

SENATE BILL 471

By Bowling

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 49,
Chapter 6, Part 13, relative to the Success
Sequence Act.

WHEREAS, couples who have children within marriage have higher family incomes and lower poverty rates than their unmarried counterparts; and

WHEREAS, over the past forty-five years, the number of children living with married parents has declined by twelve percent; and

WHEREAS, approximately twenty-five percent of all children today do not have married parents; and

WHEREAS, children raised by married parents are more likely to flourish compared to children raised in single-parent families; and

WHEREAS, children raised in stable, married-parent families are more likely to excel in school, and generally earn higher grade point averages than children who are not; and

WHEREAS, children raised by married parents are about twice as likely to graduate from college than children who are not; and

WHEREAS, children not raised in a home with married parents are twice as likely to end up in jail or prison before reaching thirty years of age; and

WHEREAS, children raised by a single parent are more than three times as likely to live in poverty than children raised by married parents; and

WHEREAS, the strongest negative community predictor of children from low-income families realizing the American dream, which includes going from poverty as children to affluence as adults, is the share of single parents in a community; and

WHEREAS, among millennials who finished high school, entered the workforce, and were married before having children, ninety-seven percent did not live in poverty when they reached adulthood; now, therefore,

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

SECTION 1. This act is known and may be cited as the "Success Sequence Act."

SECTION 2. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 49-6-1301, is amended by adding the following as a new subdivision:

"Success sequence" means a method by which a person completes the following in the following sequence:

- (A) Obtains a high school diploma or high school equivalency credential;
- (B) Enters into the workforce or pursues a postsecondary degree or credential;
- (C) Enters into marriage; and
- (D) Has children;

SECTION 3. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 49-6-1304(a), is amended by adding the following as a new subdivision:

(15) Provide instruction and evidence regarding the positive personal and societal outcomes associated with the success sequence.

SECTION 4. This act takes effect July 1, 2025, the public welfare requiring it, and applies to the 2025-2026 school year and each school year thereafter.