

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY JUNE 22, 2005

AMENDED IN SENATE MAY 25, 2005

AMENDED IN SENATE MAY 4, 2005

AMENDED IN SENATE APRIL 20, 2005

SENATE BILL

No. 302

Introduced by Senator Scott

February 16, 2005

An act to amend Sections 7620, 7630, 8604, and 9003 of the Family Code, and to amend ~~Section 294~~ *Sections 294 and 305.6* of the Welfare and Institutions Code, relating to adoption.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 302, as amended, Scott. Adoption.

Existing law provides that a man is presumed to be the natural father of a child if certain conditions are met. This presumption may be rebutted by a judgment establishing paternity of the child by another man. Existing law also authorizes a child, the child's natural mother, or, with certain exceptions, a presumed father of the child to bring an action to determine paternity, as specified. *Existing law provides that an action to determine a parent and child relationship may be brought in the county in which a child resides or is found, or, if the father is deceased, in the county in which probate proceedings for probate of his estate have been or could be commenced.*

Existing law provides that if a mother relinquishes for or consents to, or proposes to relinquish for or consent to, the adoption of a child who has a presumed father, the father must be given notice of the adoption proceeding and a child may not be adopted without his consent, except under specified circumstances.

Existing law also provides that, in a stepparent adoption, the consent of either or both birth parents must be signed in the presence of a county clerk, probation officer, qualified court investigator, or county welfare department staff member of any county of this state.

Existing law requires the social worker or probation officer to give notice to specified persons of a hearing to terminate parental rights or establish the legal guardianship of a dependent child.

This bill would authorize, in a stepparent adoption, the consent of either or both birth parents to be signed in the presence of a notary public.

The bill would additionally authorize an adoption agency to whom the child has been relinquished to or a prospective adoptive parent of the child to bring an action to determine paternity.

The bill would expand the provision governing venue for an action to determine a parent and child relationship by additionally authorizing that action to be brought in the county in which a licensed California adoption agency maintains an office if the agency brings the action.

The bill would provide that the consent of a presumed father is not required for the child's adoption unless he became a presumed father before the mother's relinquishment or consent becomes irrevocable or before the mother's parental rights have been terminated.

The bill would also expand the list of specified persons whom the social worker or probation officer must notify regarding a hearing to terminate parental rights or establish a legal guardianship by requiring that notice be given to unknown parents by publication, if ordered by the court, as specified. By expanding the duties of social workers and probation officers, the bill would impose a state-mandated local program.

The California Constitution requires the state to reimburse local agencies and school districts for certain costs mandated by the state. Statutory provisions establish procedures for making that reimbursement.

This bill would provide that, if the Commission on State Mandates determines that the bill contains costs mandated by the state, reimbursement for those costs shall be made pursuant to these statutory provisions.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes.
State-mandated local program: yes.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

1 *SECTION 1. Section 7620 of the Family Code is amended to*
2 *read:*

3 7620. (a) A person who has sexual intercourse in this state
4 thereby submits to the jurisdiction of the courts of this state as to
5 an action brought under this part with respect to a child who may
6 have been conceived by that act of intercourse.

7 (b) An action under this part shall be brought in ~~the one of the~~
8 *following:*

9 (1) *The county in which the child resides or is found* ~~or, if the.~~

10 (2) *The county in which a licensed California adoption agency*
11 *maintains an office if that agency brings the action.*

12 (3) *If the father is deceased, the county in which proceedings*
13 *for probate of his the estate of the father of the child have been or*
14 *could be commenced.*

15 ~~SECTION 1.—~~

16 *SEC. 2. Section 7630 of the Family Code is amended to read:*

17 7630. (a) A child, the child's natural mother, a man
18 presumed to be the child's father under subdivision (a), (b), or (c)
19 of Section 7611, an adoption agency to whom the child has been
20 relinquished or a prospective adoptive parent of the child, may
21 bring an action as follows:

22 (1) At any time for the purpose of declaring the existence of
23 the father and child relationship presumed under subdivision (a),
24 (b), or (c) of Section 7611.

25 (2) For the purpose of declaring the nonexistence of the father
26 and child relationship presumed under subdivision (a), (b), or (c)
27 of Section 7611 only if the action is brought within a reasonable
28 time after obtaining knowledge of relevant facts. After the
29 presumption has been rebutted, paternity of the child by another
30 man may be determined in the same action, if he has been made
31 a party.

