Senate Bill No. 594

Passed the Senate August 25, 2005

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Secretary of the Senate

Passed the Assembly August 18, 2005

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Chief Clerk of the Assembly

This bill was received by the Governor this _____ day of _____, 2005, at _____ o'clock ____M.

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Private Secretary of the Governor

CHAPTER _____

An act to amend Section 3030 of, and to add Section 3030.5 to, the Family Code, relating to support obligations.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 594, Torlakson. Custody and visitation: sex offenders.

Existing law prohibits a court from granting custody of, or unsupervised visitation with, a child to a registered sex offender if the victim was a minor, unless the court finds that there is no significant risk to the child and states its reasons in writing or on the record.

This bill would expand that provision to prohibit a court from granting custody of, or unsupervised visitation with, a child to a person if that person resides with a registered sex offender whose victim was a child. The bill would also provide that an existing custody or visitation order shall be modified or terminated consistent with that provision, as specified. The bill would also include related findings and declarations of the Legislature.

The bill would incorporate additional changes in Section 3030 of the Family Code proposed by AB 220, to be operative only if AB 220 and this bill are both chaptered and become effective on or before January 1, 2006, and this bill is chaptered last.

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

SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares all of the following:

(a) The children of the State of California are placed at risk when permitted to remain in contact with a parent or caretaker who has committed a sex crime.

(b) It is the policy of the State of California that the health, safety, and welfare of children shall be the court's primary concern in determining the best interest of children when making orders regarding custody or visitation.

(c) The perpetration of child abuse or domestic violence in a household in which a child resides is detrimental to the child.

(d) Custody and visitation orders shall be made in a manner that ensures the health, safety, and welfare of the child and the safety of all family members.

(e) The purpose of this legislation is to ensure that information regarding sex crimes is appropriately considered by the court in child custody matters and children are protected from an at-risk environment.

(f) With regard to juvenile court proceedings in which child protective services seeks to remove the child from the home and declare the child a dependant of the State of California, subdivision (d) of Section 355.1 of the Welfare and Institutions Code establishes a presumption that a child is placed at "substantial risk of abuse or neglect" if a "parent guardian, or any other person who resides with, or has the care or custody of, a minor who is currently the subject of the petition … is required, as the result of a felony conviction, to register as a sex offender pursuant to Section 290 of the Penal Code..."

SEC. 2. Section 3030 of the Family Code is amended to read:

3030. (a) (1) No person shall be granted physical or legal custody of, or unsupervised visitation with, a child if the person is required to be registered as a sex offender under Section 290 of the Penal Code where the victim was a minor, or if the person has been convicted under Section 273a, 273d, or 647.6 of the Penal Code, unless the court finds that there is no significant risk to the child and states its reasons in writing or on the record.

(2) No person shall be granted physical or legal custody of, or unsupervised visitation with, a child if anyone residing in the person's household is required, as a result of a felony conviction in which the victim was a minor, to register as a sex offender under Section 290 of the Penal Code, unless the court finds there is no significant risk to the child and states its reasons in writing or on the record.

(3) The fact that a child is permitted unsupervised contact with a person who is required, as a result of a felony conviction in which the victim was a minor, to be registered as a sex offender under Section 290 of the Penal Code, shall be prima facie evidence that the child is at significant risk. When making a determination regarding significant risk to the child, the prima facie evidence shall constitute a presumption affecting the burden of producing evidence. However, this presumption shall not

apply if there are factors mitigating against its application, including whether the party seeking custody or visitation is also required, as the result of a felony conviction in which the victim was a minor, to register as a sex offender under Section 290 of the Penal Code.

(b) No person shall be granted custody of, or visitation with, a child if the person has been convicted under Section 261 of the Penal Code and the child was conceived as a result of that violation.

(c) No person shall be granted custody of, or unsupervised visitation with, a child if the person has been convicted of murder in the first degree, as defined in Section 189 of the Penal Code, and the victim of the murder was the other parent of the child who is the subject of the order, unless the court finds that there is no risk to the child's health, safety, and welfare, and states the reasons for its finding in writing or on the record. In making its finding, the court may consider, among other things, the following:

(1) The wishes of the child, if the child is of sufficient age and capacity to reason so as to form an intelligent preference.

(2) Credible evidence that the convicted parent was a victim of abuse, as defined in Section 6203, committed by the deceased parent. That evidence may include, but is not limited to, written reports by law enforcement agencies, child protective services or other social welfare agencies, courts, medical facilities, or other public agencies or private nonprofit organizations providing services to victims of domestic abuse.

(3) Testimony of an expert witness, qualified under Section 1107 of the Evidence Code, that the convicted parent suffers from the effects of battered women's syndrome.

Unless and until a custody or visitation order is issued pursuant to this subdivision, no person shall permit or cause the child to visit or remain in the custody of the convicted parent without the consent of the child's custodian or legal guardian.

(d) The court may order child support that is to be paid by a person subject to subdivision (a), (b), or (c) to be paid through the local child support agency, as authorized by Section 4573 of the Family Code and Division 17 (commencing with Section 17000) of this code.

(e) The court shall not disclose, or cause to be disclosed, the custodial parent's place of residence, place of employment, or the child's school, unless the court finds that the disclosure would be in the best interest of the child.

