

VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY — CHAPTER

An Act to amend and reenact § 16.1-241 as it is currently effective and as it may become effective, and §§ 20-124.1 and 63.1-233 of the Code of Virginia, relating to standing in certain actions where parental rights have been voluntarily terminated.

[H 2902]

Approved

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That § 16.1-241 as it is currently effective and as it may become effective, and §§ 20-124.1 and 63.1-233 of the Code of Virginia are amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 16.1-241. Jurisdiction.

The judges of the juvenile and domestic relations district court elected or appointed under this law shall be conservators of the peace within the corporate limits of the cities and the boundaries of the counties for which they are respectively chosen and within one mile beyond the limits of such cities and counties. Except as hereinafter provided, each juvenile and domestic relations district court shall have, within the limits of the territory for which it is created, exclusive original jurisdiction, and within one mile beyond the limits of said city or county, concurrent jurisdiction with the juvenile court or courts of the adjoining city or county over all cases, matters and proceedings involving:

A. The custody, visitation, support, control or disposition of a child:

1. Who is alleged to be abused, neglected, in need of services, in need of supervision, a status offender, or delinquent except where the jurisdiction of the juvenile court has been terminated or divested;

2. Who is abandoned by his parent or other custodian or who by reason of the absence or physical or mental incapacity of his parents is without parental care and guardianship;

2a. Who is at risk of being abused or neglected by a parent or custodian who has been adjudicated as having abused or neglected another child in the care of the parent or custodian;

3. Whose custody, visitation or support is a subject of controversy or requires determination. In such cases jurisdiction shall be concurrent with and not exclusive of courts having equity jurisdiction, except as provided in § 16.1-244;

4. Who is the subject of an entrustment agreement entered into pursuant to § 63.1-56 or § 63.1-204 or whose parent or parents for good cause desire to be relieved of his care and custody;

5. Where the termination of residual parental rights and responsibilities is sought. In such cases jurisdiction shall be concurrent with and not exclusive of courts having equity jurisdiction, as provided in § 16.1-244;

6. Who is charged with a traffic infraction as defined in § 46.2-100.

In any case in which the juvenile is alleged to have committed a violent juvenile felony enumerated in subsection B of § 16.1-269.1, and for any charges ancillary thereto, the jurisdiction of the juvenile court shall be limited to conducting a preliminary hearing to determine if there is probable cause to believe that the juvenile committed the act alleged and that the juvenile was fourteen years of age or older at the time of the commission of the alleged offense, and any matters related thereto. In any case in which the juvenile is alleged to have committed a violent juvenile felony enumerated in subsection C of § 16.1-269.1, and for all charges ancillary thereto, if the attorney for the Commonwealth has given notice as provided in subsection C of § 16.1-269.1, the jurisdiction of the juvenile court shall be limited to conducting a preliminary hearing to determine if there is probable cause to believe that the juvenile committed the act alleged and that the juvenile was fourteen years of age or older at the time of the commission of the alleged offense, and any matters related thereto. A determination by the juvenile court following a preliminary hearing pursuant to subsection B or C of § 16.1-269.1 to certify a charge to the grand jury shall divest the juvenile court of jurisdiction over the charge and any ancillary charge. In any case in which a transfer hearing is held pursuant to subsection A of § 16.1-269.1, if the juvenile court determines to transfer the case, jurisdiction of the juvenile court over the case shall be divested as provided in § 16.1-269.6.

In all other cases involving delinquent acts, and in cases in which an ancillary charge remains after a violent juvenile felony charge has been dismissed or a violent juvenile felony has been reduced to a lesser offense not constituting a violent juvenile felony, the jurisdiction of the juvenile court shall not be divested unless there is a transfer pursuant to subsection A of § 16.1-269.1.

