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HOUSE BILL NO. 2159

AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE

(Proposed by the House Committee on Health, Welfare, and Institutions
on January 29, 2009)

(Patron Prior to Substitute—Delegate Toscano)

A *BILL to amend and reenact §§ 63.2-1201, 63.2-1202, 63.2-1203, 63.2-1204, 63.2-1209, 63.2-1212, 63.2-1221, 63.2-1222, 63.2-1225, 63.2-1230, 63.2-1233, and 63.2-1250 of the Code of Virginia, relating to adoption of a child.*

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That §§ 63.2-1201, 63.2-1202, 63.2-1203, 63.2-1204, 63.2-1209, 63.2-1212, 63.2-1221, 63.2-1222, 63.2-1225, 63.2-1230, 63.2-1233, and 63.2-1250 of the Code of Virginia are amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 63.2-1201. Filing of petition for adoption; venue; jurisdiction; and proceedings.

Proceedings for the adoption of a minor child and for a change of name of such child shall be instituted only by petition to a circuit court in the county or city in which the petitioner resides, in the county or city in which the child-placing agency that placed the child is located, or in the county or city in which a birth parent executed a consent pursuant to § 63.2-1233. Such petition may be filed by any natural person who resides in the Commonwealth, or who has custody of a child placed by a child-placing agency of the Commonwealth, or by an adopting parent of a child who was subject to a consent proceeding held pursuant to § 63.2-1233, or by intended parents who are parties to a surrogacy contract. The petition shall ask leave to adopt a minor child not legally the petitioner's by birth and, if it is so desired by the petitioner, also to change the name of such child. In the case of married persons, or persons who were previously married who are permitted to adopt a child under § 63.2-1201.1, the petition shall be the joint petition of the husband and wife or former spouses but, in the event the child to be adopted is legally the child by birth or adoption of one of the petitioners, such petitioner shall unite in the petition for the purpose of indicating consent to the prayer thereof only. If any procedural provision of this chapter applies to only one of the adoptive ~~parent~~parents, then the court may waive the application of the procedural provision as to ~~the~~for the spouse of the adoptive parent to whom the provision applies. The petition shall contain a full disclosure of the circumstances under which the child came to live, and is living, in the home of the petitioner. Each petition for adoption shall be signed by the petitioner as well as by counsel of record, if any. In any case in which the petition seeks the entry of an adoption order without referral for investigation, the petition shall be under oath.

A single petition for adoption under the provisions of this section shall be sufficient for the concurrent adoption by the same petitioners of two or more children who have the same birth parent or parents, and nothing in this section shall be construed as having heretofore required a separate petition for each of such children.

The petition for adoption, except those filed pursuant to subdivisions 5 and 6 of § 63.2-1210, shall include an additional \$50 filing fee that shall be used to fund the Putative Father Registry established in Article 7 (§ 63.2-1249 et seq.) of this chapter.

A petition filed while the child is under 18 years of age shall not become invalid because the child reaches 18 years of age prior to the entry of a final order of adoption. Any final order of adoption entered pursuant to § 63.2-1213 after a child reaches 18 years of age, where the petition was filed prior to the child turning 18 years of age, shall have the same effect as if the child was under 18 years of age at the time the order was entered by the circuit court provided the court has obtained the consent of the adoptee.

§ 63.2-1202. Parental, or agency, consent required; exceptions.

A. No petition for adoption shall be granted, except as hereinafter provided in this section, unless written consent to the proposed adoption is filed with the petition. Such consent shall be in writing, signed under oath and acknowledged before an officer authorized by law to take acknowledgments. The consent of a birth parent for the adoption of his child placed directly by the birth parent shall be executed as provided in § 63.2-1233, and the circuit court may accept a certified copy of an order entered pursuant to § 63.2-1233 in satisfaction of all requirements of this section, provided the order clearly evidences compliance with the applicable notice and consent requirements of § 63.2-1233.

B. A birth parent who has not reached the age of 18 shall have legal capacity to give consent to adoption and perform all acts related to adoption, and shall be as fully bound thereby as if the birth parent had attained the age of 18 years.

