SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 2193

State of Washington 62nd Legislature 2012 Regular Session

By House Judiciary (originally sponsored by Representatives Pedersen, Nealey, Kagi, Rivers, Orwall, Walsh, Eddy, Goodman, Roberts, Fagan, Ladenburg, Green, Ormsby, and Kenney)

READ FIRST TIME 01/25/12.

AN ACT Relating to third-party visitation; amending RCW 26.10.160; 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:

<u>NEW SECTION.</u> Sec. 1. (1) 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.

7 (2) For the purposes of this chapter "parent" means a biological,
8 adoptive, or adjudicated parent.

9 (3) A person has established an ongoing and substantial 10 relationship with a child if the person and the child have had a 11 relationship with substantial continuity for at least one year through 12 interaction, companionship, and mutuality, without expectation of 13 financial compensation.

14 <u>NEW SECTION.</u> Sec. 2. (1) A petition for visitation under section 15 1 of this act must be filed in the county where the child primarily 16 resides.

17 (2) The petitioner may not file a petition for visitation more than18 once, unless:

(a) At least two years have passed since the final order issued on
 the previous petition for visitation; and

3 (b) The petitioner shows there has been a substantial change in 4 circumstances of the nonmoving party or the child based on facts that 5 have arisen since, or facts that were unknown to the court at the time 6 of, the order issued on the previous petition for visitation.

7 (3) The petitioner must file with the petition an affidavit 8 alleging that:

9 (a) A sufficient relationship with the child exists or existed 10 before interference by the respondent; and

(b) The child would likely suffer harm or the substantial risk ofharm if visitation between the petitioner and child were not granted.

(4) The petitioner shall set forth facts in the affidavitsupporting the petitioner's requested order for visitation.

15 (5) The petitioner shall serve notice of the filing to each person 16 having legal custody of, or court-ordered residential time with, the 17 child. A person having legal custody or residential time may file an 18 opposing affidavit.

19 (6) If, based on the petition and affidavits, the court finds that 20 it is more likely than not that visitation will be granted, the court 21 shall hold a hearing.

(7) The court may not enter any temporary orders to establish,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.

30 (b) An order granting visitation does not confer upon the person31 the rights and duties of a parent.

32 (2) In making its determination, the court shall consider the 33 respondent's reasons for denying visitation. It is presumed that a fit 34 parent's decision to deny visitation is in the best interest of the 35 child and does not create a likelihood of harm or a substantial risk of 36 harm to the child.

1 (3) To rebut the presumption, the petitioner must prove by clear 2 and convincing evidence that the child would likely suffer harm or the 3 substantial risk of harm if visitation between the petitioner and the 4 child were not granted.

(4) If the court finds that the petitioner has met the standard for 5 rebutting the presumption, or if there is no presumption because no 6 7 parent has custody of the child, the court shall consider whether it is 8 in the best interest of the child to enter an order granting visitation. The petitioner must prove by clear and convincing evidence 9 10 that visitation is in the child's best interest. In determining whether it is in the best interest of the child, the court shall 11 12 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;

20 (c) The relationship between the petitioner and the respondent;

21 (d) The nature and reason for the respondent's objection to 22 granting the petitioner visitation;

23 (e) The effect that granting visitation will have on the 24 relationship between the child and the respondent;

25 (f) The residential time-sharing arrangements between the parties 26 having residential time with the child;

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(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;

(i) The child's reasonable preference, if the court considers thechild to be of sufficient age to express a preference; and

35 (j) Any other factor relevant to the child's best interest.

36 <u>NEW SECTION.</u> Sec. 4. (1)(a) For the purposes of sections 1 37 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.

4 (b) The court may, on its own motion or the motion of the 5 respondent, order the petitioner to pay reasonable attorneys' fees and 6 costs to the respondent regardless of the outcome of the petition.

7 (2) If visitation is granted, the court shall order the petitioner8 to pay all transportation costs associated with visitation.

