~~office~~
4 **TITLE IV-D AGENCY** shall not report the support information as
5 required or permitted by this section until after 1 of the
6 following occurs:

7 (a) The payer fails to produce evidence that the support
8 information is incorrect and the time scheduled for the review has
9 passed.

10 (b) After conducting the review, the office determines the
11 correct support information.

12 ~~(4) The office of the friend of the court shall not make~~
13 ~~support information, including an arrearage, available under~~
14 ~~subsection (1) if 21 days have not expired after the date the~~
15 ~~notice was sent under subsection (2). The office of the friend of~~
16 ~~the court~~ **THE TITLE IV-D AGENCY** shall not report an arrearage
17 amount as required under subsection (1) if the payer pays the
18 entire arrearage within 21 days after the date the notice was sent
19 under subsection (2).

20 (5) Within 14 days after the ~~office of the friend of the court~~
21 **TITLE IV-D AGENCY** knows that incorrect information has been made
22 available to a consumer reporting agency, the ~~office~~ **TITLE IV-D**
23 **AGENCY** shall contact the consumer reporting agency and correct the
24 information.

25 (6) The ~~state court administrative office~~ **OF CHILD SUPPORT** is
26 responsible for determining what support information should be
27 provided to a consumer reporting agency and establishing the

1 policies and procedures for making support information available to
2 a consumer reporting agency under this section.

3 (7) Upon request of a consumer reporting agency or the payer,
4 ~~the office of the friend of the court~~ **TITLE IV-D AGENCY** shall make
5 available to the consumer reporting agency current support
6 information of an individual payer.

7 Sec. 13. (1) In a friend of the court case, the office shall
8 provide, either directly or by contract, alternative dispute
9 resolution to assist the parties in settling voluntarily a dispute
10 concerning child custody or parenting time. The alternative dispute
11 resolution shall be provided ~~pursuant~~ **ACCORDING** to a plan approved
12 by the chief judge and the state court administrative office. **THE**
13 **PLAN ADOPTED SHALL INCLUDE A SCREENING PROCESS FOR DOMESTIC**
14 **VIOLENCE, THE EXISTENCE OF A PERSONAL PROTECTION ORDER BETWEEN THE**
15 **PARTIES, CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT, AND OTHER SAFETY CONCERNS, AND THE**
16 **PLAN SHALL PROVIDE A METHOD TO ADDRESS THOSE CONCERNS.** The plan
17 shall be consistent with standards established by the state court
18 administrative office under the supervision and direction of the
19 supreme court and shall include minimum qualifications and training
20 requirements for ~~alternative dispute resolution providers~~ **DOMESTIC**
21 **RELATIONS MEDIATION** and a designation of matters that are subject
22 to alternative dispute resolution by various means. A party ~~shall~~
23 ~~not~~ **MAY** be required **BY COURT ORDER** to meet with a person conducting
24 alternative dispute resolution. **AS USED IN THIS SUBSECTION,**
25 **"PERSONAL PROTECTION ORDER" MEANS THAT TERM AS DEFINED IN SECTION**
26 **2950 OF THE REVISED JUDICATURE ACT OF 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL**
27 **600.2950.**

1 (2) If an agreement is reached by the parties through friend
2 of the court alternative dispute resolution, a consent order
3 incorporating the agreement shall be prepared by an employee of the
4 office or individual approved by the court using a form provided by
5 the state court administrative office, under the supervision and
6 direction of the supreme court, or approved by the chief judge. The
7 consent order shall be provided to, and shall be entered by, the
8 court.

9 (3) **EACH ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION PLAN PREPARED**
10 **ACCORDING TO SUBSECTION (1) SHALL INCLUDE AN OPTION FOR DOMESTIC**
11 **RELATIONS MEDIATION.** Except as provided in subsection (2), a
12 communication between a friend of the court ~~alternative dispute~~
13 ~~resolution~~ **DOMESTIC RELATIONS MEDIATION** provider and a party
14 pertaining to the matter subject to resolution is confidential as
15 provided in court rule.

16 (4) An employee of the office or other person who provides
17 ~~alternative dispute resolution~~ **DOMESTIC RELATIONS MEDIATION**
18 services under a plan approved under subsection (1) shall have all
19 of the following qualifications:

20 (a) Possess knowledge of the court system of this state and
21 the procedures used in domestic relations matters.

22 (b) Possess knowledge of other resources in the community to
23 which the parties to a domestic relations matter can be referred
24 for assistance.

25 (c) Other qualifications as prescribed by the state court
26 administrative office under the supervision and direction of the
27 supreme court.

