H-3730.2		

HOUSE BILL 2421

State of Washington 61st Legislature 2010 Regular Session

By Representatives Pedersen, Kagi, Chase, Roberts, Rolfes, Upthegrove, Carlyle, Green, Goodman, Kenney, Ormsby, and Moeller

Prefiled 12/07/09. Read first time 01/11/10. Referred to Committee on Judiciary.

- AN ACT Relating to third-party visitation; amending RCW 26.10.160;
- 2 adding a new chapter to Title 26 RCW; and repealing RCW 26.09.240.
- 3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

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- NEW SECTION. Sec. 1. (1) Except as provided in subsection (2) of this section, a person who is not the parent of the child may petition for visitation with the child if the person has established an ongoing and substantial relationship with the child.
 - (2) A person may not petition for visitation with a child if the child's two parents, living together with the child, agree that visitation should not be granted. For the purposes of this chapter "parent" means a biological, adoptive, or adjudicated parent.
- 12 (3) A person has established an ongoing and substantial 13 relationship with a child if the person and the child have had a 14 relationship with substantial continuity for at least one year through 15 interaction, companionship, and mutuality, without expectation of 16 financial compensation.
- 17 NEW SECTION. Sec. 2. (1) A petition for visitation under section

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- 1 1 of this act must be filed in the county where the child primarily 2 resides.
- 3 (2) The petitioner may not file a petition for visitation more than once, unless:

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- (a) At least two years have passed since the final order issued on the previous petition for visitation; and
- (b) The petitioner shows there has been a substantial change in circumstances of the nonmoving party or the child based on facts that have arisen since, or facts that were unknown to the court at the time of, the order issued on the previous petition for visitation.
- 11 (3) The petitioner must file with the petition an affidavit 12 alleging that:
- 13 (a) A sufficient relationship with the child exists or existed 14 before interference by the respondent; and
- 15 (b) The child would likely suffer harm or the substantial risk of 16 harm if visitation between the petitioner and child were not granted.
 - (4) The petitioner shall set forth facts in the affidavit supporting the petitioner's requested order for visitation.
 - (5) The petitioner shall serve notice of the filing to each person having legal custody of, or court-ordered residential time with, the child. A person having legal custody or residential time may file an opposing affidavit.
- 23 (6) If, based on the petition and affidavits, the court finds that 24 it is more likely than not that visitation will be granted, the court 25 shall hold a hearing.
- 26 (7) The court may not enter any temporary orders to establish, 27 enforce, or modify visitation under this section.
- NEW SECTION. Sec. 3. (1)(a) At a hearing pursuant to section 2(6) of this act, the court shall enter an order granting visitation if it finds that the child would likely suffer harm or the substantial risk of harm if visitation between the petitioner and the child is not granted and that granting visitation between the child and petitioner is in the best interest of the child.
- 34 (b) An order granting visitation does not confer upon the person 35 the rights and duties of a parent.
- 36 (2) In making its determination, the court shall consider the 37 respondent's reasons for denying visitation. It is presumed that a fit

parent's decision to deny visitation is in the best interest of the child and does not create a likelihood of harm or a substantial risk of harm to the child.

- (3) To rebut the presumption, the petitioner must prove by clear and convincing evidence that the child would likely suffer harm or the substantial risk of harm if visitation between the petitioner and the child were not granted.
- (4) If the court finds that the petitioner has met the standard for rebutting the presumption, or if there is no presumption because no parent has custody of the child, the court shall consider whether it is in the best interest of the child to enter an order granting visitation. The petitioner must prove by clear and convincing evidence that visitation is in the child's best interest. In determining whether it is in the best interest of the child, the court shall consider the following, nonexclusive factors:
- (a) The love, affection, and strength of the current relationship between the child and the petitioner and how the relationship is beneficial to the child;
- (b) The length and quality of the prior relationship between the child and the petitioner before the respondent denied visitation, including the role performed by the petitioner and the emotional ties that existed between the child and the petitioner;
 - (c) The relationship between the petitioner and the respondent;
- (d) The nature and reason for the respondent's objection to granting the petitioner visitation;
- (e) The effect that granting visitation will have on the relationship between the child and the respondent;
- (f) The residential time-sharing arrangements between the parties having residential time with the child;
 - (g) The good faith of the petitioner and respondent;
- (h) Any history of physical, emotional, or sexual abuse or neglect by the petitioner, or any history of physical, emotional, or sexual abuse or neglect by a person residing with the petitioner if visitation would involve contact between the child and the person with such history;
- 36 (i) The child's reasonable preference, if the court considers the 37 child to be of sufficient age to express a preference; and
 - (j) Any other factor relevant to the child's best interest.