9 <u>NEW SECTION.</u> Sec. 5. (1) A court may not modify or terminate an 10 order granting visitation under section 3 of this act unless it finds, 11 on the basis of facts that have arisen since the entry of the order or 12 were unknown to the court at the time it entered the order, that a 13 substantial change of circumstances has occurred in the circumstances 14 of the child or nonmoving party and that modification or termination of 15 the order is necessary for the best interest of the child.

16 (2) The petitioner must file a petition for modification or 17 termination in the county where the child primarily resides.

(3) The petitioner must file with the petition an affidavit 18 alleging that, on the basis of facts that have arisen since the entry 19 20 of the order or were unknown to the court at the time it entered the 21 order, there is a substantial change of circumstances of the child or 22 nonmoving party and that modification or termination of the order is necessary for the best interest of the child. The petitioner shall set 23 24 forth facts in the affidavit supporting the petitioner's requested 25 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.

31 (5) If, based on the petition and affidavits, the court finds that 32 it is more likely than not that a modification or termination will be 33 granted, the court shall hold a hearing.

34 (6) The court may award reasonable attorneys' fees and costs to 35 either party.

1 Sec. 6. RCW 26.10.160 and 2011 c 89 s 7 are each amended to read 2 as follows:

3 (1) A parent not granted custody of the child is entitled to 4 reasonable visitation rights except as provided in subsection (2) of 5 this section.

(2)(a) Visitation with the child shall be limited if it is found б 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 16 offender and the victim, no rebuttable presumption exists under (d) of 17 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;

- 24 (D) RCW 9A.44.089;
- 25 (E) RCW 9A.44.093;
- 26 (F) RCW 9A.44.096;

(G) RCW 9A.64.020 (1) or (2) if, because of the difference in age
between the offender and the victim, no rebuttable presumption exists
under (d) of this subsection;

30 (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.

(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 б 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 10 offender and the victim, no rebuttable presumption exists under (e) of 11 this subsection;

12 (B) RCW 9A.44.079 if, because of the difference in age between the 13 offender and the victim, no rebuttable presumption exists under (e) of 14 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;

(G) RCW 9A.64.020 (1) or (2) if, because of the difference in age between the offender and the victim, no rebuttable presumption exists under (e) of this subsection;

24 (H) Chapter 9.68A RCW;

(I) Any predecessor or antecedent statute for the offenses listedin (b)(iii)(A) through (H) of this subsection;

(J) Any statute from any other jurisdiction that describes an
 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

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other jurisdiction, the court shall restrain the parent from contact with the parent's child except contact that occurs outside that person's presence.

4 (d) There is a rebuttable presumption that a parent who has been 5 convicted as an adult of a sex offense listed in (d)(i) through (ix) of 6 this subsection poses a present danger to a child. Unless the parent 7 rebuts this presumption, the court shall restrain the parent from 8 contact with a child that would otherwise be allowed under this 9 chapter:

(i) RCW 9A.64.020 (1) or (2), provided that the person convicted
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 14 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;

(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.

26 (e) There is a rebuttable presumption that a parent who resides 27 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) 28 of this subsection places a child at risk of abuse or harm when that 29 parent exercises visitation in the presence of the convicted or 30 adjudicated person. Unless the parent rebuts the presumption, the 31 32 court shall restrain the parent from contact with the parent's child except for contact that occurs outside of the convicted or adjudicated 33 34 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;

37 (ii) RCW 9A.44.073;

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(iii) RCW 9A.44.076, provided that the person convicted was at
 least eight years older than the victim;

3 (iv) RCW 9A.44.079, provided that the person convicted was at least
4 eight years older than the victim;

5 (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;

8 (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.

14 (f) The presumption established in (d) of this subsection may be 15 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 23 24 the parent requesting visitation, (A) contact between the child and the 25 offending parent is appropriate and poses minimal risk to the child, 26 (B) if the child is in or has been in therapy for victims of sexual 27 abuse, the child's counselor believes such contact between the child 28 and the offending parent is in the child's best interest, and (C) the 29 offending parent has successfully engaged in treatment for sex 30 offenders or is engaged in and making progress in such treatment, if any was ordered by a court, and the treatment provider believes such 31 32 contact is appropriate and poses minimal risk to the child.

