ASSEMBLY BILL NO. 211-ASSEMBLYMAN EDWARDS

FEBRUARY 18, 2019

Referred to Committee on Judiciary

SUMMARY—Makes various changes concerning domestic relations. (BDR 11-123)

FISCAL NOTE: Effect on Local Government: May have Fiscal Impact. Effect on the State: Yes.

CONTAINS UNFUNDED MANDATE (§§ 3, 4, 8) (NOT REQUESTED BY AFFECTED LOCAL GOVERNMENT)

EXPLANATION - Matter in bolded italics is new; matter between brackets [omitted material] is material to be omitted.

AN ACT relating to domestic relations; providing various penalties for persons who knowingly make false statements or present false documentary evidence in domestic relations proceedings; requiring the establishment of independent review panel to observe domestic relations proceedings; requiring the establishment of an advocate group to provide assistance to veterans in domestic relations proceedings; requiring the establishment of a program for the supervised exchange of a child between certain persons; establishing the consequences resulting from a person who participates in such a program failing to appear at the designated time and place for the supervised exchange of the child; creating the Program for the Supervised Exchange of a Child Fund; making an appropriation; providing a penalty; and providing other matters properly relating thereto.

Legislative Counsel's Digest:

Section 2 of this bill establishes various penalties to be imposed upon any person who is a party to a domestic relations proceeding and who makes a false statement of material fact or presents false documentary evidence to the court. The penalty imposed is dependent upon the frequency of the occurrence of the particular offense.

Section 3 of this bill requires each district court to establish an independent review panel consisting of members of the public to observe all domestic relations proceedings for the purpose of ensuring that judges are acting impartially and





appropriately. If a member of the independent review panel observes a presiding judge engaging in any behavior for which the judge could be subject to discipline, the review panel is required to file a complaint with the Commission on Judicial Discipline. Section 3 also provides that members of the review panel must not be excluded from observing a proceeding for any reason, and sections 5 and 16-19 of this bill make conforming changes.

Section 4 of this bill requires each district court to establish an advocate group consisting of persons who are qualified to provide assistance deemed appropriate by the court to any veteran who is a party to a domestic relations proceeding. **Section 4** also requires the Department of Veterans Services to assist the court as necessary to determine whether a person is qualified to provide assistance to a veteran.

Section 8 of this bill requires each family court, as defined by **section 7** of this bill, to establish a program for the supervised exchange of a child between parents named in a custody order. Such a program must require that an employee of the family court supervise the exchange of a child between such parents to ensure that the exchange occurs in a safe manner. Section 13 of this bill provides that if a parent appears more than 30 minutes after the time fixed by the court pursuant to an order for such an exchange, the person with whom the child is to be exchanged is entitled to spend an additional amount of time with the child equal to five times the amount of time denied by the lateness of the parent. If a parent appears more than 1 hour after the time fixed by the court: (1) a \$500 fine will be imposed in addition to the additional time to which the other parent is entitled; and (2) the court employee will notify a local law enforcement agency to locate the parent who failed to appear, provide certain notices to such a parent and transfer the child to the other person. Sections 7-14 and 20 of this bill establish procedures related to a program for the supervised exchange of a child. **Section 15** of this bill creates the Program for the Supervised Exchange of a Child Fund as a special revenue fund in the State

Section 21 of this bill makes an appropriation to the Office of Court Administrator to assist with the implementation of the Program for the Supervised Exchange of a Child. **Section 22** of this bill requires each district court to establish an independent review panel and an advocate group for veterans pursuant to **sections 3 and 4**, respectively, not later than October 1, 2019, and each family court to establish a program for the supervised exchange of a child pursuant to **section 8** as soon as practicable after October 1, 2019, but not later than January 1, 2020.

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF NEVADA, REPRESENTED IN SENATE AND ASSEMBLY, DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. Title 11 of NRS is hereby amended by adding thereto a new chapter to consist of the provisions set forth as sections 2, 3 and 4 of this act.