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NEW SECTION. Sec. 4. (1)(a) For the purposes of sections 1 through 3 of this act, the court shall, on motion of the respondent, order the petitioner to pay reasonable attorneys' fees to the respondent in advance and prior to any hearing, unless the court finds that no financial hardship will be imposed upon the respondent.

- (b) The court may, on its own motion or the motion of the respondent, order the petitioner to pay reasonable attorneys' fees and costs to the respondent regardless of the outcome of the petition.
- 9 (2) If visitation is granted, the court shall order the petitioner 10 to pay all transportation costs associated with visitation.
 - NEW SECTION. Sec. 5. (1) A court may not modify or terminate an order granting visitation under section 3 of this act unless it finds, on the basis of facts that have arisen since the entry of the order or were unknown to the court at the time it entered the order, that a substantial change of circumstances has occurred in the circumstances of the child or nonmoving party and that modification or termination of the order is necessary for the best interest of the child.
 - (2) The petitioner must file a petition for modification or termination in the county where the child primarily resides.
 - (3) The petitioner must file with the petition an affidavit alleging that, on the basis of facts that have arisen since the entry of the order or were unknown to the court at the time it entered the order, there is a substantial change of circumstances of the child or nonmoving party and that modification or termination of the order is necessary for the best interest of the child. The petitioner shall set forth facts in the affidavit supporting the petitioner's requested order.
 - (4) The petitioner shall serve notice of the petition to each person having legal custody of, or court-ordered residential time or court-ordered visitation with, the child. A person having legal custody or residential or visitation time may file an opposing affidavit.
- 33 (5) If, based on the petition and affidavits, the court finds that 34 it is more likely than not that a modification or termination will be 35 granted, the court shall hold a hearing.
- 36 (6) The court may award reasonable attorneys' fees and costs to 37 either party.

- 1 **Sec. 6.** RCW 26.10.160 and 2004 c 38 s 13 are each amended to read 2 as follows:
 - (1) A parent not granted custody of the child is entitled to reasonable visitation rights except as provided in subsection (2) of this section.
- (2)(a) Visitation with the child shall be limited if it is found 6 7 that the parent seeking visitation has engaged in any of the following 8 conduct: (i) Willful abandonment that continues for an extended period of time or substantial refusal to perform parenting functions; (ii) 9 10 physical, sexual, or a pattern of emotional abuse of a child; (iii) a history of acts of domestic violence as defined in RCW 26.50.010(1) or 11 12 an assault or sexual assault which causes grievous bodily harm or the 13 fear of such harm; or (iv) the parent has been convicted as an adult of 14 a sex offense under:
- 15 (A) RCW 9A.44.076 if, because of the difference in age between the offender and the victim, no rebuttable presumption exists under (d) of this subsection;
 - (B) RCW 9A.44.079 if, because of the difference in age between the offender and the victim, no rebuttable presumption exists under (d) of this subsection;
- (C) RCW 9A.44.086 if, because of the difference in age between the offender and the victim, no rebuttable presumption exists under (d) of this subsection;
 - (D) RCW 9A.44.089;
- 25 (E) RCW 9A.44.093;

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- 26 (F) RCW 9A.44.096;
- 27 (G) RCW 9A.64.020 (1) or (2) if, because of the difference in age 28 between the offender and the victim, no rebuttable presumption exists 29 under (d) of this subsection;
 - (H) Chapter 9.68A RCW;
- 31 (I) Any predecessor or antecedent statute for the offenses listed 32 in (a)(iv)(A) through (H) of this subsection;
- 33 (J) Any statute from any other jurisdiction that describes an 34 offense analogous to the offenses listed in (a)(iv)(A) through (H) of 35 this subsection.
- This subsection (2)(a) shall not apply when (c) or (d) of this subsection applies.

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- (b) The parent's visitation with the child shall be limited if it 1 2 is found that the parent resides with a person who has engaged in any of the following conduct: (i) Physical, sexual, or a pattern of 3 4 emotional abuse of a child; (ii) a history of acts of domestic violence as defined in RCW 26.50.010(1) or an assault or sexual assault that 5 causes grievous bodily harm or the fear of such harm; or (iii) the 6 7 person has been convicted as an adult or as a juvenile has been 8 adjudicated of a sex offense under:
- 9 (A) RCW 9A.44.076 if, because of the difference in age between the offender and the victim, no rebuttable presumption exists under (e) of this subsection;
- 12 (B) RCW 9A.44.079 if, because of the difference in age between the offender and the victim, no rebuttable presumption exists under (e) of this subsection;
- 15 (C) RCW 9A.44.086 if, because of the difference in age between the 16 offender and the victim, no rebuttable presumption exists under (e) of 17 this subsection;
- 18 (D) RCW 9A.44.089;
- 19 (E) RCW 9A.44.093;
- 20 (F) RCW 9A.44.096;

