



LAWS OF ALASKA

1987

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Chapter No.

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AN ACT

Relating to termination of parental rights of perpetrators of certain sexual offenses.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:

THE ACT FOLLOWS ON PAGE 1, LINE 9

UNDERLINED MATERIAL INDICATES TEXT THAT IS BEING ADDED TO THE LAW AND BRACKETED MATERIAL IN CAPITAL LETTERS INDICATES DELETIONS FROM THE LAW; COMPLETELY NEW TEXT OR MATERIAL REPEALED AND RE-ENACTED IS IDENTIFIED IN THE INTRODUCTORY LINE OF EACH BILL SECTION.

Approved by the Governor: June 10, 1987
Actual Effective Date: September 8, 1987

AN ACT

Relating to termination of parental rights of perpetrators
of certain sexual offenses.

* Section 1. AS 25.23.030(b) is amended to read:

(b) If the court finds in the interest of substantial justice, under AS 22.10.040, that the adoption proceeding [MATTER] should be heard in another judicial district, the court may transfer, stay or dismiss the proceeding in whole or in part on [ANY] conditions that are just.

* Sec. 2. AS 25.23.030 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

(c) Proceedings for the termination of parental rights on the grounds set out in AS 25.23.180(c)(3) shall be brought in the superior court for the district in which the child that is the subject of the action resides.

* Sec. 3. AS 25.23.050(a) is amended to read:

(a) Consent to adoption is not required of

(1) for purposes of this section, a parent who has abandoned a child for a period of at least [NOT LESS THAN] six months;

(2) a parent of a child in the custody of another, if the parent for a period of at least one year has failed significantly without justifiable cause, including but not limited to indigency,

(A) to communicate meaningfully with the child, or

(B) to provide for the care and support of the child as required by law or judicial decree;

Chapter 50

1 (3) the father of a minor if the father's consent is not
2 required by AS 25.23.040(a)(2);

3 (4) a parent who has relinquished the right to consent
4 under AS 25.23.180;

5 (5) a parent whose parental rights have been terminated by
6 order of the court under AS 25.23.180(c)(3) or AS 47.10.080(c)(3);

7 (6) a parent judicially declared incompetent or mentally
8 defective if the court dispenses with the parent's consent;

9 (7) a [ANY] parent of the person to be adopted, if the
10 person is 19 or more years of age, and the court dispenses with the
11 consent of the parent;

12 (8) a [ANY] guardian or custodian specified in AS 25.23.-
13 040(a)(3) or (4) who has failed to respond in writing to a request for
14 consent for a period of 60 days or who, after examination of the
15 guardian's or custodian's written reasons for withholding consent, is
16 found by the court to be withholding consent unreasonably; or

17 (9) the spouse of the person to be adopted, if the require-
18 ment of consent to the adoption is waived by the court by reason of
19 prolonged unexplained absence, unavailability, incapacity, or circum-
20 stances constituting an unreasonable withholding of consent.

21 * Sec. 4. AS 25.23.130 is amended by adding new subsections to read:

22 (d) Except as provided in (e) of this section, a decree ter-
23 minating parental rights on the grounds set out in AS 25.23.180(c)(3)
24 voids all legal relationships between the child and the biological
25 parent so that the child is a stranger to the biological parent and to
26 relatives of the biological parent for all purposes, including inter-
27 pretation of documents executed before or after the termination of
28 parental rights that do not include the child by name or by a descrip-
29 tion not based on a parental or blood relationship.
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(e) Inheritance rights between a child and a biological parent are not voided by a decree terminating parental rights on the grounds set out in AS 25.23.180(c)(3) unless the decree specifically provides for the termination of inheritance rights.

* Sec. 5. AS 25.23.140 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

(c) Subject to the disposition of an appeal, one year after a decree is issued terminating parental rights on grounds set out in AS 25.23.180(c)(3), the order may not be challenged on any ground, including fraud, misrepresentation, failure to give notice, or lack of jurisdiction of the parties or of the subject matter.

* Sec. 6. AS 25.23.150(b) is amended to read:

(b) The papers and records relating to an adoption or a termination of parental rights under AS 25.23.180(c)(3) that are a part of the permanent record of a court are subject to inspection only upon consent of the court. The papers and records relating to an adoption or a termination of parental rights under AS 25.23.180(c)(3) on file with the department, an agency, or an individual are subject to inspection only with consent of all interested persons or by order of a court for good cause shown. Except as provided in this section, adoption records of the Bureau of Vital Statistics are subject to inspection under the provisions of AS 18.50.

