

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2024 REGULAR SESSION

Introduced

House Bill 4370

By Delegate Foster

[Introduced January 10, 2024 ; Referred
to the Committee on Health and Human Resources
then Judiciary]

1 A BILL to amend and reenact §48-9-601 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, relating
 2 to ensuring that legal or biological parents have equal access to any and all copies of birth
 3 registry forms submitted to the hospital by the mother, or any other person, for the purpose
 4 of registering the birth of the child with the West Virginia Vital Registration Office.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

**ARTICLE 9. ALLOCATION OF CUSTODIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND DECISION-
 MAKING RESPONSIBILITY OF CHILDREN.**

PART 6. MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS.

§48-9-601. Access to a child’s records.

1 (a)(1) Each parent has full and equal access to a child’s educational records absent a court
 2 order to the contrary. Neither parent may veto the access requested by the other parent.
 3 Educational records are academic, attendance and disciplinary records of public and private
 4 schools in all grades kindergarten through 12 and any form of alternative school. Educational
 5 records are any and all school records concerning the child that would otherwise be properly
 6 released to the primary custodial parent, including, but not limited to, report cards and progress
 7 reports, attendance records, disciplinary reports, results of the child’s performance on
 8 standardized tests and statewide tests and information on the performance of the school that the
 9 child attends on standardized statewide tests; curriculum materials of the class or classes in which
 10 the child is enrolled; names of the appropriate school personnel to contact if problems arise with
 11 the child; information concerning the academic performance standards, proficiencies, or skills the
 12 child is expected to accomplish; school rules, attendance policies, dress codes and procedures for
 13 visiting the school; and information about any psychological testing the school does involving the
 14 child.

15 (2) In addition to the right to receive school records, the nonresidential parent has the right
 16 to participate as a member of a parent advisory committee or any other organization comprised of

17 parents of children at the school that the child attends.

18 (3) The nonresidential parent or noncustodial parent has the right to question anything in
19 the child's record that the parent feels is inaccurate or misleading or is an invasion of privacy and
20 to receive a response from the school.

21 (4) Each parent has a right to arrange appointments for parent-teacher conferences
22 absent a court order to the contrary. Neither parent can be compelled against their will to exercise
23 this right by attending conferences jointly with the other parent.

24 (b)(1) Each parent has full and equal access to a child's medical records absent a court
25 order to the contrary. Neither parent may veto the access requested by the other parent. If
26 necessary, either parent is required to authorize medical providers to release to the other parent
27 copies of any and all information concerning medical care provided to the child which would
28 otherwise be properly released to either parent. For the purposes of the provisions of this code,
29 any and all copies, including prior drafts or versions subsequently removed or deleted from any
30 hospital files, and all information contained therein, of the birth registry forms submitted to the
31 hospital by the mother or any other person, for the purposes of registering the birth of a child with
32 the West Virginia Vital Registration Office, are deemed part of the child's medical records and are
33 fully accessible, without limitation or reservation, to each legal and or biological parent.

34 (2) If the child is in the actual physical custody of one parent, that parent is required to
35 promptly inform the other parent of any illness of the child which requires medical attention.

36 (3) Each parent is required to consult with the other parent prior to any elective surgery
37 being performed on the child, and in the event emergency medical procedures are undertaken for
38 the child which require the parental consent of either parent, if time permits, the other parent shall
39 be consulted, or if time does not permit such consultation, the other parent shall be promptly
40 informed of the emergency medical procedures: *Provided*, That nothing contained herein alters or
41 amends the law of this state as it otherwise pertains to physicians or health care facilities obtaining
42 parental consent prior to providing medical care or performing medical procedures.

43 (c) Each parent has full and equal access to a child's juvenile court records, process and
44 pleadings, absent a court order to the contrary. Neither parent may veto any access requested by
45 the other parent. Juvenile court records are limited to those records which are normally available
46 to a parent of a child who is a subject of the juvenile justice system.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to ensure that legal or biological parents have equal access to any and all copies of birth registry forms submitted to the hospital by the mother, or any other person, for the purpose of registering the birth of the child with the West Virginia Vital Registration Office.

Strike-throughs indicate language that would be stricken from a heading or the present law and underscoring indicates new language that would be added.