
HOUSE BILL 1021

State of Washington

63rd Legislature

2013 Regular Session

By Representative Haler

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1 AN ACT Relating to educating parents of the harmful effects of
2 parental abduction; and adding a new section to chapter 26.09 RCW.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** A new section is added to chapter 26.09 RCW
5 to read as follows:

6 Any party who files for legal separation or dissolution where the
7 custody or care of a minor child is at issue or in dispute must be
8 provided by the court where the petition is filed a separate pamphlet
9 providing the information below regarding the harmful effects of
10 parental abduction. Each party must certify in any parenting plan
11 regarding the minor child that he or she has been provided and has read
12 the following information:

13 PAMPHLET REGARDING THE HARMFUL EFFECTS OF PARENTAL ABDUCTION IN
14 CHILD CUSTODY CASES

15 Child custody disputes can sometimes lead one parent or the other
16 to abduct one or more of their children. Each year approximately two
17 hundred fifty thousand children in the United States are abducted by a
18 noncustodial or custodial parent in violation of the law.

1 Child abduction, including abduction by a parent, commonly leads to
2 growing fear, confusion, and general mistrust on the part of the child.
3 Parental abduction means a loss of the parent left behind, extended
4 family, friends, pets, community, and familiar surroundings that
5 provide children with a sense of security and well-being. Such losses
6 may be very traumatic for a child leading to long-term, adverse effects
7 as the child grows.

8 Given the need to maintain secrecy by the abducting parent,
9 children who are parentally abducted often:

- 10 (1) Fail to receive an adequate education;
- 11 (2) Fail to receive adequate medical care;
- 12 (3) Live in substandard housing;
- 13 (4) Are told the parent left behind is a bad person, does not want
14 the child, or is deceased;
- 15 (5) Are instructed to lie to remain anonymous and hidden;
- 16 (6) Are fearful of leaving their residence;
- 17 (7) Are fearful of encountering law enforcement and other security
18 personnel.

19 If and when returned, abducted children often live in apprehension
20 of being abducted again. Just as abused children may identify with and
21 seek the approval of their abuser, abducted children may do the same
22 with their abductor. Once returned the child may feel anger and
23 resentment at the parent who was left behind because the child now does
24 not have visitation or communication with the abducting parent.

25 The returned child may suffer loyalty conflicts, emotional
26 detachment, and feelings of betrayal by providing information about the
27 abducting parent who broke the law. An inability to trust adults in
28 general can hinder the child's ability to form lasting relationships
29 even long into adulthood.

30 If the child is very young when abducted and is returned as an
31 older child, the child may suffer serious negative emotional effects
32 because the child feels as if he or she is returned to a stranger and
33 therefore the return to the parent who was originally left behind seems
34 like an abduction itself.

35 Parents need to understand that even though their relationship with
36 each other may be strained or even toxic, their children often have a
37 strong, loving, trusting relationship with both parents.

1 A parent who is considering abducting his or her child should know
2 and understand the potential short-term and long-term traumatic impacts
3 that parental abduction has on a child and consider only those actions
4 that will be lawful and will contribute to the child's best interests.

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