The authority of the juvenile court to adjudicate matters involving the custody, visitation, support, control or disposition of a child shall not be limited to the consideration of petitions filed by a mother,

57 father or legal guardian but shall include petitions filed at any time by any party with a legitimate
 58 interest therein. A party with a legitimate interest shall be broadly construed and shall include, but not
 59 be limited to, grandparents, stepparents, former stepparents, blood relatives and family members. A party
 60 with a legitimate interest shall not include any person (i) whose parental rights have been ~~involuntarily~~
 61 terminated by court order, *either voluntarily or involuntarily, or any other person whose interest in the*
 62 *child derives from or through such person whose parental rights have been so terminated, including but*
 63 *not limited to grandparents, stepparents, former stepparents, blood relatives and family members*, if the
 64 child subsequently has been legally adopted; *except where a final order of adoption is entered pursuant*
 65 *to § 63.1-231* or (ii) who has been convicted of a violation of subsection A of § 18.2-61 or subsection B
 66 of § 18.2-366 when the child who is the subject of the petition was conceived as a result of such
 67 violation. The authority of the juvenile court to consider a petition involving the custody of a child shall
 68 not be proscribed or limited where the child has previously been awarded to the custody of a local
 69 board of social services.

70 B. The admission of minors for inpatient treatment in a mental health facility in accordance with the
 71 provisions of Article 16 (§ 16.1-335 et seq.) of this chapter and the commitment of a mentally ill person
 72 or judicial certification of eligibility for admission to a treatment facility of a mentally retarded person
 73 in accordance with the provisions of Chapters 1 (§ 37.1-1 et seq.) and 2 (§ 37.1-63 et seq.) of Title 37.1.
 74 Jurisdiction of the commitment and certification of adults shall be concurrent with the general district
 75 court.

76 C. Except as provided in subsections D and H hereof, judicial consent to such activities as may
 77 require parental consent may be given for a child who has been separated from his parents, guardian,
 78 legal custodian or other person standing in loco parentis and is in the custody of the court when such
 79 consent is required by law.

80 D. Judicial consent for emergency surgical or medical treatment for a child who is neither married
 81 nor has ever been married, when the consent of his parent, guardian, legal custodian or other person
 82 standing in loco parentis is unobtainable because such parent, guardian, legal custodian or other person
 83 standing in loco parentis (i) is not a resident of this Commonwealth, (ii) his whereabouts is unknown,
 84 (iii) he cannot be consulted with promptness, reasonable under the circumstances or (iv) fails to give
 85 such consent or provide such treatment when requested by the judge to do so.

86 E. Any person charged with deserting, abandoning or failing to provide support for any person in
 87 violation of law.

88 F. Any parent, guardian, legal custodian or other person standing in loco parentis of a child:

89 1. Who has been abused or neglected;

90 2. Who is the subject of an entrustment agreement entered into pursuant to § 63.1-56 or § 63.1-204
 91 or is otherwise before the court pursuant to subdivision A 4 of this section;

92 3. Who has been adjudicated in need of services, in need of supervision, or delinquent, if the court
 93 finds that such person has by overt act or omission induced, caused, encouraged or contributed to the
 94 conduct of the child complained of in the petition.

95 G. Petitions filed by or on behalf of a child or such child's parent, guardian, legal custodian or other
 96 person standing in loco parentis for the purpose of obtaining treatment, rehabilitation or other services
 97 which are required by law to be provided for that child or such child's parent, guardian, legal custodian
 98 or other person standing in loco parentis. Jurisdiction in such cases shall be concurrent with and not
 99 exclusive of that of courts having equity jurisdiction as provided in § 16.1-244.

100 H. Judicial consent to apply for work permit for a child when such child is separated from his
 101 parents, legal guardian or other person standing in loco parentis.

102 I. The prosecution and punishment of persons charged with ill-treatment, abuse, abandonment or
 103 neglect of children or with any violation of law which causes or tends to cause a child to come within
 104 the purview of this law, or with any other offense against the person of a child. In prosecution for
 105 felonies over which the court has jurisdiction, jurisdiction shall be limited to determining whether or not
 106 there is probable cause.

