

By Senator Rich

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A bill to be entitled

An act relating to court actions involving families; amending ss. 39.001, 61.001, 63.022, 68.07, 741.2902, 984.01, and 985.02, F.S., and creating ss. 88.1041, 742.016, 743.001, and 1003.296, F.S.; providing legislative intent with respect to implementing a unified family court program; providing an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Paragraph (o) is added to subsection (1) of section 39.001, Florida Statutes, to read:

39.001 Purposes and intent; personnel standards and screening.--

(1) PURPOSES OF CHAPTER.--The purposes of this chapter are:

(o) To provide a comprehensive and integrated approach to handling all cases involving children and families which come under the jurisdiction of the court and to resolve family disputes in a fair, timely, efficient, and cost-effective manner. The Legislature finds that it is in the best interests of this state that our courts embrace methods of resolving disputes which do not result in additional emotional harm to the children and families who are required to interact with the judicial system. The Legislature finds that the legal system should focus on the needs of children, refer families to resources that will make family relationships stronger, coordinate family cases in order to provide consistent results, and strive to leave families more stable than when they entered the system. It is therefore the intent of the

1 Legislature to support the development of a unified family
2 court and to support the efforts of the state court system to
3 improve the resolution of disputes involving children and
4 families through a comprehensive and integrated approach that
5 includes coordinated case management; the concept of "one
6 family, one judge"; collaboration with the community for
7 referral to needed services; and the use of alternative
8 dispute resolution.

9 Section 2. Subsection (2) of section 61.001, Florida
10 Statutes, is amended to read:

11 61.001 Purpose of chapter.--

12 (2) Its purposes are:

13 (a) To preserve the integrity of marriage and to
14 safeguard meaningful family relationships;

15 (b) To promote the amicable settlement of disputes
16 that arise between parties to a marriage; ~~and~~

17 (c) To mitigate the potential harm to the spouses and
18 their children caused by the process of legal dissolution of
19 marriage; ~~and-~~

20 (d) To provide a comprehensive and integrated approach
21 to handling all cases involving spouses and their children
22 which come under the jurisdiction of the court and to resolve
23 family disputes in a fair, timely, efficient, and
24 cost-effective manner. The Legislature finds that it is in the
25 best interests of this state that our courts embrace methods
26 of resolving disputes which do not result in additional
27 emotional harm to the children and families who are required
28 to interact with the judicial system. The Legislature finds
29 that the legal system should focus on the needs of children,
30 refer families to resources that will make family
31 relationships stronger, coordinate family cases in order to

1 provide consistent results, and strive to leave families more
2 stable than when they entered the system. It is therefore the
3 intent of the Legislature to support the development of a
4 unified family court and to support the efforts of the state
5 court system to improve the resolution of disputes involving
6 children and families through a comprehensive and integrated
7 approach that includes coordinated case management; the
8 concept of "one family, one judge"; collaboration with the
9 community for referral to needed services; and the use of
10 alternative dispute resolution.

11 Section 3. Subsection (6) is added to section 63.022,
12 Florida Statutes, to read:

13 63.022 Legislative intent.--

14 (6) It is the intent of the Legislature to provide a
15 comprehensive and integrated approach to handling all cases
16 involving children and families which come under the
17 jurisdiction of the court and to resolve family disputes in a
18 fair, timely, efficient, and cost-effective manner. The
19 Legislature finds that it is in the best interests of this
20 state that our courts embrace methods of resolving disputes
21 which do not result in additional emotional harm to the
22 children and families who are required to interact with the
23 judicial system. The Legislature finds that the legal system
24 should focus on the needs of children, refer families to
25 resources that will make family relationships stronger,
26 coordinate family cases in order to provide consistent
27 results, and strive to leave families more stable than when
28 they entered the system. It is therefore the intent of the
29 Legislature to support the development of a unified family
30 court and to support the efforts of the state court system to
31 improve the resolution of disputes involving children and

1 families through a comprehensive and integrated approach that
2 includes coordinated case management; the concept of "one
3 family, one judge"; collaboration with the community for
4 referral to needed services; and the use of alternative
5 dispute resolution.