32 (b) Any interested party may bring an action at any time for
33 the purpose of determining the existence or nonexistence of the
34 father and child relationship presumed under subdivision (d) or
35 (f) of Section 7611.

36 (c) An action to determine the existence of the father and child
37 relationship with respect to a child who has no presumed father
38 under Section 7611 or whose presumed father is deceased may

1 be brought by the child or personal representative of the child,
2 the Department of Child Support Services, the mother or the
3 personal representative or a parent of the mother if the mother
4 has died or is a minor, a man alleged or alleging himself to be the
5 father, or the personal representative or a parent of the alleged
6 father if the alleged father has died or is a minor.

7 (d) An action under subdivision (c) shall be consolidated with
8 a proceeding pursuant to Section 7662 whenever a proceeding
9 has been filed under Chapter 5 (commencing with Section 7660).
10 The parental rights of the alleged natural father shall be
11 determined as set forth in Section 7664. The consolidated action
12 shall be heard in the court in which the Section 7662 proceeding
13 is filed, unless the court in which the action under subdivision (c)
14 is filed finds, by clear and convincing evidence, that transferring
15 the action to the other court poses a substantial hardship to the
16 petitioner. Mere inconvenience does not constitute a sufficient
17 basis for a finding of substantial hardship. If the court determines
18 there is a substantial hardship, the consolidated action shall be
19 heard in the court in which the paternity action is filed.

20 ~~SEC. 2.—~~

21 *SEC. 3.* Section 8604 of the Family Code is amended to read:

22 8604. (a) Except as provided in subdivision (b), a child
23 having a presumed father under Section 7611 may not be adopted
24 without the consent of the child's birth parents, if living. The
25 consent of a presumed father is not required for the child's
26 adoption unless he became a presumed father as described in
27 *Chapter 1 (commencing with Section 7540) or Chapter 3*
28 *(commencing with Section 7570) of Part 2 of Division 12, or*
29 *subdivision (a), (b), or (c) of Section 7611* before the mother's
30 relinquishment or consent becomes irrevocable or before the
31 mother's parental rights have been terminated.

32 (b) If one birth parent has been awarded custody by judicial
33 order, or has custody by agreement of both parents, and the other
34 birth parent for a period of one year willfully fails to
35 communicate with and to pay for the care, support, and education
36 of the child when able to do so, then the birth parent having sole
37 custody may consent to the adoption, but only after the birth
38 parent not having custody has been served with a copy of a
39 citation in the manner provided by law for the service of a
40 summons in a civil action that requires the birth parent not

1 having custody to appear at the time and place set for the
2 appearance in court under Section 8718, 8823, 8913, or 9007.

3 (c) Failure of a birth parent to pay for the care, support, and
4 education of the child for the period of one year or failure of a
5 birth parent to communicate with the child for the period of one
6 year is prima facie evidence that the failure was willful and
7 without lawful excuse.

8 ~~SEC. 3.—~~

9 *SEC. 4.* Section 9003 of the Family Code is amended to read:

10 9003. (a) In a stepparent adoption, the consent of either or
11 both birth parents shall be signed in the presence of a notary
12 public, ~~county~~ court clerk, probation officer, qualified court
13 investigator, or county welfare department staff member of any
14 ~~county~~ court of this state. The notary public, county clerk,
15 probation officer, qualified court investigator, or county welfare
16 department staff member before whom the consent is signed shall
17 immediately file the consent with the clerk of the court where the
18 adoption petition is filed. The clerk shall immediately notify the
19 probation officer or, at the option of the board of supervisors, the
20 county welfare department of that county.

21 (b) If the birth parent of a child to be adopted is outside this
22 state at the time of signing the consent, the consent may be
23 signed before a notary or other person authorized to perform
24 notarial acts.

25 (c) The consent, when reciting that the person giving it is
26 entitled to sole custody of the child and when acknowledged
27 before the notary public, ~~county~~ court clerk, probation officer,
28 qualified court investigator, or county welfare department staff
29 member, is prima facie evidence of the right of the person
30 signing the consent to the sole custody of the child and that
31 person's sole right to consent.

32 (d) A birth parent who is a minor has the right to sign a
33 consent for the adoption of the birth parent's child and the
34 consent is not subject to revocation by reason of the minority.

35 ~~SEC. 4.—~~

36 *SEC. 5.* Section 294 of the Welfare and Institutions Code is
37 amended to read:

38 294. The social worker or probation officer shall give notice
39 of a selection and implementation hearing held pursuant to
40 Section 366.26 in the following manner:

1 (a) Notice of the hearing shall be given to the following
2 persons:

3 (1) The mother.

