

PLEASE NOTE: Legislative Information **cannot** perform research, provide legal advice, or interpret Maine law. For legal assistance, please contact a qualified attorney.

An Act To Ensure the Payment of Survivor Benefits to Certain Children

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

Sec. 1. 18-A MRSA §2-108, as enacted by PL 1979, c. 540, §1, is repealed and the following enacted in its place:

§ 2-108. Afterborn heirs

(1). Relatives of the decedent conceived before the decedent's death but born thereafter inherit as if they had been born in the lifetime of the decedent.

(2). Children of the decedent conceived after the decedent's death inherit as if the children had been born in the lifetime of the decedent only if the decedent consented in a record to be a parent of children conceived after the decedent's death.

Sec. 2. 18-A MRSA §2-109, sub-§(2), as amended by PL 1987, c. 736, §37, is further amended to read:

(2). In cases not covered by ~~paragraph~~subsection (1), a person born out of wedlock is a child of the mother; that person is also a child of the father if:

(i). The natural parents participated in a marriage ceremony before or after the birth of the child, even though the attempted marriage is void; ~~or~~

(ii). The father adopts the child into his family; or

(iii). The father acknowledges in writing before a notary public that he is the father of the child, or the paternity is established by an adjudication before the death of the father or is established thereafter by clear and convincing proof, but the paternity established under this ~~subparagraph~~paragraph is ineffective to qualify the father or his kindred to inherit from or through the child unless the father has openly treated the child as his and has not refused to support the child.;

Sec. 3. 18-A MRSA §2-109, sub-§(3), as enacted by PL 1995, c. 694, Pt. C, §6 and affected by Pt. E, §2, is amended to read:

(3). A divorce or judicial separation does not bar the issue of the marriage from inheriting; ~~and~~

Sec. 4. 18-A MRSA §2-109, sub-§(4) is enacted to read:

(4). A child conceived after the death of a person is a child of that person if the child is born to the person's surviving spouse using the gametes of the person and the person consented in a record that if the gametes were used after the person's death the person would be a parent of the child.

SUMMARY

This bill addresses the ability to inherit for purposes of intestate succession when a child is conceived using the gametes of a person after the person has died. This bill provides that the child has the same right to inherit from the decedent as if the child had been born prior to the decedent's death. This bill also clarifies that a parent-child relationship is established for the purposes of intestate succession between a child and a person if the child is conceived after the death of the person and the child is born to the person's surviving spouse using the gametes of the person. In each situation, the person must have consented in a record to be a parent in the given circumstances.

The availability of Social Security survivor benefits is based on state intestate succession laws. This bill will facilitate the eligibility for survivor benefits to be paid to posthumously conceived children.