* Sec. 7. AS 25.23.150(c) is amended to read:

(c) Except as otherwise provided by law, or as authorized in writing by the adopted child, if 14 or more years of age, or by the adoptive parent, or upon order of the court for good cause shown, a person may not disclose the identity or address of [EITHER] an adoptive parent, [OR] an adopted child, a child who is the subject of a proceeding under AS 25.23.180(c)(3), or a biological parent whose parental rights have been terminated on grounds set out in

Chapter 50

1 AS 25.23.180(c)(3).

2 * Sec. 8. AS 25.23.150(d) is amended to read:

3 (d) The court may order the disclosure of a natural parent's
4 identity or address only if

5 (1) the court makes an express finding that the disclosure
6 is required because of a medical necessity or other extraordinary
7 circumstance; and

8 (2) the natural parent unless the parent's parental rights
9 have been terminated on grounds set out in AS 25.23.180(c)(3), the
10 [ADOPTED] child, and the adoptive parents are afforded proper notice
11 and a hearing; the court may waive the hearing and notice requirement
12 if it finds there is a medical necessity that poses an immediate risk
13 to life.

14 * Sec. 9. AS 25.23.170 is amended to read:

15 Sec. 25.23.170. APPLICATIONS FOR BIRTH CERTIFICATES. Within 30
16 days after an adoption decree becomes final, the clerk of the court
17 shall, if requested by the adoptive parents, prepare an application
18 for a birth certificate in the name of the adopted person. Upon
19 issuing a decree terminating parental rights on grounds set out in
20 AS 25.23.180(c)(3) the court may order the preparation of an applica-
21 tion for a birth certificate in the name of the child without refer-
22 ence to the parent whose parental rights have been terminated. The
23 clerk of the court shall [AND] forward the application

24 (1) for a person born in the United States, to the appro-
25 priate vital statistics office of the place, if known, where the
26 adopted person was born and a copy of the decree to the department for
27 statistical purposes; and

28 (2) for a person born outside the United States to the
29 state registrar of vital statistics.

* Sec. 10. AS 25.23.180(c) is amended to read:

(c) The relationship of parent and child may be terminated by a court order issued in connection with a [AN ADOPTION] proceeding under this chapter or a proceeding under AS 47.10:

(1) on the grounds specified in AS 47.10.080(c)(3); [OR]

(2) on the grounds that a parent who does not have custody is unreasonably withholding consent to adoption, contrary to the best interest of the minor child; or

(3) on grounds that the parent committed an act constituting sexual assault or sexual abuse of a minor under the laws of this state or a comparable offense under the laws of the state where the act occurred that resulted in conception of the child and that termination of the parental rights of the biological parent is in the best interests of the child.

* Sec. 11. AS 25.23.180(e) is amended to read:

(e) A petition for termination of the relationship of parent and child made in connection with an adoption proceeding or in an independent proceeding for the termination of parental rights on grounds set out in (c)(3) of this section may be made by

(1) either parent if termination of the relationship is sought with respect to the other parent;

(2) the petitioner for adoption, the guardian of the person, the legal custodian of the child, or the individual standing in parental relationship to the child;

(3) an agency; or

(4) another [ANY OTHER] person having a legitimate interest in the matter.

* Sec. 12. AS 25.23.180(g) is amended to read:

(g) Notwithstanding the provisions of (b) of this section, a

Chapter 50

1 relinquishment of parental rights with respect to a child, executed
2 under this section, may be withdrawn by the parent, and a decree of a
3 court terminating the parent and child relationship on grounds set out
4 in (c)(1) and (2) of [UNDER] this section may be vacated by the court
5 upon motion of the parent, if the child is not on placement for adop-
6 tion and the person having custody of the child consents in writing to
7 the withdrawal or vacation of the decree.

8 * Sec. 13. AS 25.23.180 is amended by adding new subsections to read:

9 (h) The respondent to a petition filed for the termination of
10 parental rights on grounds set out in (c)(3) of this section is enti-
11 tled to representation in the proceedings by an attorney. If the
12 respondent is financially unable to employ an attorney, the court
13 shall appoint the office of public advocacy to represent the respon-
14 dent in the proceedings.