4 (2) The fathers, presumed and alleged.

5 (3) The child, if the child is 10 years of age or older.

6 (4) Any known sibling of the child who is the subject of the
7 hearing if that sibling either is the subject of a dependency
8 proceeding or has been adjudged to be a dependent child of the
9 juvenile court. If the sibling is 10 years of age or older, the
10 sibling, the sibling's caregiver, and the sibling's attorney. If the
11 sibling is under 10 years of age, the sibling's caregiver and the
12 sibling's attorney. However, notice is not required to be given to
13 any sibling whose matter is calendared in the same court on the
14 same day.

15 (5) The grandparents of the child, if their address is known and
16 if the parent's whereabouts are unknown.

17 (6) All counsel of record.

18 (7) If the court knows or has reason to know that an Indian
19 child is involved, then to the Indian custodian and the tribe of
20 that child. If the identity or location of the parent or Indian
21 custodian and the tribe cannot be determined, notice shall be
22 given to the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

23 (8) To any unknown parent by publication, if ordered by the
24 court pursuant to subdivision (h).

25 (b) The following persons shall not be notified of the hearing:

26 (1) A parent who has relinquished the child to the State
27 Department of Social Services or to a licensed adoption agency
28 for adoption, and the relinquishment has been accepted and filed
29 with notice as required under Section 8700 of the Family Code.

30 (2) An alleged father who has denied paternity and has
31 executed a waiver of the right to notice of further proceedings.

32 (3) A parent whose parental rights have been terminated.

33 (c) (1) Service of the notice shall be completed at least 45
34 days before the hearing date. Service is deemed complete at the
35 time the notice is personally delivered to the person named in the
36 notice or 10 days after the notice has been placed in the mail, or
37 at the expiration of the time prescribed by the order for
38 publication.

1 (2) In the case of an Indian child, notice to the Indian
2 custodian and the tribe shall be completed at least 10 days before
3 the hearing.

4 (3) In the case of an Indian child, if notice is given to the
5 Bureau of Indian Affairs, the bureau shall have 15 days after
6 receipt to provide the requisite notice to the parent or Indian
7 custodian and the tribe.

8 (4) Service of notice in cases where publication is ordered
9 shall be completed at least 30 days before the date of the hearing.

10 (d) Regardless of the type of notice required, or the manner in
11 which it is served, once the court has made the initial finding that
12 notice has properly been given to the parent, or to any person
13 entitled to receive notice pursuant to this section, subsequent
14 notice for any continuation of a Section 366.26 hearing may be
15 by first-class mail to any last known address, by an order made
16 pursuant to Section 296, or by any other means that the court
17 determines is reasonably calculated, under any circumstance, to
18 provide notice of the continued hearing. However, if the
19 recommendation changes from the recommendation contained in
20 the notice previously found to be proper, notice shall be provided
21 to the parent, and to any person entitled to receive notice
22 pursuant to this section, regarding that subsequent hearing.

23 (e) The notice shall contain the following information:

24 (1) The date, time, and place of the hearing.

25 (2) The right to appear.

26 (3) The parents' right to counsel.

27 (4) The nature of the proceedings.

28 (5) The recommendation of the supervising agency.

29 (6) A statement that, at the time of hearing, the court is
30 required to select a permanent plan of adoption, legal
31 guardianship, or long-term foster care for the child.

32 (7) In the case of an Indian child, the notice shall contain a
33 statement that the parent or Indian custodian and the tribe have a
34 right to intervene at any point in the proceedings. The notice
35 shall also include a statement that the parent or Indian custodian
36 and the tribe shall, upon request, be granted up to 20 additional
37 days to prepare for the proceedings.

38 (f) Notice to the parents may be given in any one of the
39 following manners:

(1) If the parent is present at the hearing at which the court schedules a hearing pursuant to Section 366.26, the court shall advise the parent of the date, time, and place of the proceedings, their right to counsel, the nature of the proceedings, and the requirement that at the proceedings the court shall select and implement a plan of adoption, legal guardianship, or long-term foster care for the child. The court shall direct the parent to appear for the proceedings and then direct that the parent be notified thereafter by first-class mail to the parent's usual place of residence or business only.

(2) Certified mail, return receipt requested, to the parent's last known mailing address. This notice shall be sufficient if the child welfare agency receives a return receipt signed by the parent.

(3) Personal service to the parent named in the notice.