107 J. All offenses in which one family or household member is charged with an offense in which
 108 another family or household member is the victim and all offenses under § 18.2-49.1.

109 In prosecution for felonies over which the court has jurisdiction, jurisdiction shall be limited to
 110 determining whether or not there is probable cause. Any objection based on jurisdiction under this
 111 subsection shall be made before a jury is impaneled and sworn in a jury trial or, in a nonjury trial,
 112 before the earlier of when the court begins to hear or receive evidence or the first witness is sworn, or it
 113 shall be conclusively waived for all purposes. Any such objection shall not affect or be grounds for
 114 challenging directly or collaterally the jurisdiction of the court in which the case is tried. For purposes
 115 of this subsection, "family or household member," as defined in § 16.1-228, shall also be construed to
 116 include parent and child, stepparent and stepchild, brothers and sisters, and grandparent and grandchild,
 117 regardless of whether such persons reside in the same home.

K. Petitions filed by a natural parent, whose parental rights to a child have been voluntarily relinquished pursuant to a court proceeding, to seek a reversal of the court order terminating such parental rights. No such petition shall be accepted, however, after the child has been placed in the home of adoptive parents.

L. Any person who seeks spousal support after having separated from his spouse. A decision under this subdivision shall not be res judicata in any subsequent action for spousal support in a circuit court. A circuit court shall have concurrent original jurisdiction in all causes of action under this subdivision.

M. Petitions filed for the purpose of obtaining an order of protection pursuant to § 16.1-253.1 or § 16.1-279.1.

N. Any person who escapes or remains away without proper authority from a residential care facility in which he had been placed by the court or as a result of his commitment to the Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice.

O. Petitions for emancipation of a minor pursuant to Article 15 (§ 16.1-331 et seq.) of this chapter.

P. Petitions for enforcement of administrative support orders entered pursuant to Chapter 13 (§ 63.1-249 et seq.) of Title 63.1, or by another state in the same manner as if the orders were entered by a juvenile and domestic relations district court upon the filing of a certified copy of such order in the juvenile and domestic relations district court.

Q. Petitions for a determination of parentage pursuant to Chapter 3.1 (§ 20-49.1 et seq.) of Title 20.

R. Petitions for the purpose of obtaining an emergency protective order pursuant to § 16.1-253.4.

S. Petitions filed by school boards against parents pursuant to §§ 16.1-241.2 and 22.1-279.3.

T. Petitions to enforce any request for information or subpoena that is not complied with or to review any refusal to issue a subpoena in an administrative appeal regarding child abuse and neglect pursuant to § 63.1-248.6:1.

U. Petitions filed in connection with parental placement adoption consent hearings, pursuant to § 63.1-220.3. Such proceedings shall be advanced on the 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.

The ages specified in this law refer to the age of the child at the time of the acts complained of in the petition.

Notwithstanding any other provision of law no fees shall be charged by a sheriff for the service of any process in a proceeding pursuant to subdivision 3 of subsection A or subsection B, D, M or R of this section.

§ 16.1-241. (Delayed effective date) Jurisdiction.

The judges of the family court elected or appointed under this law shall be conservators of the peace within the corporate limits of the cities and the boundaries of the counties for which they are respectively chosen and within one mile beyond the limits of such cities and counties. Except as hereinafter provided, each family court shall have, within the limits of the territory for which it is created, exclusive original jurisdiction, and within one mile beyond the limits of said city or county, concurrent jurisdiction with the family court or courts of the adjoining city or county over all cases, matters and proceedings involving:

A. The custody, visitation, support, control or disposition of a child:

1. Who is alleged to be abused, neglected, in need of services, in need of supervision, a status offender, or delinquent; except where the jurisdiction of the family court has been terminated or divested;