C. Consent shall be executed:

1. By the birth mother and by any man who:

a. Is an acknowledged father under § 20-49.1;

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- 60 b. Is an adjudicated father under § 20-49.8;
61 c. Is a presumed father under subsection D; or
62 d. Has registered with the Putative Father Registry pursuant to Article 7 (§ 63.2-1249 et seq.) of this
63 chapter.

64 Verification of compliance with the notice provisions of the Putative Father Registry shall be
65 provided to the court.

66 2. By the child-placing agency or the local board having custody of the child, with right to place him
67 for adoption, through court commitment or parental agreement as provided in § 63.2-900, 63.2-903 or
68 63.2-1221; or an agency outside the Commonwealth that is licensed or otherwise duly authorized to
69 place children for adoption by virtue of the laws under which it operates; and

70 3. By the child if he is 14 years of age or older, unless the circuit court finds that the best interests
71 of the child will be served by not requiring such consent.

72 D. A man shall be presumed to be the father of a child if:

73 1. He and the mother of the child are married to each other and the child is born during the
74 marriage;

75 2. He and the mother of the child were married to each other and the child is born within 300 days
76 of their date of separation, as evidenced by a written agreement or decree of separation, or within 300
77 days after the marriage is terminated by death, annulment, declaration of invalidity, or divorce; or

78 3. Before the birth of the child, he and the mother of the child married each other in apparent
79 compliance with the law, even if the attempted marriage is or could be declared invalid, and the child is
80 born during the invalid marriage or within 300 days of their date of separation, as evidenced by a
81 written agreement or decree of separation, or within 300 days after its termination by death, annulment,
82 declaration of invalidity, or divorce.

83 Such presumption may be rebutted by sufficient evidence that would establish by a preponderance of
84 the evidence the paternity of another man or the impossibility or improbability of cohabitation with the
85 birth mother for a period of at least 300 days prior to the birth of the child.

86 E. No consent shall be required of a birth father if he denies under oath and in writing the paternity
87 of the child. Such denial of paternity may be withdrawn no more than 10 days after it is executed. Once
88 the child is 10 days old, any executed denial of paternity is final and constitutes a waiver of all rights
89 with respect to the adoption of the child and cannot be withdrawn.

90 F. No consent shall be required of the birth father of a child when the birth father is convicted of a
91 violation of subsection A of § 18.2-61, § 18.2-63, subsection B of § 18.2-366, or an equivalent offense
92 of another state, the United States, or any foreign jurisdiction, and the child was conceived as a result of
93 such violation.

94 G. No notice or consent shall be required of any person whose parental rights have been terminated
95 by a court of competent jurisdiction, including foreign courts that have competent jurisdiction. No notice
96 or consent is required of any birth parent of a child whose adoption was finalized in a foreign country
97 or for whom a guardianship order was granted when the child was approved by the United States
98 Citizenship and Immigration Services for purposes of adoption.

99 H. No consent shall be required of a birth parent who, without just cause, has neither visited nor
100 contacted the child for a period of six months prior to the filing of the petition for adoption. The
101 prospective adoptive parent(s) shall establish by clear and convincing evidence that the birth parent(s),
102 without just cause, has neither visited nor contacted the child for a period of six months prior to the
103 filing of the petition for adoption. This provision shall not infringe upon the birth parent's right to be
104 noticed and heard on the allegation of abandonment. *For purposes of this section, the payment of child*
105 *support, in the absence of other contact with the child, shall not be considered contact.*

106 I. A birth father of the child may consent to the termination of all of his parental rights prior to the
107 birth of the child.

108 J. The failure of the nonconsenting party to appear at any scheduled hearing, either in person or by
109 counsel, after proper notice has been given to said party, shall constitute a waiver of any objection and
110 right to consent to the adoption.

111 K. If a birth parent or legal guardian, executing a consent, entrustment, or other documents related to
112 the adoption, cannot provide the identification required pursuant to § 47.1-14, the birth parent may
113 execute a self-authenticating affidavit as to his identity subject to the penalties contained in § 63.2-1217.