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- 21 (G) RCW 9A.64.020 (1) or (2) if, because of the difference in age 22 between the offender and the victim, no rebuttable presumption exists 23 under (e) of this subsection;
 - (H) Chapter 9.68A RCW;
 - (I) Any predecessor or antecedent statute for the offenses listed in (b)(iii)(A) through (H) of this subsection;
- 27 (J) Any statute from any other jurisdiction that describes an 28 offense analogous to the offenses listed in (b)(iii)(A) through (H) of this subsection.
- This subsection (2)(b) shall not apply when (c) or (e) of this subsection applies.
- 32 (c) If a parent has been found to be a sexual predator under 33 chapter 71.09 RCW or under an analogous statute of any other 34 jurisdiction, the court shall restrain the parent from contact with a 35 child that would otherwise be allowed under this chapter. If a parent 36 resides with an adult or a juvenile who has been found to be a sexual 37 predator under chapter 71.09 RCW or under an analogous statute of any

- other jurisdiction, the court shall restrain the parent from contact with the parent's child except contact that occurs outside that person's presence.
- (d) There is a rebuttable presumption that a parent who has been convicted as an adult of a sex offense listed in (d)(i) through (ix) of this subsection poses a present danger to a child. Unless the parent rebuts this presumption, the court shall restrain the parent from contact with a child that would otherwise be allowed under this chapter:
- 10 (i) RCW 9A.64.020 (1) or (2), provided that the person convicted 11 was at least five years older than the other person;
- 12 (ii) RCW 9A.44.073;
- 13 (iii) RCW 9A.44.076, provided that the person convicted was at least eight years older than the victim;
- 15 (iv) RCW 9A.44.079, provided that the person convicted was at least 16 eight years older than the victim;
- 17 (v) RCW 9A.44.083;
- 18 (vi) RCW 9A.44.086, provided that the person convicted was at least 19 eight years older than the victim;
- 20 (vii) RCW 9A.44.100;

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- (viii) Any predecessor or antecedent statute for the offenses listed in (d)(i) through (vii) of this subsection;
- (ix) Any statute from any other jurisdiction that describes an offense analogous to the offenses listed in (d)(i) through (vii) of this subsection.
 - (e) There is a rebuttable presumption that a parent who resides with a person who, as an adult, has been convicted, or as a juvenile has been adjudicated, of the sex offenses listed in (e)(i) through (ix) of this subsection places a child at risk of abuse or harm when that parent exercises visitation in the presence of the convicted or adjudicated person. Unless the parent rebuts the presumption, the court shall restrain the parent from contact with the parent's child except for contact that occurs outside of the convicted or adjudicated person's presence:
- 35 (i) RCW 9A.64.020 (1) or (2), provided that the person convicted 36 was at least five years older than the other person;
 - (ii) RCW 9A.44.073;

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- 1 (iii) RCW 9A.44.076, provided that the person convicted was at least eight years older than the victim;
 - (iv) RCW 9A.44.079, provided that the person convicted was at least eight years older than the victim;
 - (v) RCW 9A.44.083;
- 6 (vi) RCW 9A.44.086, provided that the person convicted was at least 7 eight years older than the victim;
 - (vii) RCW 9A.44.100;

- 9 (viii) Any predecessor or antecedent statute for the offenses 10 listed in (e)(i) through (vii) of this subsection;
 - (ix) Any statute from any other jurisdiction that describes an offense analogous to the offenses listed in (e)(i) through (vii) of this subsection.
 - (f) The presumption established in (d) of this subsection may be rebutted only after a written finding that:
 - (i) If the child was not the victim of the sex offense committed by the parent requesting visitation, (A) contact between the child and the offending parent is appropriate and poses minimal risk to the child, and (B) the offending parent has successfully engaged in treatment for sex offenders or is engaged in and making progress in such treatment, if any was ordered by a court, and the treatment provider believes such contact is appropriate and poses minimal risk to the child; or
 - (ii) If the child was the victim of the sex offense committed by the parent requesting visitation, (A) contact between the child and the offending parent is appropriate and poses minimal risk to the child, (B) if the child is in or has been in therapy for victims of sexual abuse, the child's counselor believes such contact between the child and the offending parent is in the child's best interest, and (C) the offending parent has successfully engaged in treatment for sex offenders or is engaged in and making progress in such treatment, if any was ordered by a court, and the treatment provider believes such contact is appropriate and poses minimal risk to the child.
 - (g) The presumption established in (e) of this subsection may be rebutted only after a written finding that:
 - (i) If the child was not the victim of the sex offense committed by the person who is residing with the parent requesting visitation, (A) contact between the child and the parent residing with the convicted or adjudicated person is appropriate and that parent is able to protect

the child in the presence of the convicted or adjudicated person, and (B) the convicted or adjudicated person has successfully engaged in treatment for sex offenders or is engaged in and making progress in such treatment, if any was ordered by a court, and the treatment provider believes such contact is appropriate and poses minimal risk to the child; or