2. Who is abandoned by his parent or other custodian or who by reason of the absence or physical or mental incapacity of his parents is without parental care and guardianship;

2a. Who is at risk of being abused or neglected by a parent or custodian who has been adjudicated as having abused or neglected another child in the care of the parent or custodian;

3. Whose custody, visitation or support is a subject of controversy or requires determination;

4. Who is the subject of an entrustment agreement entered into pursuant to § 63.1-56 or § 63.1-204 or whose parent or parents for good cause desire to be relieved of his care and custody;

5. Where the termination of residual parental rights and responsibilities is sought;

6. Who is charged with a traffic infraction as defined in § 46.2-100.

In any case in which the juvenile is alleged to have committed a violent juvenile felony enumerated in subsection B of § 16.1-269.1, and for any charges ancillary thereto, the jurisdiction of the family court shall be limited to conducting a preliminary hearing to determine if there is probable cause to believe that the juvenile committed the act alleged and that the juvenile was fourteen years of age or older at the time of the commission of the alleged offense, and any matters related thereto. In any case in which the juvenile is alleged to have committed a violent juvenile felony enumerated in subsection C of § 16.1-269.1, and for all charges ancillary thereto, if the attorney for the Commonwealth has given notice as provided in subsection C of § 16.1-269.1, the jurisdiction of the family court shall be limited

to conducting a preliminary hearing to determine if there is probable cause to believe that the juvenile committed the act alleged and that the juvenile was fourteen years of age or older at the time of the commission of the alleged offense, and any matters related thereto. A determination by the family court following a preliminary hearing pursuant to subsection B or C of § 16.1-269.1 to certify a charge to the grand jury shall divest the family court of jurisdiction over the charge and any ancillary charge. In any case in which a transfer hearing is held pursuant to subsection A of § 16.1-269.1, if the family court determines to transfer the case, jurisdiction of the family court over the case shall be divested as provided in § 16.1-269.6.

In all other cases involving delinquent acts, and in cases in which an ancillary charge remains after a violent juvenile felony charge has been dismissed or a violent juvenile felony has been reduced to a lesser offense not constituting a violent juvenile felony, the jurisdiction of the family court shall not be divested unless there is a transfer pursuant to subsection A of § 16.1-269.1.

The authority of the family court to adjudicate matters involving the custody, visitation, support, control or disposition of a child shall not be limited to the consideration of petitions filed by a mother, father or legal guardian but shall include petitions filed at any time by any party with a legitimate interest therein. A party with a legitimate interest shall be broadly construed and shall include, but not be limited to, grandparents, stepparents, former stepparents, blood relatives and family members. A party with a legitimate interest shall not include any person (i) whose parental rights have been ~~involuntarily~~ terminated by court order, *either voluntarily or involuntarily or any other person whose interest in the child derives from or through such person whose parental rights have been so terminated, including but not limited to grandparents, stepparents, former stepparents, blood relatives and family members*, if the child subsequently has been legally adopted; *except where a final order of adoption is entered pursuant to § 63.1-231* or (ii) who has been convicted of a violation of subsection A of § 18.2-61 or subsection B of § 18.2-366 when the child who is the subject of the petition was conceived as a result of such violation. The authority of the family court to consider a petition involving the custody of a child shall not be proscribed or limited where the child has previously been awarded to the custody of a local board of social services.

B. The admission of minors for inpatient treatment in a mental health facility in accordance with the provisions of Article 16 (§ 16.1-335 et seq.) of this chapter and the commitment of a mentally ill person or judicial certification of eligibility for admission to a treatment facility of a mentally retarded person in accordance with the provisions of Chapters 1 (§ 37.1-1 et seq.) and 2 (§ 37.1-63 et seq.) of Title 37.1. Jurisdiction of the commitment and certification of adults shall be concurrent with the general district court.

C. Except as provided in subsections D and H hereof, judicial consent to such activities as may require parental consent may be given for a child who has been separated from his parents, guardian, legal custodian or other person standing in loco parentis and is in the custody of the court when such consent is required by law.