SEC. 2.5. Section 3030 of the Family Code is amended to read:

3030. (a) (1) No person shall be granted physical or legal custody of, or unsupervised visitation with, a child if the person is required to be registered as a sex offender under Section 290 of the Penal Code where the victim was a minor, or if the person has been convicted under Section 273a, 273d, or 647.6 of the Penal Code, unless the court finds that there is no significant risk to the child and states its reasons in writing or on the record.

(2) No person shall be granted physical or legal custody of, or unsupervised visitation with, a child if anyone residing in the person's household is required, as a result of a felony conviction in which the victim was a minor, to register as a sex offender under Section 290 of the Penal Code, unless the court finds there is no significant risk to the child and states its reasons in writing or on the record.

(3) The fact that a child is permitted unsupervised contact with a person who is required, as a result of a felony conviction in which the victim was a minor, to be registered as a sex offender under Section 290 of the Penal Code, shall be prima facie evidence that the child is at significant risk. When making a determination regarding significant risk to the child, the prima facie evidence shall constitute a presumption affecting the burden of producing evidence. However, this presumption shall not apply if there are factors mitigating against its application, including whether the party seeking custody or visitation is also required, as the result of a felony conviction in which the victim was a minor, to register as a sex offender under Section 290 of the Penal Code.

(b) No person shall be granted custody of, or visitation with, a child if the person has been convicted under Section 261 of the Penal Code and the child was conceived as a result of that violation.

(c) No person shall be granted custody of, or unsupervised visitation with, a child if the person has been convicted of murder in the first degree, as defined in Section 189 of the Penal Code,

and the victim of the murder was the other parent of the child who is the subject of the order, unless the court finds that there is no risk to the child's health, safety, and welfare, and states the reasons for its finding in writing or on the record. In making its finding, the court may consider, among other things, the following:

(1) The wishes of the child, if the child is of sufficient age and capacity to reason so as to form an intelligent preference.

(2) Credible evidence that the convicted parent was a victim of abuse, as defined in Section 6203, committed by the deceased parent. That evidence may include, but is not limited to, written reports by law enforcement agencies, child protective services or other social welfare agencies, courts, medical facilities, or other public agencies or private nonprofit organizations providing services to victims of domestic abuse.

(3) Testimony of an expert witness, qualified under Section 1107 of the Evidence Code, that the convicted parent experiences intimate partner battering.

Unless and until a custody or visitation order is issued pursuant to this subdivision, no person shall permit or cause the child to visit or remain in the custody of the convicted parent without the consent of the child's custodian or legal guardian.

(d) The court may order child support that is to be paid by a person subject to subdivision (a), (b), or (c) to be paid through the local child support agency, as authorized by Section 4573 of the Family Code and Division 17 (commencing with Section 17000) of this code.

(e) The court shall not disclose, or cause to be disclosed, the custodial parent's place of residence, place of employment, or the child's school, unless the court finds that the disclosure would be in the best interest of the child.

SEC. 3. Section 3030.5 is added to the Family Code, to read:

3030.5. (a) Upon the motion of one or both parents, or the legal guardian or custodian, or upon the court's own motion, an order granting physical or legal custody of, or unsupervised visitation with, a child may be modified or terminated if either of the following circumstances has occurred since the order was entered, unless the court finds that there is no significant risk to the child and states its reasons in writing or on the record:

(1) The person who has been granted physical or legal custody of, or unsupervised visitation with the child is required, as a result of a felony conviction in which the victim was a minor, to be registered as a sex offender under Section 290 of the Penal Code.

(2) The person who has been granted physical or legal custody of, or unsupervised visitation with, the child resides with another person who is required, as a result of a felony conviction in which the victim was a minor, to be registered as a sex offender under Section 290 of the Penal Code.

(b) The fact that a child is permitted unsupervised contact with a person who is required, as a result of a felony conviction in which the victim was a minor, to be registered as a sex offender under Section 290 of the Penal Code, shall be prima facie evidence that the child is at significant risk. When making a determination regarding significant risk to the child, the prima facie evidence shall constitute a presumption affecting the burden of producing evidence. However, this presumption shall not apply if there are factors mitigating against its application, including whether the party seeking custody or visitation is also required, as the result of a felony conviction in which the victim was a minor, to register as a sex offender under Section 290 of the Penal Code.

(c) The court shall not modify an existing custody or visitation order upon the ex parte petition of one party pursuant to this section without providing notice to the other party and an opportunity to be heard. This notice provision applies only when the motion for custody or visitation change is based solely on the fact that the child is allowed unsupervised contact with a person required, as a result of a felony conviction in which the victim was a minor, to register as a sex offender under Section 290 of the Penal Code and does not affect the court's ability to remove a child upon an ex parte motion when there is a showing of immediate harm to the child.

SEC. 4. Section 2.5 of this bill incorporates amendments to Section 3030 of the Family Code proposed by both this bill and Assembly Bill 220. It shall only become operative if (1) both bills are enacted and become effective on or before January 1, 2006, (2) each bill amends Section 3030 of the Family Code, and

(3) this bill is enacted after Assembly Bill 220, in which case Section 2 of this bill shall not become operative.

Approved _____, 2005

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Governor