

HOUSE BILL 20

By Hardaway

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 36 and Title 37, to establish the office of noncustodial parent advocacy pilot project.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 36, Chapter 6, Part 4, is amended by adding the following language as a new, appropriately numbered section:

(a) The administrative office of the courts (AOC) shall establish and implement the office of noncustodial parent advocacy pilot project. The pilot project shall be implemented in all juvenile courts and all courts exercising juvenile court jurisdiction in at least one (1) county within each of the state's three (3) grand divisions. The office of noncustodial parent advocacy shall provide assistance to unwed noncustodial parents in obtaining visitation rights to their children.

(b) The AOC shall promulgate such rules as may be necessary to implement the office in an efficient and effective manner. Such rules shall include, but shall not be limited to, policies and procedures to:

(1) Provide assistance to unwed noncustodial parents in obtaining visitation rights to their children;

(2) Provide notice to all unwed parents of the availability of the office of parent advocacy;

(3) Monitor parents who use the office of noncustodial parent advocacy to evaluate the efficiency of the office and the continued needs of unwed noncustodial parents in obtaining visitation rights to their children;

(4) Monitor the consistency of custody and visitation due to assistance from the office of noncustodial parent advocacy; and

(5) Provide recommendations for improving visitation rights of unwed noncustodial parents, including but not limited to, the need for noncustodial parent advocacy offices throughout the state.

(c) On or before February 15, 2010, and on or before February 15 of each successive year thereafter, the AOC shall report to the judiciary committee of the senate and the children and family affairs committee of the house of representatives the findings concerning the efficiency and effectiveness of the pilot project.

(d) The pilot project shall remain in effect until July 1, 2012.

SECTION 2. For the purpose of the administrative office of the courts establishing rules relevant to the implementation of this act, this act shall take effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it. For all other purposes, it shall take effect on July 1, 2009, the public welfare requiring it.