

1 S.248

2 Introduced by Senator White

3 Referred to Committee on

4 Date:

5 Subject: Domestic relations; Uniform Family Law Arbitration Act

6 Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes the General

7 Assembly's intent to enact the Uniform Family Law Arbitration Act

8 An act relating to the Uniform Family Law Arbitration Act

9 It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

10 Sec. 1. LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS

11 The General Assembly finds that:

12 (1) Vermont courts are facing large caseloads, and parties seeking to
13 divorce and settle matters related to parental rights and responsibilities, parent-
14 child contact, child support, and property matters may have to wait for a
15 considerable amount of time to resolve these matters through the Family
16 Division of Superior Court.

17 (2) The Uniform Family Law Arbitration Act establishes a statutory
18 scheme to resolve these matters through arbitration rather than using the
19 courts.

1 (3) During arbitration, a neutral third party hears arguments from the
2 parties, evaluates the evidence, and makes a decision on the dispute.
3 Arbitration awards are filed with the court that reviews them, and such awards
4 that involve child-related issues are given particularly close scrutiny to make
5 sure they are in the best interests of the child.

6 (4) Adopting the Uniform Family Law Arbitration Act can provide
7 families with an opportunity to move forward with their lives and settle
8 important matters with the assistance of an arbitrator rather than wait for what
9 may be a significantly longer time period without such assistance.

10 Sec. 2. LEGISLATIVE INTENT

11 It is the intent of the General Assembly to enact the Uniform Family Law
12 Arbitration Act for the purpose of offering families an alternative to
13 negotiation, litigation, collaborative law, or mediation.

14 Sec. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE

15 This act shall take effect on July 1, 2024.