- (ii) If the child was the victim of the sex offense committed by the person who is residing with the parent requesting visitation, (A) contact between the child and the parent in the presence of the convicted or adjudicated person is appropriate and poses minimal risk to the child, (B) if the child is in or has been in therapy for victims of sexual abuse, the child's counselor believes such contact between the child and the parent residing with the convicted or adjudicated person in the presence of the convicted or adjudicated person is in the child's best interest, and (C) the convicted or adjudicated person has successfully engaged in treatment for sex offenders or is engaged in and making progress in such treatment, if any was ordered by a court, and the treatment provider believes contact between the parent and child in the presence of the convicted or adjudicated person is appropriate and poses minimal risk to the child.
- (h) If the court finds that the parent has met the burden of rebutting the presumption under (f) of this subsection, the court may allow a parent who has been convicted as an adult of a sex offense listed in (d)(i) through (ix) of this subsection to have visitation with the child supervised by a neutral and independent adult and pursuant to an adequate plan for supervision of such visitation. The court shall not approve of a supervisor for contact between the child and the parent unless the court finds, based on the evidence, that the supervisor is willing and capable of protecting the child from harm. The court shall revoke court approval of the supervisor upon finding, based on the evidence, that the supervisor has failed to protect the child or is no longer willing or capable of protecting the child.
- (i) If the court finds that the parent has met the burden of rebutting the presumption under (g) of this subsection, the court may allow a parent residing with a person who has been adjudicated as a juvenile of a sex offense listed in (e)(i) through (ix) of this subsection to have visitation with the child in the presence of the person adjudicated as a juvenile, supervised by a neutral and

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independent adult and pursuant to an adequate plan for supervision of such visitation. The court shall not approve of a supervisor for contact between the child and the parent unless the court finds, based on the evidence, that the supervisor is willing and capable of protecting the child from harm. The court shall revoke court approval of the supervisor upon finding, based on the evidence, that the supervisor has failed to protect the child or is no longer willing or capable of protecting the child.

- (j) If the court finds that the parent has met the burden of rebutting the presumption under (g) of this subsection, the court may allow a parent residing with a person who, as an adult, has been convicted of a sex offense listed in (e)(i) through (ix) of this subsection to have visitation with the child in the presence of the convicted person supervised by a neutral and independent adult and pursuant to an adequate plan for supervision of such visitation. The court shall not approve of a supervisor for contact between the child and the parent unless the court finds, based on the evidence, that the supervisor is willing and capable of protecting the child from harm. The court shall revoke court approval of the supervisor upon finding, based on the evidence, that the supervisor has failed to protect the child or is no longer willing or capable of protecting the child.
- (k) A court shall not order unsupervised contact between the offending parent and a child of the offending parent who was sexually abused by that parent. A court may order unsupervised contact between the offending parent and a child who was not sexually abused by the parent after the presumption under (d) of this subsection has been rebutted and supervised visitation has occurred for at least two years with no further arrests or convictions of sex offenses involving children under chapter 9A.44 RCW, RCW 9A.64.020, or chapter 9.68A RCW and (i) the sex offense of the offending parent was not committed against a child of the offending parent, and (ii) the court finds that unsupervised contact between the child and the offending parent is appropriate and poses minimal risk to the child, after consideration of the testimony of a state-certified therapist, mental health counselor, or social worker with expertise in treating child sexual abuse victims who has supervised at least one period of visitation between the parent and the child, and after consideration of evidence of the offending parent's compliance with community supervision requirements, if any.

If the offending parent was not ordered by a court to participate in treatment for sex offenders, then the parent shall obtain a psychosexual evaluation conducted by a certified sex offender treatment provider or a certified affiliate sex offender treatment provider indicating that the offender has the lowest likelihood of risk to reoffend before the court grants unsupervised contact between the parent and a child.