Sec. 2. During any proceeding conducted pursuant to this title, if a person who is a party to the proceeding knowingly:

- 1. Makes any statement of material fact to the court that the court determines to be false, the person:
- (a) For the first or second offense, must receive a warning from the court.
 - (b) For the third offense, shall be punished by:



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- (1) Imprisonment in the county jail for a period of 1 day;
- (2) A fine of \$500; or

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- (3) Performing 10 hours of community service.
- (c) For the fourth or subsequent offense, shall be punished by:
 - (1) Imprisonment in the county jail for a period of 2 days;
 - (2) A fine of \$1,000; or
 - (3) Performing 20 hours of community service.
- 2. Presents any documentary evidence to the court that the court determines to be false, the person shall be punished for each offense by performing not more than 10 hours of community service. As used in this subsection, "documentary evidence" means any account, book, correspondence, file, message, paper, record or other type of document in any form, including, without limitation, in any written, audio, visual, digital or electronic form.
- Sec. 3. 1. Each district court shall establish an independent review panel consisting of members of the public to observe all proceedings conducted pursuant to this title for the purpose of ensuring that the presiding judge is acting impartially and appropriately. Notwithstanding any other provision of law or court rule, members of the review panel must not be excluded from observing a proceeding conducted pursuant to this title for any reason.
- 2. If a member of the independent review panel observes a presiding judge engaging in any behavior for which the judge could be subject to discipline, the review panel shall file a complaint with the Commission on Judicial Discipline in accordance with the provisions of NRS 1.425 to 1.4695, inclusive.
- Sec. 4. 1. Each district court shall establish an advocate group consisting of persons who are qualified to provide assistance deemed appropriate by the court, including, without limitation, any assistance necessary for the enforcement of a court order, to any veteran who is a party to a proceeding conducted pursuant to this title.
- 2. The Department of Veterans Services shall assist the court as necessary to determine whether a person is qualified to provide assistance to a veteran pursuant to subsection 1.
- 3. As used in this section, "veteran" has the meaning ascribed to it in NRS 417.005.
 - **Sec. 5.** NRS 125.080 is hereby amended to read as follows:
- 125.080 1. In any action for divorce, the court shall, upon demand of either party, direct that the trial and issue or issues of fact joined therein be private.
- 2. Except as otherwise provided in subsection 3, upon such demand of either party, all persons must be excluded from the court or chambers wherein the action is tried, except:





- (a) The officers of the court;
- (b) The members of the independent review panel established by the court pursuant to section 3 of this act;
 - (c) The parties;

- (d) The counsel for the parties;
- (e) The witnesses for the parties;
- (e) The parents or guardians of the parties; and
- (g) The siblings of the parties.
- 3. The court may, upon oral or written motion of either party, order a hearing to determine whether to exclude the parents, guardians or siblings of either party, or witnesses for either party, from the court or chambers wherein the action is tried. If good cause is shown for the exclusion of any such person, the court shall exclude any such person from the court or chambers wherein the action is tried.
- **Sec. 6.** Chapter 125C of NRS is hereby amended by adding thereto the provisions set forth as sections 7 to 15, inclusive, of this act.
- Sec. 7. As used in sections 7 to 15, inclusive, of this act, unless the context otherwise requires:
 - 1. "Family court" means:
- (a) The Division of the district court that is established as a family court pursuant to NRS 3.0105; or
- (b) In a judicial district that does not include a family court, the district court.
- 2. "Office of Court Administrator" means the Office of Court Administrator created pursuant to NRS 1.320.
- Sec. 8. 1. Each family court shall establish a program for the supervised exchange of a child between parents named in an order for the custody of the child. The program must:
- (a) Require an employee of the family court to supervise the exchange of a child between such parents to ensure that the exchange occurs in a safe manner at a time fixed by the family court; and
- (b) Provide for weekly reports prepared by an employee of the family court required to supervise the exchange of a child, which include:
- (1) The time of arrival of each parent at the exchange of a child;
- (2) Whether each parent appeared at the exchange of a child;
- (3) Any efforts to locate a parent who did not appear at the exchange of a child; or
 - (4) Other information concerning the exchange of a child.





- 2. In carrying out the program described in subsection 1, the Office of Court Administrator shall:
- (a) Oversee and administer the program in each judicial district;
- (b) Employ personnel and staff necessary to carry out the program in each judicial district; and

(c) Appoint a director of the program to:

(1) Oversee each family court employee required to supervise the exchange of a child in this State; and

(2) Twice each year, provide a comprehensive report of the activities of the program to the Legislature or the Legislative Commission when the Legislature is not in regular session.

Sec. 9. 1. Upon the request of a parent seeking the supervised exchange of a child between parents and to ensure that the exchange occurs in a safe manner, the family court shall:

(a) Order the exchange to occur at a time fixed by the family

court;

(b) Require an employee of the family court to supervise the exchange; and

(c) Require each parent to appear at the exchange.

