

# **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.**

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

(1) Stability of the child;

(2) Parental planning and agreement about the child's custodial arrangements and

upbringing;

(3) Continuity of existing parent-child attachments;

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

(5) Caretaking and parenting relationships by adults who love the child, know how to

provide for the child's needs, and who place a high priority on doing so;

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

(7) Expedited, predictable decision-making and avoidance of prolonged uncertainty

respecting arrangements for the child's care and control; and

(8) Meaningful contact between a child and his or her siblings, including half-siblings and

step siblings.

(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.