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(1) A court may order unsupervised contact between the parent and a child which may occur in the presence of a juvenile adjudicated of a sex offense listed in (e)(i) through (ix) of this subsection who resides with the parent after the presumption under (e) of this subsection has been rebutted and supervised visitation has occurred for at least two years during which time the adjudicated juvenile has had no further arrests, adjudications, or convictions of sex offenses involving children under chapter 9A.44 RCW, RCW 9A.64.020, or chapter 9.68A RCW, and (i) the court finds that unsupervised contact between the child and the parent that may occur in the presence of the adjudicated juvenile is appropriate and poses minimal risk to the child, after consideration of the testimony of a state-certified therapist, mental health counselor, or social worker with expertise in treatment of child sexual abuse victims who has supervised at least one period of visitation between the parent and the child in the presence of the adjudicated juvenile, and after consideration of evidence of the adjudicated juvenile's compliance with community supervision or parole requirements, if any. If the adjudicated juvenile was not ordered by a court to participate in treatment for sex offenders, then the adjudicated juvenile shall obtain a psychosexual evaluation conducted by a certified sex offender treatment provider or a certified affiliate sex offender treatment provider indicating that the adjudicated juvenile has the lowest likelihood of risk to reoffend before the court grants unsupervised contact between the parent and a child which may occur in the presence of the adjudicated juvenile who is residing with the parent.

(m)(i) The limitations imposed by the court under (a) or (b) of this subsection shall be reasonably calculated to protect the child from the physical, sexual, or emotional abuse or harm that could result if the child has contact with the parent requesting visitation. If the court expressly finds based on the evidence that limitations on

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visitation with the child will not adequately protect the child from the harm or abuse that could result if the child has contact with the parent requesting visitation, the court shall restrain the person seeking visitation from all contact with the child.

- (ii) The court shall not enter an order under (a) of this subsection allowing a parent to have contact with a child if the parent has been found by clear and convincing evidence in a civil action or by a preponderance of the evidence in a dependency action to have sexually abused the child, except upon recommendation by an evaluator or therapist for the child that the child is ready for contact with the parent and will not be harmed by the contact. The court shall not enter an order allowing a parent to have contact with the child in the offender's presence if the parent resides with a person who has been found by clear and convincing evidence in a civil action or by a preponderance of the evidence in a dependency action to have sexually abused a child, unless the court finds that the parent accepts that the person engaged in the harmful conduct and the parent is willing to and capable of protecting the child from harm from the person.
- (iii) If the court limits visitation under (a) or (b) of this subsection to require supervised contact between the child and the parent, the court shall not approve of a supervisor for contact between a child and a parent who has engaged in physical, sexual, or a pattern of emotional abuse of the child unless the court finds based upon the evidence that the supervisor accepts that the harmful conduct occurred and is willing to and capable of protecting the child from harm. The court shall revoke court approval of the supervisor upon finding, based on the evidence, that the supervisor has failed to protect the child or is no longer willing to or capable of protecting the child.
- (n) If the court expressly finds based on the evidence that contact between the parent and the child will not cause physical, sexual, or emotional abuse or harm to the child and that the probability that the parent's or other person's harmful or abusive conduct will recur is so remote that it would not be in the child's best interests to apply the limitations of (a), (b), and (m)(i) and (iii) of this subsection, or if the court expressly finds that the parent's conduct did not have an impact on the child, then the court need not apply the limitations of (a), (b), and (m)(i) and (iii) of this subsection. The weight given to the existence of a protection

order issued under chapter 26.50 RCW as to domestic violence is within 2 the discretion of the court. This subsection shall not apply when (c), (d), (e), (f), (g), (h), (i), (j), (k), (l), and (m)(ii) of this 3 subsection apply. 4

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- (3) ((Any person may petition the court for visitation rights at any time including, but not limited to, custody proceedings. The court may order visitation rights for any person when visitation may serve the best interest of the child whether or not there has been any change of circumstances.
- (4))) The court may modify an order granting or denying visitation 10 rights whenever modification would serve the best interests of the 11 12 child. Modification of a parent's visitation rights shall be subject 13 to the requirements of subsection (2) of this section.
- (((5))) (4) For the purposes of this section, a parent's child 14 15 means that parent's natural child, adopted child, or stepchild.
- 16 NEW SECTION. Sec. 7. RCW 26.09.240 (Visitation rights--Person other than parent--Grandparents' visitation rights) and 1996 c 177 s 1, 17 1989 c 375 s 13, 1987 c 460 s 18, 1977 ex.s. c 271 s 1, & 1973 1st 18 ex.s. c 157 s 24 are each repealed. 19
- 20 NEW SECTION. Sec. 8. Sections 1 through 5 of this act constitute 21 a new chapter in Title 26 RCW.

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