114 § 63.2-1203. When consent is withheld or unobtainable.

115 A. If, after consideration of the evidence, the circuit court finds that the valid consent of any person
116 or agency whose consent is required is withheld contrary to the best interests of the child as set forth in
117 § 63.2-1205, or is unobtainable, the circuit court may grant the petition without such consent:

118 1. ~~Twenty-one~~ Fifteen days after personal service of notice of petition on the party or parties whose
119 consent is required by this section; or

120 2. If personal service is unobtainable, ten days after the completion of the execution of an order of
121 publication against the party or parties whose consent is required by this section concerning the petition;

3. *If a birth parent is deceased, upon the filing of a death certificate for a deceased birth parent with the court; or*

4. If the judge certifies on the record that the identity of any person whose consent is hereinabove required is not reasonably ascertainable.

An affidavit of the birth mother that the identity of the birth father is not reasonably ascertainable shall be sufficient evidence of this fact, provided there is no other evidence before the circuit court that would refute such an affidavit. The absence of such an affidavit shall not be deemed evidence that the identity of the birth father is reasonably ascertainable. For purposes of determining whether the identity of the birth father is reasonably ascertainable, the standard of what is reasonable under the circumstances shall control, taking into account the relative interests of the child, the birth mother and the birth father.

B. If the child is not in the custody of a child-placing agency and both parents are deceased, the circuit court, after hearing evidence to that effect, may grant the petition without the filing of any consent.

§ 63.2-1204. When consent is revocable; fraud or duress; mutual consent.

Parental consent to an adoption *or an entrustment agreement not yet finalized by or of the court*, shall be revocable prior to the final order of adoption (i) upon proof of fraud or duress or (ii) after placement of the child in an adoptive home, upon written, mutual consent of the birth parents and prospective adoptive parents *or the child-placing agency*.

§ 63.2-1209. Entry of interlocutory order.

If, *in the case of a direct parental placement adoption pursuant to § 63.2-1230 or in circumstances in which an interlocutory order is necessary in an agency adoption*, after considering the home study or any required report, the circuit court is satisfied that all of the applicable requirements have been complied with, that the petitioner is financially able to maintain adequately, except as provided in Chapter 13 (§ 63.2-1300 et seq.) of this title, and is morally suitable and a proper person to care for and train the child, that the child is suitable for adoption by the petitioner, and that the best interests of the child will be promoted by the adoption, it shall enter an interlocutory order of adoption declaring that henceforth, subject to the probationary period hereinafter provided for and to the provisions of the final order of adoption, the child will be, to all intents and purposes, the child of the petitioner. If the petition includes a prayer for a change of the child's name and the circuit court is satisfied that such change is in the best interests of the child, upon entry of final order, the name of the child shall be changed. An attested copy of every interlocutory order of adoption shall be forwarded forthwith by the clerk of the circuit court in which it was entered to the Commissioner and to the licensed or duly authorized child-placing agency or the local director that prepared the required home study or report. *The agency or director shall, after receipt of the attested copy of the interlocutory order of adoption, prepare a report of visitation pursuant to § 63.2-1212.*

If the circuit court denies the petition for adoption and if it appears to the circuit court that the child is without proper care, custody or guardianship, the circuit court may, in its discretion, appoint a guardian for the child or commit the child to a custodial agency as provided for in §§ 16.1-278.2, 16.1-278.3 and 31-5, respectively.

§ 63.2-1212. Visitations during probationary period and report.