33 (g) The presumption established in (e) of this subsection may be 34 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 7 8 the person who is residing with the parent requesting visitation, (A) contact between the child and the parent in the presence of the 9 10 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 11 12 of sexual abuse, the child's counselor believes such contact between 13 the child and the parent residing with the convicted or adjudicated person in the presence of the convicted or adjudicated person is in the 14 child's best interest, and (C) the convicted or adjudicated person has 15 successfully engaged in treatment for sex offenders or is engaged in 16 17 and making progress in such treatment, if any was ordered by a court, 18 and the treatment provider believes contact between the parent and child in the presence of the convicted or adjudicated person is 19 appropriate and poses minimal risk to the child. 20

21 (h) If the court finds that the parent has met the burden of 22 rebutting the presumption under (f) of this subsection, the court may 23 allow a parent who has been convicted as an adult of a sex offense 24 listed in (d)(i) through (ix) of this subsection to have visitation with the child supervised by a neutral and independent adult and 25 26 pursuant to an adequate plan for supervision of such visitation. The 27 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 28 29 supervisor is willing and capable of protecting the child from harm. 30 The court shall revoke court approval of the supervisor upon finding, based on the evidence, that the supervisor has failed to protect the 31 32 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

independent adult and pursuant to an adequate plan for supervision of 1 2 such visitation. The court shall not approve of a supervisor for contact between the child and the parent unless the court finds, based 3 4 on the evidence, that the supervisor is willing and capable of protecting the child from harm. The court shall revoke court approval 5 of the supervisor upon finding, based on the evidence, that the 6 supervisor has failed to protect the child or is no longer willing or 7 8 capable of protecting the child.

9 (j) If the court finds that the parent has met the burden of 10 rebutting the presumption under (g) of this subsection, the court may allow a parent residing with a person who, as an adult, has been 11 12 convicted of a sex offense listed in (e)(i) through (ix) of this 13 subsection to have visitation with the child in the presence of the convicted person supervised by a neutral and independent adult and 14 pursuant to an adequate plan for supervision of such visitation. 15 The court shall not approve of a supervisor for contact between the child 16 and the parent unless the court finds, based on the evidence, that the 17 18 supervisor is willing and capable of protecting the child from harm. 19 The court shall revoke court approval of the supervisor upon finding, 20 based on the evidence, that the supervisor has failed to protect the 21 child or is no longer willing or capable of protecting the child.

22 (k) A court shall not order unsupervised contact between the 23 offending parent and a child of the offending parent who was sexually 24 abused by that parent. A court may order unsupervised contact between the offending parent and a child who was not sexually abused by the 25 26 parent after the presumption under (d) of this subsection has been 27 rebutted and supervised visitation has occurred for at least two years with no further arrests or convictions of sex offenses involving 28 children under chapter 9A.44 RCW, RCW 9A.64.020, or chapter 9.68A RCW 29 30 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 31 32 unsupervised contact between the child and the offending parent is 33 appropriate and poses minimal risk to the child, after consideration of the testimony of a state-certified therapist, mental health counselor, 34 35 or social worker with expertise in treating child sexual abuse victims 36 who has supervised at least one period of visitation between the parent 37 and the child, and after consideration of evidence of the offending 38 parent's compliance with community supervision requirements, if any.

If the offending parent was not ordered by a court to participate in 1 2 treatment for sex offenders, then the parent shall obtain a psychosexual evaluation conducted by a certified sex offender treatment 3 4 provider or a certified affiliate sex offender treatment provider indicating that the offender has the lowest likelihood of risk to 5 б reoffend before the court grants unsupervised contact between the 7 parent and a child.