- 2. An order issued pursuant to subsection 1 is effective when issued and enforceable against either parent at the next supervised exchange of the child.
- Sec. 10. 1. Each employee of the family court required to supervise the exchange of a child pursuant to section 9 of this act shall:
- (a) Upon issuance of an order pursuant to section 9 of this act, coordinate a location for the supervised exchange of the child and inform each parent named in the order of the time fixed by the family court;
 - (b) Record at each supervised exchange of a child:
 - (1) The signature of each parent;
 - (2) The arrival time of each parent;
 - (3) The name of each child exchanged;
 - (4) The location of the exchange; and
- (5) Any other details the family court deems necessary with respect to the exchange; and

(c) Submit a weekly report to the court which must include the information required to be recorded pursuant to paragraph (b).

2. The employee of the family court required to supervise the exchange of a child pursuant to section 9 of this act must determine a location of the supervised exchange of a child and shall give preference to where the family court is located. Such an employee may, in his or her discretion, determine whether an





alternative location would be a more convenient location for each parent.

Sec. 11. 1. Upon receipt of each weekly report submitted pursuant to section 10 of this act, the family court shall:

(a) Consider the information set forth in each report in making a determination regarding the custody of a child;

(b) Retain the report for a period of not less than 1 year; and

- (c) Grant equitable relief to a parent if the family court determines that the other parent exhibits a pattern of failing to appear at the time fixed by the court pursuant to section 9 of this act.
- 2. The family court shall not entertain actual or implied bias or prejudice, which a reasonable person would consider likely to affect the impartiality, for or against one of the parents.

Sec. 12. 1. A parent may challenge a decision issued pursuant to sections 7 to 15, inclusive, of this act by a family court for actual or implied bias or prejudice.

2. For the purposes of conducting a review of a challenge of a decision pursuant to subsection 1, the judges of a court other than a family court shall appoint a review panel of four judges including two male judges and two female judges.

3. The review panel shall review the challenge pursuant to subsection 1 to determine whether there exists actual or implied

bias or prejudice.

 4. If the review panel determines that there is actual or implied bias or prejudice, the review panel shall reverse the decision of the family court and make the decision of the panel available to the public.

5. The family court shall grant a parent who prevails in the challenge pursuant to subsection 1 an amount of time equal to

three times the amount of time at issue in the decision.

Sec. 13. 1. If a parent named in an order issued pursuant to section 9 of this act appears more than:

(a) Thirty minutes after the time fixed by the court pursuant to section 9 of this act, the parent with whom the child is to be exchanged is entitled to spend an additional amount of time with the child equal to five times the amount of time denied or attempted denied to the parent as a result of the other parent failing to appear at the time fixed by the court; or

(b) One hour after the time fixed by the court pursuant to section 9 of this act, the family court shall impose a fine of \$500 in addition to the amount of time the parent with whom the child is to

be exchanged is entitled pursuant to paragraph (a).

2. The employee of the court required to supervise the exchange of the child shall:





- (a) Schedule the additional amount of time to which a parent is entitled pursuant to paragraph (a) of subsection 1 at the convenience of such parent; and
- (b) Notify the court to order the appropriate law enforcement agency to:
- (1) Locate the parent who appeared more than 1 hour after the time fixed by the court pursuant to paragraph (b) of subsection 1;
- (2) Notify such a parent that expenses and costs incurred to locate the parent will be assessed against the parent;
- (3) Notify the parent that a \$500 fine will be imposed against the parent; and

(4) Transfer the child to the other parent.

- 3. All fines collected pursuant to subsection 1 must be paid by the clerk of the court to the State Treasurer for credit to the Program for the Supervised Exchange of a Child Fund created by section 15 of this act.
- Sec. 14. If a parent believes there is a violation in carrying out the provisions of the program established pursuant to section 8 of this act, such a parent must first notify the director of the program. The director of the program must be given an opportunity to respond and remedy the alleged violation before the parent notifies the Office of Court Administrator of the alleged violation.
- Sec. 15. 1. There is hereby created as a special revenue fund in the State Treasury the Program for the Supervised Exchange of a Child Fund.
- 2. All money received for the use of the Fund pursuant to section 13 of this act or from any other source must be deposited in the Fund.
- 3. The interest and income earned on the money in the Fund, after deducting any applicable charges, must be credited to the Fund. All claims against the Fund must be paid as other claims against the State are paid.
- 4. The State Court Administrator of the Office of Court Administrator shall administer the Fund and may expend any money in the Fund to support any program for the supervised exchange of a child established pursuant to section 8 of this act.
 - **Sec. 16.** NRS 126.211 is hereby amended to read as follows:
- 126.211 [Any] Except as otherwise provided in section 3 of this act, any hearing or trial held under this chapter must be held in closed court without admittance of any person other than those necessary to the action or proceeding. All papers and records, other than the final judgment, pertaining to the action or proceeding, whether part of the permanent record of the court or of a file in the





Division of Welfare and Supportive Services of the Department of Health and Human Services or elsewhere, are subject to inspection only upon consent of the court and all interested persons, or in exceptional cases only upon an order of the court for good cause shown.