A. Except as hereinafter provided, after the entry of an interlocutory order of adoption, (i) the licensed or duly authorized child-placing agency; (ii) if the child was not placed by an agency and the placement is not a parental placement, the local director; (iii) if the placement is a parental placement, the child-placing agency that submitted the home study; or, (iv) if the child was placed by an agency in another state or by an agency, court, or other entity in another country, the local director or licensed child-placing agency, whichever agency completed the home study or provided supervision, shall cause *or have caused* the child to be visited at least three times within a period of six months by an agent of such local board or local department or by an agent of such licensed or duly authorized child-placing agency. Whenever practicable, such visits shall be made within the six-month period immediately following the date *upon which the child was placed in the physical care of the adoptive parents or of entry of the interlocutory order*; however, no less than ninety days shall elapse between the first visit and the last visit. The agency that placed the child, the child-placing agency that submitted the home study, the local director or the licensed child-placing agency, as applicable, shall make a written report to the circuit court, in such form as the Commissioner may prescribe, of the findings made pursuant to such visitations. A copy of the report to the circuit court shall be furnished to the counsel of record for the parties, which copy shall be returned by such counsel as is required by § 63.2-1246 for the return of the original report. A copy of the report to the circuit court shall be served on the Commissioner by delivering or mailing a copy to him on or before the day of filing the report with the circuit court. On the report to the circuit court there shall be appended either acceptance of service or certification of the local director or the representative of the child-placing agency, that copies were served as this section

183 requires, showing the date of delivery or mailing.

184 B. The three supervisory visits required in subsection A shall be conducted in the presence of the
185 child. At least one such visit shall be conducted in the home of the petitioners in the presence of the
186 child and both petitioners, unless the petition was filed by a single parent or one of the petitioners is no
187 longer residing in the home.

188 C. When it is determined for purposes of subsection B that the petitioner no longer resides in the
189 adoptive home, the child-placing agency or local director shall contact the petitioner to determine
190 whether or not the petitioner wishes to remain a party to the proceedings and shall include in its report
191 to the circuit court the results of its findings.

192 § 63.2-1221. Placement of children for adoption by agency or local board.

193 A licensed child-placing agency or local board may place for adoption, and is empowered to consent
194 to the adoption of, any child who is properly committed or entrusted to its care, in accordance with the
195 provisions of §§ 63.2-900, 63.2-903, 63.2-1817 or this section, when the order of commitment or the
196 entrustment agreement between the birth parent(s) and the agency or board provides for the termination
197 of all parental rights and responsibilities with respect to the child for the purpose of placing and
198 consenting to the adoption of such child.

199 The entrustment agreement shall divest the birth parent(s) of all legal rights and obligations with
200 respect to the child, and the child shall be free from all legal obligations of obedience and maintenance
201 with respect to them, provided that such rights and obligations may be restored to the birth parent(s) and
202 the child by circuit court order prior to the entry of a final order of adoption upon proof of fraud or
203 duress. An entrustment agreement for the termination of all parental rights and responsibilities shall be
204 executed in writing and notarized, *and shall be revocable prior to entry of an order finalizing the*
205 *agreement (i) upon proof of fraud or duress, or (ii) after the placement of the child in an adoptive*
206 *home, upon written, mutual consent of the birth parents and prospective adoptive parents.*

207 § 63.2-1222. Execution of entrustment agreement by birth parent(s); exceptions; notice and objection
208 to entrustment; copy required to be furnished; requirement for agencies outside the Commonwealth.

209 A. For the purposes of this section, a birth parent who is less than 18 years of age shall be deemed
210 fully competent and shall have legal capacity to execute a valid entrustment agreement, including an
211 agreement that provides for the termination of all parental rights and responsibilities, and perform all
212 acts related to adoption and shall be as fully bound thereby as if such birth parent had attained the age
213 of 18 years.

214 B. An entrustment agreement for the termination of all parental rights and responsibilities with
215 respect to the child shall be valid notwithstanding that it is not signed by the birth father of a child born
216 out of wedlock if the identity of the birth father is not reasonably ascertainable or such birth father did
217 not register with the Putative Father Registry pursuant to Article 7 (§ 63.2-1249 et seq.) of this chapter
218 or the birth father named by the birth mother denies under oath and in writing the paternity of the child.
219 *An affidavit signed by the birth mother stating that the identity of the birth father is unknown may be*
220 *filed with the court alleging that the identity of the birth father is not known or reasonably*
221 *ascertainable.* A birth father shall be given notice of the entrustment if he is an acknowledged father
222 pursuant to § 20-49.1, an adjudicated father pursuant to § 20-49.8, a presumed father pursuant to
223 § 63.2-1202, or a putative father who has registered with Putative Father Registry pursuant to Article 7
224 (§ 63.2-1249 et seq.) of this chapter. If the putative father's identity is reasonably ascertainable, he shall
225 be given notice pursuant to the requirements of § 63.2-1250.

