

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2026 REGULAR SESSION

Enrolled

Committee Substitute

for

Senate Bill 459

By Senator Chapman

[Passed March 13, 2026; in effect 90 days from
passage (June 11, 2026)]

1 AN ACT to amend and reenact §48-9-102 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended,
2 relating to ensuring meaningful contact between a child and his or her step-siblings.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

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

§48-9-102. Objectives; best interests of the child.

1 (a) The primary objective of this article is to serve the child's best interests, by facilitating:

2 (1) Stability of the child;

3 (2) Parental planning and agreement about the child's custodial arrangements and
4 upbringing;

5 (3) Continuity of existing parent-child attachments;

6 (4) Meaningful contact between a child and each parent;

7 (5) Caretaking and parenting relationships by adults who love the child, know how to
8 provide for the child's needs, and who place a high priority on doing so;

9 (6) Security from exposure to physical or emotional harm;

10 (7) Expeditious, predictable decisionmaking, and avoidance of prolonged uncertainty
11 respecting arrangements for the child's care and control; and

12 (8) Meaningful contact between a child and his or her siblings, including half-siblings and
13 step-siblings when the child has an established bond with the step-sibling and the step-sibling
14 lives at least part-time with the biological parent.

15 (b) A secondary objective of this article is to achieve fairness between the parents.

The Clerk of the Senate and the Clerk of the House of Delegates hereby certify that the foregoing bill is correctly enrolled.

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Clerk of the Senate

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Clerk of the House of Delegates

Originated in the Senate.

In effect 90 days from passage.

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President of the Senate

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Speaker of the House of Delegates

The within is this the.....
Day of, 2026.

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Governor