Sec. 17. NRS 126.730 is hereby amended to read as follows:

126.730 1. Except as otherwise provided in NRS 239.0115 [-] and section 3 of this act, all hearings held in a proceeding under NRS 126.710 to 126.810, inclusive, are confidential and must be held in closed court, without admittance of any person other than the parties to a gestational agreement, their witnesses and attorneys, except by order of the court.

- 2. The files and records pertaining to a gestational carrier arrangement, gestational agreement or proceeding under NRS 126.710 to 126.810, inclusive, are not open to inspection by any person except:
- (a) Upon an order of the court expressly so permitting pursuant to a petition setting forth the reasons therefor; or
 - (b) As provided pursuant to subsection 3.
- 3. A person who intends to file a petition to enforce a gestational agreement may inspect the files or the records of the court concerning the gestational agreement.
 - **Sec. 18.** NRS 127.140 is hereby amended to read as follows:
- 127.140 1. Except as otherwise provided in NRS 239.0115 [,] and section 3 of this act, all hearings held in proceedings under this chapter are confidential and must be held in closed court, without admittance of any person other than the petitioners, their witnesses, the director of an agency, or their authorized representatives, attorneys and persons entitled to notice by this chapter, except by order of the court.
- 2. The files and records of the court in adoption proceedings are not open to inspection by any person except:
- (a) Upon an order of the court expressly so permitting pursuant to a petition setting forth the reasons therefor;
- (b) If a natural parent and the child are eligible to receive information from the State Register for Adoptions; or
 - (c) As provided pursuant to subsections 3 to 6, inclusive.
- 3. An adoptive parent who intends to file a petition pursuant to NRS 127.1885 or 127.1895 to enforce, modify or terminate an agreement that provides for postadoptive contact may inspect only the portions of the files and records of the court concerning the agreement for postadoptive contact.
- 4. A natural parent who intends to file a petition pursuant to NRS 127.1885 to prove the existence of or to enforce an agreement that provides for postadoptive contact or to file an action pursuant to





NRS 41.509 may inspect only the portions of the files or records of the court concerning the agreement for postadoptive contact.

- 5. Upon the request of a sibling or adoptive child who wishes to enforce an order for visitation included in a decree of adoption pursuant to NRS 127.2827, the court shall provide the case number of the adoption proceeding to the sibling and allow the sibling to inspect only the portions of the files or records of the court concerning the order for visitation.
- 6. The portions of the files and records which are made available for inspection by an adoptive parent, natural parent or sibling pursuant to subsection 3, 4 or 5 must not include any confidential information, including, without limitation, any information that identifies or would lead to the identification of a natural parent if the identity of the natural parent is not included in the agreement for postadoptive contact or order for visitation, as applicable.
 - **Sec. 19.** NRS 128.090 is hereby amended to read as follows:
- 128.090 1. At the time stated in the notice, or at the earliest time thereafter to which the hearing may be postponed, the court shall proceed to hear the petition.
- 2. The proceedings are civil in nature and are governed by the Nevada Rules of Civil Procedure. The court shall in all cases require the petitioner to establish the facts by clear and convincing evidence and shall give full and careful consideration to all of the evidence presented, with regard to the rights and claims of the parent of the child and to any and all ties of blood or affection, but with a dominant purpose of serving the best interests of the child.
- 3. Information contained in a report filed pursuant to NRS 432.097 to 432.130, inclusive, or chapter 432B of NRS may not be excluded from the proceeding by the invoking of any privilege.
- 4. In the event of postponement, all persons served, who are not present or represented in court at the time of the postponement, must be notified thereof in the manner provided by the Nevada Rules of Civil Procedure.
- 5. [Any] Except as otherwise provided in section 3 of this act, any hearing held pursuant to this section must be held in closed court without admittance of any person other than those necessary to the action or proceeding, unless the court determines that holding such a hearing in open court will not be detrimental to the child.
- 6. Except as otherwise provided in [subsection] subsections 5 and 7, any hearing held pursuant to NRS 128.005 to 128.150, inclusive, is confidential and must be held in closed court without the admittance of any person other than the petitioner, attorneys, any witnesses, the director of an agency which provides child welfare





services or an authorized representative of such person and any other person entitled to notice, except by order of the court.