226 C. When a birth father is required to be given notice, he may be given notice of the entrustment by
227 registered or certified mail to his last known address. If he fails to object to the entrustment within 15
228 days of the mailing of such notice, his entrustment shall not be required. Such objection shall be in
229 writing, signed by the objecting party or counsel of record for the objecting party and shall be filed with
230 the agency that mailed the notice of entrustment within the time period specified in § 63.2-1223.

231 D. The execution of an entrustment agreement shall be required of a presumed father except under
232 the following circumstances: (i) if he denies paternity under oath and in writing in accordance with
233 § 63.2-1202; (ii) if the presumption is rebutted by sufficient evidence, satisfactory to the circuit court,
234 which would establish by a preponderance of the evidence the paternity of another man or the
235 impossibility or improbability of cohabitation of the birth mother and her husband for a period of at
236 least 300 days preceding the birth of the child; (iii) if another man admits, in writing and under oath,
237 that he is the biological father; or (iv) if an adoptive placement has been determined to be in the best
238 interests of the child pursuant to § 63.2-1205.

239 E. When none of the provisions of subsections C and D apply, notice of the entrustment shall be
240 given to the presumed father pursuant to the requirements of § 16.1-277.01.

241 F. An entrustment agreement for the termination of all parental rights and responsibilities with
242 respect to the child shall be valid notwithstanding that it is not signed by the birth father of a child
243 when the birth father has been convicted of a violation of subsection A of § 18.2-61, § 18.2-63,
244 subsection B of § 18.2-366, or an equivalent offense of another state, the United States, or any foreign

jurisdiction, and the child was conceived as a result of such violation.

G. A birth father may execute an entrustment agreement for the termination of all of his parental rights prior to the birth of the child. Such entrustment shall be subject to the revocation provisions of § 63.2-1223.

H. No entrustment shall be required of a birth father if he denies under oath and in writing the paternity of the child. Such denial of paternity may be withdrawn no more than 10 days after it is executed. Once the child is 10 days old, any executed denial of paternity is final and constitutes a waiver of all rights with respect to the adoption of the child and cannot be withdrawn.

I. A copy of the entrustment agreement shall be furnished to all parties signing such agreement.

J. When any agency outside the Commonwealth, or its agent, that is licensed or otherwise duly authorized to place children for adoption by virtue of the laws under which it operates executes an entrustment agreement in the Commonwealth with a birth parent for the termination of all parental rights and responsibilities with respect to the child, the requirements of §§ 63.2-1221 through 63.2-1224 shall apply. The birth parent may expressly waive, under oath and in writing, the execution of the entrustment under the requirements of §§ 63.2-1221 through 63.2-1224 in favor of the execution of an entrustment or relinquishment under the laws of another state if the birth parent is represented by independent legal counsel. Such written waiver shall expressly state that the birth parent has received independent legal counsel advising of the laws of Virginia and of the other state and that Virginia law is expressly being waived. The waiver also shall include the name, address, and telephone number of such legal counsel. Any entrustment agreement that fails to comply with such requirements shall be void.

§ 63.2-1225. Determination of appropriate home.

A. In determining the appropriate home in which to place a child for adoption, a married couple or an unmarried individual shall be eligible to receive placement of a child for purposes of adoption. ~~When Prior to or after the acceptance of custody of a child placed for adoption, a licensed child-placing agency or a local board accepts custody of the child for the purpose of placing the child for adoption, the agency or local board shall~~ consider the recommendations of the birth parent(s), a physician or attorney licensed in the Commonwealth, or a clergyman who is familiar with the situation of the prospective adoptive parent(s) or the child. No birth parent, physician, attorney or clergyman shall advertise that he is available to make recommendations, nor shall he charge any fee for such recommendations to a board or agency, except that an attorney may charge for legal fees and services rendered in connection with such placement.