6 Section 4. Subsection (9) is added to section 68.07,
7 Florida Statutes, to read:

8 68.07 Change of name.--

9 (9) It is the intent of the Legislature to provide a
10 comprehensive and integrated approach to handling all cases
11 involving children and families which come under the
12 jurisdiction of the court and to resolve family disputes in a
13 fair, timely, efficient, and cost-effective manner. The
14 Legislature finds that it is in the best interests of this
15 state that our courts embrace methods of resolving disputes
16 which do not result in additional emotional harm to the
17 children and families who are required to interact with the
18 judicial system. The Legislature finds that the legal system
19 should focus on the needs of children, refer families to
20 resources that will make family relationships stronger,
21 coordinate family cases in order to provide consistent
22 results, and strive to leave families more stable than when
23 they entered the system. It is therefore the intent of the
24 Legislature to support the development of a unified family
25 court and to support the efforts of the state court system to
26 improve the resolution of disputes involving children and
27 families through a comprehensive and integrated approach that
28 includes coordinated case management; the concept of "one
29 family, one judge"; collaboration with the community for
30 referral to needed services; and the use of alternative
31 dispute resolution.

1 Section 5. Section 88.1041, Florida Statutes, is
2 created to read:

3 88.1041 Legislative intent with respect to tribunal's
4 role.--It is the intent of the Legislature to provide a
5 comprehensive and integrated approach to handling all cases
6 involving children and families which come under the
7 jurisdiction of the court and to resolve family disputes in a
8 fair, timely, efficient, and cost-effective manner. The
9 Legislature finds that it is in the best interests of this
10 state that our courts embrace methods of resolving disputes
11 which do not result in additional emotional harm to the
12 children and families who are required to interact with the
13 judicial system. The Legislature finds that the legal system
14 should focus on the needs of children, refer families to
15 resources that will make family relationships stronger,
16 coordinate family cases in order to provide consistent
17 results, and strive to leave families more stable than when
18 they entered the system. It is therefore the intent of the
19 Legislature to support the development of a unified family
20 court and to support the efforts of the state court system to
21 improve the resolution of disputes involving children and
22 families through a comprehensive and integrated approach that
23 includes coordinated case management; the concept of "one
24 family, one judge"; collaboration with the community for
25 referral to needed services; and the use of alternative
26 dispute resolution.

27 Section 6. Subsection (3) is added to section
28 741.2902, Florida Statutes, to read:

29 741.2902 Domestic violence; legislative intent with
30 respect to judiciary's role.--

31

1 (3) It is the intent of the Legislature to provide a
2 comprehensive and integrated approach to handling all cases
3 involving children and families which come under the
4 jurisdiction of the court and to resolve family disputes in a
5 fair, timely, efficient, and cost-effective manner. The
6 Legislature finds that it is in the best interests of this
7 state that our courts embrace methods of resolving disputes
8 which do not result in additional emotional harm to the
9 children and families who are required to interact with the
10 judicial system. The Legislature finds that the legal system
11 should focus on the needs of children, refer families to
12 resources that will make family relationships stronger,
13 coordinate family cases in order to provide consistent
14 results, and strive to leave families more stable than when
15 they entered the system. It is therefore the intent of the
16 Legislature to support the development of a unified family
17 court and to support the efforts of the state court system to
18 improve the resolution of disputes involving children and
19 families through a comprehensive and integrated approach that
20 includes coordinated case management; the concept of "one
21 family, one judge"; collaboration with the community for
22 referral to needed services; and the use of alternative
23 dispute resolution.

24 Section 7. Section 742.016, Florida Statutes, is
25 created to read:

26 742.016 Legislative intent with respect to the
27 judiciary's role.--It is the intent of the Legislature to
28 provide a comprehensive and integrated approach to handling
29 all cases involving children and families which come under the
30 jurisdiction of the court and to resolve family disputes in a
31 fair, timely, efficient, and cost-effective manner. The

1 Legislature finds that it is in the best interests of this
2 state that our courts embrace methods of resolving disputes
3 which do not result in additional emotional harm to the
4 children and families who are required to interact with the
5 judicial system. The Legislature finds that the legal system
6 should focus on the needs of children, refer families to
7 resources that will make family relationships stronger,
8 coordinate family cases in order to provide consistent
9 results, and strive to leave families more stable than when
10 they entered the system. It is therefore the intent of the
11 Legislature to support the development of a unified family
12 court and to support the efforts of the state court system to
13 improve the resolution of disputes involving children and
14 families through a comprehensive and integrated approach that
15 includes coordinated case management; the concept of "one
16 family, one judge"; collaboration with the community for
17 referral to needed services; and the use of alternative
18 dispute resolution.