- 7. The files and records of the court in a proceeding to terminate parental rights pursuant to NRS 128.005 to 128.150, inclusive, are not open to inspection by any person except:
- (a) The person petitioning for the termination of parental rights and a person who intends to file a response to such a petition; or
- (b) Upon an order of the court expressly so permitting pursuant to a petition setting forth the reasons therefor.

Sec. 20. NRS 1.360 is hereby amended to read as follows:

- 1.360 Under the direction of the Supreme Court, the Court Administrator shall:
- 1. Examine the administrative procedures employed in the offices of the judges, clerks, court reporters and employees of all courts of this State and make recommendations, through the Chief Justice, for the improvement of those procedures;
- 2. Examine the condition of the dockets of the courts and determine the need for assistance by any court;
- 3. Make recommendations to and carry out the directions of the Chief Justice relating to the assignment of district judges where district courts are in need of assistance;
- 4. Develop a uniform system for collecting and compiling statistics and other data regarding the operation of the State Court System and transmit that information to the Supreme Court so that proper action may be taken in respect thereto;
- 5. Prepare and submit a budget of state appropriations necessary for the maintenance and operation of the State Court System and make recommendations in respect thereto;
- 6. Develop procedures for accounting, internal auditing, procurement and disbursement for the State Court System;
- 7. Collect statistical and other data and make reports relating to the expenditure of all public money for the maintenance and operation of the State Court System and the offices connected therewith:
- 8. Compile statistics from the information required to be maintained by the clerks of the district courts pursuant to NRS 3.275 regarding criminal and civil cases and make reports as to the cases filed in the district courts;
- 9. Formulate and submit to the Supreme Court recommendations of policies or proposed legislation for the improvement of the State Court System;
- 10. On or before January 1 of each year, submit to the Director of the Legislative Counsel Bureau a written report:





- (a) Compiling the information submitted to the Court Administrator pursuant to NRS 3.243, 4.175 and 5.045 during the immediately preceding fiscal year; and
 - (b) Concerning:

- (1) The distribution of money deposited in the special account created by NRS 176.0613 to assist with funding and establishing specialty court programs;
- (2) The current status of any specialty court programs to which money from the account was allocated since the last report;
- (3) Statistics compiled from information required to be maintained by clerks of the district courts pursuant to NRS 3.275 concerning specialty courts, including, without limitation, the number of participants in such programs, the nature of the criminal charges that were filed against participants, the number of participants who have completed the programs and the disposition of the cases; and
- (4) Such other related information as the Court Administrator deems appropriate; [and]
- 11. Perform any duties required pursuant to section 8 of this act; and
- 12. Attend to such other matters as may be assigned by the Supreme Court or prescribed by law.
- **Sec. 21.** 1. There is hereby appropriated from the State General Fund to the Office of Court Administrator the sum of \$500,000 to assist with the implementation of the program for the supervised exchange of a child.
- 2. Any remaining balance of the appropriation made by subsection 1 must not be committed for expenditure after June 30, 2021, by the entity to which the appropriation is made or any entity to which money from the appropriation is granted or otherwise transferred in any manner, and any portion of the appropriated money remaining must not be spent for any purpose after September 17, 2021, by either the entity to which the money was appropriated or the entity to which the money was subsequently granted or transferred, and must be reverted to the State General Fund on or before September 17, 2021.
- **Sec. 22.** 1. Each district court shall establish an independent review panel pursuant to section 3 of this act and an advocate group to provide assistance to veterans pursuant to section 4 of this act not later than October 1, 2019.
- 2. Each family court shall establish a program for the supervised exchange of a child pursuant to section 8 of this act as soon as practicable after October 1, 2019, but not later than January 1, 2020. As used in this subsection, "family court" has the meaning ascribed to it in section 7 of this act.





- **Sec. 23.** The provisions of subsection 1 of NRS 218D.380 do not apply to any provision of this act which adds or revises a requirement to submit a report to the Legislature.
- **Sec. 24.** The provisions of NRS 354.599 do not apply to any additional expenses of a local government that are related to the provisions of this act.

Sec. 25. This act becomes effective:

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- 1. Upon passage and approval for the purpose of performing any preparatory administrative tasks that are necessary to carry out the provisions of sections 3, 4 and 8 of this act.
 - 2. On October 1, 2019, for all other purposes.