B. The agency or local board may give consideration to placement of the child with the recommended adoptive parent(s) if the agency or local board finds that such placement is in the best interest of the child. When the birth parent(s) has recommended such placement, the agency or local board shall provide the birth parent(s) the opportunity to be represented by independent legal counsel as well as the opportunity for counseling with a social worker. The agency or board also shall advise the prospective adoptive parent(s) of the right to be represented by independent legal counsel. The parties may, but are not required to, exchange identifying information as provided for in subdivision A 3 of § 63.2-1232.

§ 63.2-1230. Placement of children by parent or guardian.

The birth parent or, legal guardian, or adoptive parent of a child may place his child for adoption directly with the adoptive parents of his choice. Consent to the proposed adoption shall be executed upon compliance with the provisions of this chapter before a juvenile and domestic relations district court or, if the birth parent or legal guardian does not reside in Virginia, before a court having jurisdiction over child custody matters in the jurisdiction where the birth parent or legal guardian resides when requested by a juvenile and domestic relations district court of this Commonwealth, pursuant to §§ 20-146.11 and 16.1-242. Consent proceedings shall be advanced on the juvenile and domestic relations district court docket so as to be heard by the court within ten days of filing of the petition, or as soon thereafter as practicable so as to provide the earliest possible disposition.

§ 63.2-1233. Consent to be executed in juvenile and domestic relations district court; exceptions.

When the juvenile and domestic relations district court is satisfied that all requirements of § 63.2-1232 have been met with respect to at least one birth parent and the adoptive child is at least in the third calendar day of life, that birth parent or both birth parents, as the case may be, shall execute consent to the proposed adoption in compliance with the provisions of § 63.2-1202 while before the juvenile and domestic relations district court in person and in the presence of the prospective adoptive parents. The juvenile and domestic relations district court shall accept the consent of the birth parent(s) and transfer custody of the child to the prospective adoptive parents, pending notification to any nonconsenting birth parent, as described hereinafter.

1. a. The execution of consent before the juvenile and domestic relations district court shall not be required of a birth father if the birth father consents under oath and in writing to the adoption.

b. The consent of a birth father who is not married to the mother of the child at the time of the

child's conception or birth shall not be required if the putative father named by the birth mother denies under oath and in writing the paternity of the child or if the putative father did not register with the Putative Father Registry pursuant to Article 7 (§ 63.2-1249 et seq.) of this chapter. If the identity of the birth father is reasonably ascertainable, *but the whereabouts of the birth father are not reasonably ascertainable*, verification of compliance with the Putative Father Registry shall be provided to the court.

c. When a birth father is required to be given notice, he may be given notice of the adoption by registered or certified mail to his last known address and if he fails to object to the adoption within 15 days of the mailing of such notice, his consent shall not be required. An objection shall be in writing, signed by the objecting party or counsel of record for the objecting party and shall be filed with the clerk of the juvenile and domestic relations district court in which the petition was filed during the business day of the court, within the time period specified in this section. When no timely objection is filed, no hearing on this issue is required. Failure of the objecting party to appear at any scheduled hearing, either in person or by counsel, shall constitute a waiver of such objection.

d. The juvenile and domestic relations district court may accept the written consent of the birth father at the time of the child's conception or birth, provided that his identifying information required in § 63.2-1232 is filed in writing with the juvenile and domestic relations district court of jurisdiction. Such consent shall advise the birth father of his opportunity for legal representation, shall identify the court in which the case was or is intended to be filed, and shall be presented to the juvenile and domestic relations district court for acceptance. The consent may waive further notice of the adoption proceedings and shall contain the name, address and telephone number of the birth father's legal counsel or an acknowledgment that he was informed of his opportunity to be represented by legal counsel and declined such representation. For good cause shown, the court may dispense with the requirements regarding the filing of the birth father's identifying information pursuant to this subdivision 1. d.