8 (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 9 sex offense listed in (e)(i) through (ix) of this subsection who 10 11 resides with the parent after the presumption under (e) of this 12 subsection has been rebutted and supervised visitation has occurred for 13 at least two years during which time the adjudicated juvenile has had 14 no further arrests, adjudications, or convictions of sex offenses involving children under chapter 9A.44 RCW, RCW 9A.64.020, or chapter 15 9.68A RCW, and (i) the court finds that unsupervised contact between 16 the child and the parent that may occur in the presence of the 17 adjudicated juvenile is appropriate and poses minimal risk to the 18 19 child, after consideration of the testimony of a state-certified therapist, mental health counselor, or social worker with expertise in 20 21 treatment of child sexual abuse victims who has supervised at least one 22 period of visitation between the parent and the child in the presence 23 of the adjudicated juvenile, and after consideration of evidence of the adjudicated juvenile's compliance with community supervision or parole 24 requirements, if any. If the adjudicated juvenile was not ordered by 25 26 a court to participate in treatment for sex offenders, then the 27 adjudicated juvenile shall obtain a psychosexual evaluation conducted by a certified sex offender treatment provider or a certified affiliate 28 29 sex offender treatment provider indicating that the adjudicated 30 juvenile has the lowest likelihood of risk to reoffend before the court grants unsupervised contact between the parent and a child which may 31 32 occur in the presence of the adjudicated juvenile who is residing with 33 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

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 5 subsection allowing a parent to have contact with a child if the parent 6 7 has been found by clear and convincing evidence in a civil action or by 8 a preponderance of the evidence in a dependency action to have sexually 9 abused the child, except upon recommendation by an evaluator or 10 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 11 12 enter an order allowing a parent to have contact with the child in the 13 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 14 preponderance of the evidence in a dependency action to have sexually 15 abused a child, unless the court finds that the parent accepts that the 16 17 person engaged in the harmful conduct and the parent is willing to and 18 capable of protecting the child from harm from the person.

19 (iii) If the court limits visitation under (a) or (b) of this 20 subsection to require supervised contact between the child and the 21 parent, the court shall not approve of a supervisor for contact between 22 a child and a parent who has engaged in physical, sexual, or a pattern 23 of emotional abuse of the child unless the court finds based upon the 24 evidence that the supervisor accepts that the harmful conduct occurred 25 and is willing to and capable of protecting the child from harm. The 26 court shall revoke court approval of the supervisor upon finding, based 27 on the evidence, that the supervisor has failed to protect the child or 28 is no longer willing to or capable of protecting the child.

29 (n) If the court expressly finds based on the evidence that 30 contact between the parent and the child will not cause physical, sexual, or emotional abuse or harm to the child and that the 31 32 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 33 best interests to apply the limitations of (a), (b), and (m)(i) and 34 35 (iii) of this subsection, or if the court expressly finds that the 36 parent's conduct did not have an impact on the child, then the court 37 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 38

order issued under chapter 26.50 RCW as to domestic violence is within 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 subsection apply.

5 (3) ((Any person may petition the court for visitation rights at 6 any time including, but not limited to, custody proceedings. The court 7 may order visitation rights for any person when visitation may serve 8 the best interest of the child whether or not there has been any change 9 of circumstances.

10 (4))) The court may modify an order granting or denying visitation 11 rights whenever modification would serve the best interests of the 12 child. Modification of a parent's visitation rights shall be subject 13 to the requirements of subsection (2) of this section.

14 (((5))) (4) For the purposes of this section:

(a) "A parent's child" means that parent's natural child, adoptedchild, or stepchild; and

(b) "Social worker" means a person with a master's or further advanced degree from a social work educational program accredited and approved as provided in RCW 18.320.010.

20 <u>NEW SECTION.</u> Sec. 7. RCW 26.09.240 (Visitation rights--Person 21 other than parent--Grandparents' visitation rights) and 1996 c 177 s 1, 22 1989 c 375 s 13, 1987 c 460 s 18, 1977 ex.s. c 271 s 1, & 1973 1st 23 ex.s. c 157 s 24 are each repealed.

24 <u>NEW SECTION.</u> **Sec. 8.** Sections 1 through 5 of this act constitute 25 a new chapter in Title 26 RCW.

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