D. Judicial consent for emergency surgical or medical treatment for a child who is neither married nor has ever been married, when the consent of his parent, guardian, legal custodian or other person standing in loco parentis is unobtainable because such parent, guardian, legal custodian or other person standing in loco parentis (i) is not a resident of this Commonwealth, (ii) his whereabouts is unknown, (iii) cannot be consulted with promptness, reasonable under the circumstances or (iv) fails to give such consent or provide such treatment when requested by the judge to do so.

E. Any person charged with deserting, abandoning or failing to provide support for any person in violation of law pursuant to Chapter 5 (§ 20-61 et seq.) of Title 20.

F. Any parent, guardian, legal custodian or other person standing in loco parentis of a child:

1. Who has been abused or neglected;
2. Who is the subject of an entrustment agreement entered into pursuant to § 63.1-56 or § 63.1-204 or is otherwise before the court pursuant to subdivision A 4 of this section;
3. Who has been adjudicated in need of services, in need of supervision, or delinquent, if the court finds that such person has by overt act or omission induced, caused, encouraged or contributed to the conduct of the child complained of in the petition.

G. Petitions filed by or on behalf of a child or such child's parent, guardian, legal custodian or other person standing in loco parentis for the purpose of obtaining treatment, rehabilitation or other services which are required by law to be provided for that child or such child's parent, guardian, legal custodian or other person standing in loco parentis.

H. Judicial consent to apply for work permit for a child when such child is separated from his parents, legal guardian or other person standing in loco parentis.

I. The prosecution and punishment of persons charged with ill-treatment, abuse, abandonment or neglect of children or with any violation of law which causes or tends to cause a child to come within the purview of this law, or with any other offense against the person of a child. In prosecution for

felonies over which the court has jurisdiction, jurisdiction shall be limited to determining whether or not there is probable cause.

J. All offenses in which one family or household member is charged with an offense in which another family or household member is the victim and all offenses under § 18.2-49.1.

In prosecution for felonies over which the court has jurisdiction, jurisdiction shall be limited to determining whether or not there is probable cause. Any objection based on jurisdiction under this subsection shall be made before a jury is impaneled and sworn in a jury trial or, in a nonjury trial, before the earlier of when the court begins to hear or receive evidence or the first witness is sworn, or it shall be conclusively waived for all purposes. Any such objection shall not affect or be grounds for challenging directly or collaterally the jurisdiction of the court in which the case is tried. For purposes of this subsection, "family or household member," as defined in § 16.1-228, shall also be construed to include parent and child, stepparent and stepchild, brothers and sisters, and grandparent and grandchild, regardless of whether such persons reside in the same home.

K. Petitions filed by a natural parent, whose parental rights to a child have been voluntarily relinquished pursuant to a court proceeding, to seek a reversal of the court order terminating such parental rights. No such petition shall be accepted, however, after the child has been placed in the home of adoptive parents.

L. Any person who seeks spousal support after having separated from his spouse.

M. Petitions filed for the purpose of obtaining an order of protection pursuant to § 16.1-253.1 or § 16.1-279.1.

N. Any person who escapes or remains away without proper authority from a residential care facility in which he had been placed by the court or as a result of his commitment to the Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice.

O. Petitions for emancipation of a minor pursuant to Article 15 (§ 16.1-331 et seq.) of this chapter.

P. Petitions for enforcement of administrative support orders entered pursuant to Chapter 13 (§ 63.1-249 et seq.) of Title 63.1, or by another state in the same manner as if the orders were entered by a family court upon the filing of a certified copy of such order in the family court.