e. In the event that the birth mother's consent is not executed in the juvenile and domestic relations district court, the consent of the birth father shall be executed in the juvenile and domestic relations district court.

f. A child born to a married birth mother shall be presumed to be the child of her husband and his consent shall be required, unless the court finds that the father's consent is withheld contrary to the best interests of the child as provided in § 63.2-1205 or if his consent is unobtainable. The consent of such presumed father shall be under oath and in writing and may be executed in or out of court. The presumption that the husband is the father of the child may be rebutted by sufficient evidence, satisfactory to the juvenile and domestic relations district court, which would establish by a preponderance of the evidence the paternity of another man or the impossibility or improbability of cohabitation of the birth mother and her husband for a period of at least 300 days preceding the birth of the child, in which case the husband's consent shall not be required. The executed denial of paternity by the putative father shall be sufficient to rebut the presumption that he is the father of the child. If the court is satisfied that the presumption has been rebutted, notice of the adoption shall not be required to be given to the presumed father.

2. After the application of the provisions of subdivision 1, if a birth parent is entitled to a hearing, the birth parent shall be given notice of the date and location of the hearing and be given the opportunity to appear before the juvenile and domestic relations district court. Such hearing may occur subsequent to the proceeding wherein the consenting birth parent appeared but may not be held until 15 days after personal service of notice on the nonconsenting birth parent, or if personal service is unobtainable, 10 days after the completion of the execution of an order of publication against such birth parent. The juvenile and domestic relations district court may appoint counsel for the birth parent(s). If the juvenile and domestic relations district court finds that consent is withheld contrary to the best interests of the child, as set forth in § 63.2-1205, or is unobtainable, it may grant the petition without such consent and enter an order waiving the requirement of consent of the nonconsenting birth parent and transferring custody of the child to the prospective adoptive parents. No further consent or notice shall be required of a birth parent who fails to appear at any scheduled hearing, either in person or by counsel. If the juvenile and domestic relations district court denies the petition, the juvenile and domestic relations district court shall order that any consent given for the purpose of such placement shall be void and, if necessary, the court shall determine custody of the child as between the birth parents.

3. Except as provided in subdivisions 4 and 5, if consent cannot be obtained from at least one birth parent, the juvenile and domestic relations district court shall deny the petition and determine custody of the child pursuant to § 16.1-278.2.

4. If ~~thea~~ child was placed by the birth parent(s) ~~with~~has been under the physical care and custody of the prospective adoptive parents and if both birth parents have failed, without good cause, to appear at a hearing to execute consent under this section for which they were given proper notice pursuant to § 16.1-264, the juvenile and domestic relations district court may grant the petition without the consent

of either birth parent and enter an order waiving consent and transferring custody of the child to the prospective adoptive parents. Prior to the entry of such an order, the juvenile and domestic relations district court may appoint legal counsel for the birth parents and shall find by clear and convincing evidence (i) that the birth parents were given proper notice of the hearing(s) to execute consent and of the hearing to proceed without their consent; (ii) that the birth parents failed to show good cause for their failure to appear at such hearing(s); and (iii) that pursuant to § 63.2-1205, the consent of the birth parents is withheld contrary to the best interests of the child or is unobtainable. Under this subdivision, the court or the parties may waive the requirement of the simultaneous meeting under § 63.2-1231 and the requirements of subdivisions A 1, A 3, and A 7 of § 63.2-1232 where the opportunity for compliance is not reasonably available under the applicable circumstances.

5. If both birth parents are deceased, the juvenile and domestic relations district court, after hearing evidence to that effect, may grant the petition without the filing of any consent.

6. No consent shall be required from the birth father of a child placed pursuant to this section when such father is convicted of a violation of subsection A of § 18.2-61, § 18.2-63, subsection B of § 18.2-366, or an equivalent offense of another state, the United States, or any foreign jurisdiction, and the child was conceived as a result of such violation, nor shall the birth father be entitled to notice of any of the proceedings under this section.