(4) Delivery to a competent person who is at least 18 years of age at the parent's usual place of residence or business, and thereafter mailed to the parent named in the notice by first-class mail at the place where the notice was delivered.

(5) If the residence of the parent is outside the state, service may be made as described in paragraph (1), (3), or (4) or by certified mail, return receipt requested.

(6) If the recommendation of the probation officer or social worker is legal guardianship or long-term foster care, service may be made by first-class mail to the parent's usual place of residence or business.

(7) If a parent's identity is known but his or her whereabouts are unknown and the parent cannot, with reasonable diligence, be served in any manner specified in paragraphs (1) to (6), inclusive, the petitioner shall file an affidavit with the court at least 75 days before the hearing date, stating the name of the parent and describing the efforts made to locate and serve the parent.

(A) If the court determines that there has been due diligence in attempting to locate and serve the parent and the probation officer or social worker recommends adoption, service shall be to that parent's attorney of record, if any, by certified mail, return receipt requested. If the parent does not have an attorney of record, the court shall order that service be made by publication of citation requiring the parent to appear at the date, time, and place stated in the citation, and that the citation be published in a

1 newspaper designated as most likely to give notice to the parent.
2 Publication shall be made once a week for four consecutive
3 weeks. Whether notice is to the attorney of record or by
4 publication, the court shall also order that notice be given to the
5 grandparents of the child by first-class mail.

6 (B) If the court determines that there has been due diligence in
7 attempting to locate and serve the parent and the probation
8 officer or social worker recommends legal guardianship or
9 long-term foster care, no further notice is required to the parent,
10 but the court shall order that notice be given to the grandparents
11 of the child by first-class mail.

12 (C) In any case where the residence of the parent becomes
13 known, notice shall immediately be served upon the parent as
14 provided for in either paragraph (2), (3), (4), (5), or (6).

15 (g) If the identity of one or both of the parents, or alleged
16 parents, of the child is unknown, or if the name of one or both
17 parents is uncertain, then that fact shall be set forth in the
18 affidavit and the court, consistent with the provisions of Sections
19 7665 and 7666 of the Family Code and subject to subdivision (h),
20 shall issue an order dispensing with notice to a natural parent or
21 possible natural parent under this section if, after inquiry and a
22 determination that there has been due diligence in attempting to
23 identify the unknown parent, the court is unable to identify the
24 natural parent and no person has appeared claiming to be the
25 natural parent.

26 (h) After a determination that there has been due diligence in
27 attempting to identify an unknown parent pursuant to subdivision
28 (g), the court shall consider whether publication notice would be
29 likely to lead to actual notice to the unknown parent. The court
30 may order publication notice if, on the basis of all information
31 before the court, the court determines that notice by publication
32 is likely to lead to actual notice to the parent. If publication
33 notice to an unknown parent is ordered, the court shall order the
34 published citation to be directed to either the father or mother, or
35 both, of the child, and to all persons claiming to be the father or
36 mother of the child, naming and otherwise describing the child.
37 An order of publication pursuant to this paragraph shall be based
38 on an affidavit describing efforts made to identify the unknown
39 parent or parents. If the court determines there has been due
40 diligence in attempting to identify the unknown parent, the court

1 may order notice by publication pursuant to this section no less
2 than 60 or more than 75 days prior to the hearing. Service made
3 by publication pursuant to this paragraph shall require the
4 unknown parent or parents to appear at the date, time, and place
5 stated in the citation. Publication shall be made once a week for
6 four consecutive weeks.

7 (i) Notice to the child and all counsel of record shall be by
8 first-class mail.

9 (j) In the case of an Indian child, notice to the tribe shall be by
10 registered mail, return receipt requested.

11 (k) Notwithstanding subdivision (a), if the attorney of record is
12 present at the time the court schedules a hearing pursuant to
13 Section 366.26, no further notice is required, except as required
14 by subparagraph (A) of paragraph (7) of subdivision (f).

15 (l) This section shall also apply to children adjudged wards
16 pursuant to Section 727.31.

17 (m) The court shall state the reasons on the record explaining
18 why good cause exists for granting any continuance of a hearing
19 held pursuant to Section 366.26 to fulfill the requirements of this
20 section.

21 ~~SEC. 5.—~~

22 *SEC. 6.* If the Commission on State Mandates determines that
23 this act contains costs mandated by the state, reimbursement to
24 local agencies and school districts for those costs shall be made
25 pursuant to Part 7 (commencing with Section 17500) of Division
26 4 of Title 2 of the Government Code.