Q. Petitions for a determination of parentage pursuant to Chapter 3.1 (§ 20-49.1 et seq.) of Title 20.

R. Petitions for the purpose of obtaining an emergency protective order pursuant to § 16.1-253.4.

S. Suits for divorce and for annulling or affirming marriage in accordance with Title 20.

T. Suits for separate maintenance.

U. Suits for equitable distribution based on a foreign decree in accordance with § 20-107.3.

V. Petitions for adoption.

W. Petitions for change of name when incident to suits for annulling or affirming marriage, divorce, or adoption or when ancillary to any action within the jurisdiction of the family court.

X. Petitions regarding records of birth pursuant to Chapter 7 (§ 32.1-249 et seq.) of Title 32.1.

Y. Judicial review of school board actions pursuant to § 22.1-87 and of hearing officer decisions pursuant to §§ 22.1-214 and 22.1-214.1.

Z. Petitions filed by school boards against parents pursuant to §§ 16.1-241.2 and 22.1-279.3.

AA. Petitions to enforce any request for information or subpoena that is not complied with or to review any refusal to issue a subpoena in an administrative appeal regarding child abuse and neglect pursuant to § 63.1-248.6:1.

BB. Petitions filed in connection with parental placement adoption consent hearings, pursuant to § 63.1-220.3. Such proceedings shall be advanced on the 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.

The ages specified in this law refer to the age of the child at the time of the acts complained of in the petition.

Notwithstanding any other provision of law no fees shall be charged by a sheriff for the service of any process in a proceeding pursuant to subdivision 3 of subsection A or subsection B, D, M or R of this section.

§ 20-124.1 Definitions.

As used in this chapter:

"Joint custody" means (i) joint legal custody where both parents retain joint responsibility for the care and control of the child and joint authority to make decisions concerning the child even though the child's primary residence may be with only one parent, (ii) joint physical custody where both parents share physical and custodial care of the child or (iii) any combination of joint legal and joint physical custody which the court deems to be in the best interest of the child.

"Person with a legitimate interest" shall be broadly construed and includes, but is not limited to grandparents, stepparents, former stepparents, blood relatives and family members provided any such party has intervened in the suit or is otherwise properly before the court. The term shall be broadly

301 construed to accommodate the best interest of the child. A party with a legitimate interest shall not
302 include any person (i) whose parental rights have been ~~involuntarily~~ terminated by court order, *either*
303 *voluntarily or involuntarily, or any other person whose interest in the child derives from or through*
304 *such person whose parental rights have been so terminated, including but not limited to grandparents,*
305 *stepparents, former stepparents, blood relatives and family members,* if the child subsequently has been
306 legally adopted; *except where a final order of adoption is entered pursuant to § 63.1-231* or (ii) who has
307 been convicted of a violation of subsection A of § 18.2-61 or subsection B of § 18.2-366 when the child
308 who is the subject of the petition was conceived as a result of such violation.

309 "Sole custody" means that one person retains responsibility for the care and control of a child and
310 has primary authority to make decisions concerning the child.

311 § 63.1-233. Legal effects of adoption.

312 The birth parents, and the parents by previous adoption, if any, *except where a final order of*
313 *adoption is entered pursuant to § 63.1-231, and any other person whose interest in the child derives*
314 *from or through such parent or previous adoptive parent, including but not limited to grandparents,*
315 *stepparents, former stepparents, blood relatives and family members,* other than any such parent who is
316 the husband or wife of one of the petitioners, shall, by such final order of adoption, be divested of all
317 legal rights and obligations in respect to the child *including the right to petition any court for visitation*
318 *with the child, and but in all cases* the child shall be free from all legal obligations of obedience and
319 maintenance in respect to ~~them~~ *such persons*. Any child adopted under the provisions of this chapter
320 shall, from and after the entry of the interlocutory order or from and after the entry of the final order
321 where no such interlocutory order is entered, be, to all intents and purposes, the child of the person or
322 persons so adopting him, and, unless and until such interlocutory order or final order is subsequently
323 revoked, shall be entitled to all the rights and privileges, and subject to all the obligations, of a child of
324 such person or persons born in lawful wedlock.