7. No consent shall be required of a birth father if he denies under oath and in writing the paternity of the child. Such denial of paternity may be withdrawn no more than 10 days after it is executed. Once the child is 10 days old, any executed denial of paternity is final and constitutes a waiver of all rights with the respect to the adoption of the child and cannot be withdrawn.

8. A birth father may consent to the adoption prior to the birth of the child.

9. The juvenile and domestic relations district court shall review each order entered under this section at least annually until such time as the final order of adoption is entered.

10. When there has been an interstate transfer of the child in a parental placement adoption in compliance with Chapter 10 (§ 63.2-1000 et seq.) of this title, all matters relating to the adoption of the child including, but not limited to, custody and parentage shall be determined in the court of appropriate jurisdiction in the state that was approved for finalization of the adoption by the interstate compact authorities.

§ 63.2-1250. Registration; notice; form.

A. Except as otherwise provided in subsection C, a man who desires to be notified of a proceeding for adoption of, or termination of parental rights regarding, a child that he may have fathered shall register with the Putative Father Registry before the birth of the child or within 10 days after the birth. A registrant shall promptly notify the registry of any change in the information registered including but not limited to change of address. The Department shall incorporate all new information received into its records but is not required to obtain current information for incorporation in the registry.

B. A man will not prejudice any rights by failing to register if:

1. A father-child relationship between the man and the child has been established pursuant to § 20-49.1, 20-49.8, or if the man is a presumed father as defined in § 63.2-1202; or

2. The man commences a proceeding to adjudicate his paternity before a petition to accept consent or waive adoption consent is filed in the juvenile and domestic relations district court, or a petition for adoption or a petition for the termination of his parental rights is filed with the court.

C. Failure to register pursuant to subsection A shall waive all rights of a man who is not an acknowledged, presumed, or adjudicated father to withhold consent to an adoption proceeding unless the man was led to believe through the birth mother's fraud that (i) the pregnancy was terminated or the mother miscarried when in fact the baby was born, or (ii) that the child died when in fact the child is alive. Upon the discovery of the fraud the man shall register with the Putative Father Registry within 10 days.

D. The child-placing agency or adoptive parent(s) shall give notice of a proceeding for the adoption of, or termination of parental rights regarding, a child to a registrant who has timely registered pursuant to subsection A. Notice shall be given pursuant to the requirements of this chapter or § 16.1-277.01 for the appropriate adoption proceeding.

E. Any man who has engaged in sexual intercourse with a woman is deemed to be on legal notice that a child may be conceived and the man is entitled to all legal rights and obligations resulting therefrom. Lack of knowledge of the pregnancy does not excuse failure to timely register ~~except when the identity of such man is reasonably ascertainable~~. In ~~such~~*the* event ~~that the identity and whereabouts of the birth father are reasonably ascertainable~~, written notice of the existence of an adoption plan and the availability of registration with the Putative Father Registry shall be provided ~~by certified mailing~~ to the man's last known address. The man shall have no more than 10 days from the date of such mailing to register. The mailing may be done either prior to or after the birth of the child.

F. The Department shall prepare a form for registering with the agency that shall require (i) the

429 registrant's name, date of birth and social security number; (ii) the registrant's driver's license number
430 and state of issuance; (iii) the registrant's home address, telephone number and employer; (iv) name,
431 date of birth, ethnicity, address and telephone number of the putative mother, if known; (v) state of
432 conception; (vi) place and date of birth of the child, if known; and (vii) name and gender of the child, if
433 known.

434 G. The form shall also state that (i) timely registration entitles the registrant to notice of a proceeding
435 for adoption of the child or termination of the registrant's parental rights, (ii) registration does not
436 commence a proceeding to establish paternity, (iii) the information disclosed on the form may be used
437 against the registrant to establish paternity, (iv) services to assist in establishing paternity are available to
438 the registrant through the Department, (v) the registrant should also register in another state if
439 conception or birth of the child occurred in another state, (vi) information on registries of other states
440 may be available from the Department, (vii) that the form is signed under penalty of perjury, and (viii)
441 procedures exist to rescind the registration of a claim of paternity.