15 (i) Proceedings for the termination of parental rights on the
16 grounds set out in (c)(3) of this section do not affect the rights of
17 a victim of sexual abuse of a minor or incest to obtain legal and
18 equitable civil remedies for all injuries and damages arising out of
19 the perpetrator's conduct.

20 * Sec. 14. AS 25.23.240(5) is amended to read:

21 (5) "court" means the superior court of this state, and,
22 when the context requires, the court of another [ANY OTHER] state
23 empowered to grant petitions for adoption or to terminate parental
24 rights;

25 * Sec. 15. AS 25.23.240 is amended by adding new paragraphs to read:

26 (10) "sexual abuse of a minor" means a sexual offense de-
27 fined in AS 11.41.434, 11.41.436, 11.41.438, or 11.41.440;

28 (11) "sexual assault" means a sexual offense defined in
29 AS 11.41.410 or 11.41.420.

* Sec. 16. AS 44.21.410(a) is amended to read:

(a) The office of public advocacy shall

(1) perform the duties of the public guardian under AS 13.-26.360 - 13.26.410;

(2) provide visitors and experts in guardianship proceedings under AS 13.26.131;

(3) provide guardian ad litem services to children in child protection actions under AS 47.17.030(e) and to wards and respondents in guardianship proceedings who will suffer financial hardship or become dependent upon a government agency or a private person or agency if the services are not provided at state expense under AS 13.-26.112;

(4) provide legal representation in guardianship proceedings to respondents who are financially unable to employ attorneys under AS 13.26.106(b), to indigent parties in cases involving child custody in which the opposing party is represented by counsel provided by a public agency, [AND] to indigent parents or guardians of a minor respondent in a commitment proceeding concerning the minor under AS 47.30.775, and to indigent respondents in cases involving the termination of parental rights on grounds set out in AS 25.23.-180(c)(3);

(5) provide legal representation and guardian ad litem services under AS 25.24.310; in cases arising under the Uniform Interstate Compact on Juveniles (AS 47.15); in cases involving petitions to adopt a minor under AS 25.23.125(b) or petitions for the termination of parental rights on grounds set out in AS 25.23.180(c)(3); in cases involving petitions to remove the disabilities of a minor under AS 09.55.590; in children's proceedings under AS 47.10.050(a); and in cases involving indigent persons who are entitled to representation

Chapter 50

1 under AS 18.85.100 and who cannot be represented by the public defend-
2 er agency because of a conflict of interests.

3 * Sec. 17. AS 47.10.010(a) is amended to read:

4 (a) Proceedings relating to a minor under 18 years of age resid-
5 ing or found in the state are governed by this chapter, except as
6 otherwise provided in this chapter, when the court finds the minor

7 (1) to be a delinquent minor as a result of violating a
8 criminal law of the state or a municipality of the state; or

9 (2) to be a child in need of aid as a result of

10 (A) the child being habitually absent from home or
11 refusing to accept available care, or having no parent, guardian,
12 custodian, or relative caring or willing to provide care, includ-
13 ing physical abandonment by

14 (i) both parents,

15 (ii) the surviving parent, or

16 (iii) one parent if the other parent's rights and
17 responsibilities have been terminated under AS 25.23.180(c)
18 or AS 47.10.080 or voluntarily relinquished;

19 (B) the child being in need of medical treatment to
20 cure, alleviate, or prevent substantial physical harm, or in need
21 of treatment for mental harm as evidenced by failure to thrive,
22 severe anxiety, depression, withdrawal, or untoward aggressive
23 behavior or hostility toward others, and the child's parent,
24 guardian, or custodian has knowingly failed to provide the treat-
25 ment;

26 (C) the child having suffered substantial physical
27 harm or if there is an imminent and substantial risk that the
28 child will suffer such harm as a result of the actions done by or
29 conditions created by the child's parent, guardian, or custodian
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or the failure of the parent, guardian, or custodian adequately to supervise the child;

(D) the child having been, or being in imminent and substantial danger of being, sexually abused either by the child's parent, guardian, or custodian, or as a result of conditions created by the child's parent, guardian, or custodian, or by the failure of the parent, guardian, or custodian adequately to supervise the child;

(E) the child committing delinquent acts as a result of pressure, guidance, or approval from the child's parents, guardian, or custodian;

(F) the child having suffered substantial physical abuse or neglect as a result of conditions created by the child's parent, guardian, or custodian.