~~———— (5) A domestic relations mediator who performs mediation pursuant to a plan approved under subsection (1) shall have all of the following minimum qualifications:~~

~~———— (a) One or more of the following:~~

~~———— (i) A license or a limited license to engage in the practice of psychology under parts 161 and 182 of the public health code, 1978 PA 368, MCL 333.16101 to 333.16349 and 333.18201 to 333.18237, or a master's degree in counseling, social work, or marriage and family counseling; and successful completion of the training program provided by the bureau under section 19(3)(b).~~

~~———— (ii) Not less than 5 years of experience in family counseling, preferably in a setting related to the areas of responsibility of the friend of the court and preferably to reflect the ethnic population to be served, and successful completion of the training program provided by the bureau under section 19(3)(b).~~

~~———— (iii) A graduate degree in a behavioral science and successful completion of a domestic relations mediation training program certified by the bureau with not less than 40 hours of classroom instruction and 250 hours of practical experience working under the direction of a person who has successfully completed a program certified by the bureau.~~

~~———— (iv) Membership in the state bar of Michigan and successful completion of the training program provided by the bureau under section 19(3)(b).~~

~~———— (b) Knowledge of the court system of this state and the procedures used in domestic relations matters.~~

~~———— (c) Knowledge of other resources in the community to which the~~

1 ~~parties to a domestic relations matter can be referred for~~
2 ~~assistance.~~

3 ~~—— (d) Knowledge of child development, clinical issues relating~~
4 ~~to children, the effects of divorce on children, and child custody~~
5 ~~research.~~

6 (5) EMPLOYEES OF THE OFFICE WHO CONDUCT ANY OTHER FORM OF
7 ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION SHALL HAVE THE QUALIFICATIONS TO
8 CONDUCT A JOINT MEETING AS DESCRIBED IN SECTION 42A OF THE SUPPORT
9 AND PARENTING TIME ENFORCEMENT ACT, 1982 PA 295, MCL 552.642A.

10 Sec. 15. An employee of the office who provides ~~alternative~~
11 ~~dispute resolution~~ DOMESTIC RELATIONS MEDIATION in a friend of the
12 court case involving a particular party shall not perform referee
13 functions, investigation and recommendation functions, or
14 enforcement functions as to any domestic relations matter involving
15 that party.

16 Sec. 22. If the friend of the court serving a judicial circuit
17 is not an attorney who is a member of the state bar of Michigan and
18 that office does not employ such an attorney, the chief judge may
19 appoint an attorney who is a member of the state bar of Michigan to
20 assist the friend of the court when legal assistance is necessary
21 to carry out the duties imposed in this act. An attorney appointed
22 under this section to assist an office shall be compensated in a
23 ~~reasonable amount, based upon time and expenses, to be determined~~
24 ~~by the county board or boards of commissioners of the judicial~~
25 ~~circuit served by that office.~~ THE MANNER PROVIDED UNDER SECTION
26 27. If the judicial circuit is one in which the employees serving
27 in the circuit court are employees of the state judicial council,

1 the compensation of an attorney appointed under this section shall
2 be paid ~~by the state and fixed by the state judicial council as~~
3 ~~provided in section 9104 of the revised judicature act of 1961, Act~~
4 ~~No. 236 of the Public Acts of 1961, being section 600.9104 of the~~
5 ~~Michigan Compiled Laws.~~ **IN THE MANNER PROVIDED UNDER SECTION 27.**

6 Sec. 26. (1) A party to a friend of the court case who has a
7 grievance concerning office operations or employees shall utilize
8 the following grievance procedure:

9 (a) File the grievance, in writing, with the appropriate
10 friend of the court office. The office shall cause the grievance to
11 be investigated and decided as soon as practicable. Within 30 days
12 after a grievance is filed, the office shall respond to the
13 grievance or issue a statement to the party filing the grievance
14 stating the reason a response is not possible within that time.

15 (b) A party who is not satisfied with the decision of the
16 office under subdivision (a) may file a further grievance, in
17 writing, with the chief judge. The chief judge shall cause the
18 grievance to be investigated and decided as soon as practicable.
19 Within 30 days after a grievance is filed, the court shall respond
20 to the grievance or issue a statement to the party filing the
21 grievance stating the reason a response is not possible within that
22 time.

23 (2) Each office shall maintain a record of grievances received
24 and a record of whether the grievance is decided or outstanding.
25 The record shall be transmitted not less than ~~biannually~~ **ANNUALLY**
26 to the bureau. ~~Each office shall provide public access to the~~
27 ~~report of grievances prepared by the bureau under section 19.~~

1 (3) In addition to the grievance procedure provided in
2 subsection (1), a party to a friend of the court case who has a
3 grievance concerning office operations may file, at any time during
4 the proceedings, the grievance in writing with the appropriate
5 citizen advisory committee. In its discretion, the citizen advisory
6 committee shall conduct a review or investigation of, or hold a
7 formal or informal hearing on, a grievance submitted to the
8 committee. The citizen advisory committee may delegate its
9 responsibility under this subsection to subcommittees appointed as
10 provided in section 4a.

11 (4) In addition to action taken under subsection (3), the
12 citizen advisory committee shall establish a procedure for randomly
13 selecting grievances submitted directly to the office of the friend
14 of the court. The citizen advisory committee shall review the
15 response of the office to these grievances and report its findings
16 to the court and the county board, either immediately or in the
17 committee's annual report.

18 (5) The citizen advisory committee shall examine the
19 grievances filed with the friend of the court under this section
20 and shall review or investigate each grievance that alleges that a
21 decision was made based on gender rather than the best interests of
22 the child.

23 (6) If a citizen advisory committee reviews or investigates a
24 grievance, the committee shall respond to the grievance as soon as
25 practicable.

26 (7) A grievance filed under subsection (3) is limited to
27 office operations, and the citizen advisory committee shall inform

1 an individual who files with the committee a grievance that
2 concerns an office employee or a court or office decision or
3 recommendation regarding a specific case that such a matter is not
4 a proper subject for a grievance.