

STATE OF OKLAHOMA

1st Session of the 50th Legislature (2005)

SENATE BILL 998

By: Williamson

AS INTRODUCED

An Act relating to children; amending 10 O.S. 2001, Section 7501-1.2, which relates to purpose; clarifying statutory reference; and providing an effective date.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:

SECTION 1. AMENDATORY 10 O.S. 2001, Section 7501-1.2, is amended to read as follows:

Section 7501-1.2 A. The Legislature of this state believes that every child should be raised in a secure, loving home and finds that adoption is the best way to provide a permanent family for a child whose biological parents are not able or willing to provide for the child's care or whose parents believe the child's best interest will be best served through adoption. The purpose of the Oklahoma Adoption Code, Section 7501-1.1 et seq. of this title, is to:

1. Ensure and promote the best interests of the child in adoptions and to establish an orderly and expeditious process for movement of adoption matters through the courts;
2. Affirm that the parent-child relationship is fundamental and that all adoption laws should be fair to the child and to each parent of the child;
3. Affirm the duty of the biological parents to provide appropriately for the care of the child unless custody of the child has been transferred either voluntarily or involuntarily;
4. Affirm the duty of a noncustodial parent to:

- a. provide financial support for the parent's biological child, and otherwise exercise parental responsibilities,
- b. maintain a parent-child relationship, regardless of the absence of any court order to that effect, and
- c. provide for the appropriate financial support of the mother of the child during her term of pregnancy;

5. Affirm the duty of a male person who has sexual relations with a female person outside of marriage to be aware that a pregnancy might occur;

6. Affirm the duty of the biological father of a child who is to be born or who is born outside of marriage to exercise his parental responsibilities for the child. This includes the duty to inform himself about the existence and needs of any such child and to exercise parental responsibilities toward that child even before birth;

7. Encourage prebirth planning for adoption as a means of facilitating adoption of a child into a permanent family as soon as possible. To that end, the Oklahoma Adoption Code provides for a prebirth notice of a plan for adoption and for procedures by which a putative father may give his consent or otherwise respond to the notice;

8. Ensure that children placed for adoption will be raised in stable, permanent, loving families whose qualifications for adoption have been properly evaluated in light of the child's needs;

9. Promote and strengthen the integrity and finality of adoptions by limiting the time and circumstances for a consent to be withdrawn or a challenge to the adoption filed; and

10. Recognize the right of all children who have been adopted to have access to information about their social and medical history.

B. It is the intent of the Legislature to balance the privacy rights of all parties to an adoption while clarifying when and to whom information may be released. The Legislature seeks to promote voluntary reunions, provide for confidential intermediaries, and collect and maintain social and medical information relating to the adoption in the recognition that all children should have access to knowledge about their heritage.

SECTION 2. This act shall become effective November 1, 2005.

50-1-810

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