

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2026 REGULAR SESSION

Introduced

Senate Bill 614

By Senator Willis

[Introduced January 27, 2026; referred
to the Committee on the Judiciary]

1 A BILL to amend and reenact §48-9-102 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, relating
 2 to domestic relations; allocation of custodial responsibility and decision-making
 3 responsibility of children; and adding meaningful contact between a child and his or her
 4 step-siblings when considering the best interest of the child.

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 decision-making 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.
 14 (b) A secondary objective of article is to achieve fairness between the parents.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to include meaningful contact between a child and a step-sibling when considering the best interests of a child in a custodial decision.

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