19 Section 8. Section 743.001, Florida Statutes, is
20 created to read:

21 743.001 Legislative intent with respect to the
22 judiciary's role.--It is the intent of the Legislature to
23 provide a comprehensive and integrated approach to handling
24 all cases involving children and families which come under the
25 jurisdiction of the court and to resolve family disputes in a
26 fair, timely, efficient, and cost-effective manner. The
27 Legislature finds that it is in the best interests of this
28 state that our courts embrace methods of resolving disputes
29 which do not result in additional emotional harm to the
30 children and families who are required to interact with the
31 judicial system. The Legislature finds that the legal system

1 should focus on the needs of children, refer families to
2 resources that will make family relationships stronger,
3 coordinate family cases in order to provide consistent
4 results, and strive to leave families more stable than when
5 they entered the system. It is therefore the intent of the
6 Legislature to support the development of a unified family
7 court and to support the efforts of the state court system to
8 improve the resolution of disputes involving children and
9 families through a comprehensive and integrated approach that
10 includes coordinated case management; the concept of "one
11 family, one judge"; collaboration with the community for
12 referral to needed services; and the use of of alternative
13 dispute resolution.

14 Section 9. Paragraph (g) is added to subsection (1) of
15 section 984.01, Florida Statutes, to read:

16 984.01 Purposes and intent; personnel standards and
17 screening.--

18 (1) The purposes of this chapter are:

19 (g) To provide a comprehensive and integrated approach
20 to handling all cases involving children and families which
21 come under the jurisdiction of the court and to resolve family
22 disputes in a fair, timely, efficient, and cost-effective
23 manner. The Legislature finds that it is in the best interests
24 of this state that our courts embrace methods of resolving
25 disputes which do not result in additional emotional harm to
26 the children and families who are required to interact with
27 the judicial system. The Legislature finds that the legal
28 system should focus on the needs of children, refer families
29 to resources that will make family relationships stronger,
30 coordinate family cases in order to provide consistent
31 results, and strive to leave families more stable than when

1 they entered the system. It is therefore the intent of the
2 Legislature to support the development of a unified family
3 court and to support the efforts of the state court system to
4 improve the resolution of disputes involving children and
5 families through a comprehensive and integrated approach that
6 includes coordinated case management; the concept of "one
7 family, one judge"; collaboration with the community for
8 referral to needed services; and the use of alternative
9 dispute resolution.

10 Section 10. Paragraph (j) is added to subsection (1)
11 of section 985.02, Florida Statutes, to read:

12 985.02 Legislative intent for the juvenile justice
13 system.--

14 (1) GENERAL PROTECTIONS FOR CHILDREN.--It is a purpose
15 of the Legislature that the children of this state be provided
16 with the following protections:

17 (j) A comprehensive and integrated approach to
18 handling all cases involving children and families which come
19 under the jurisdiction of the court and to resolve family
20 disputes in a fair, timely, efficient, and cost-effective
21 manner. The Legislature finds that it is in the best interests
22 of this state that our courts embrace methods of resolving
23 disputes which do not result in additional emotional harm to
24 the children and families who are required to interact with
25 the judicial system. The Legislature finds that the legal
26 system should focus on the needs of children, refer families
27 to resources that will make family relationships stronger,
28 coordinate family cases in order to provide consistent
29 results, and strive to leave families more stable than when
30 they entered the system. It is therefore the intent of the
31 Legislature to support the development of a unified family

1 court and to support the efforts of the state court system to
2 improve the resolution of disputes involving children and
3 families through a comprehensive and integrated approach that
4 includes coordinated case management; the concept of "one
5 family, one judge"; collaboration with the community for
6 referral to needed services; and the use of alternative
7 dispute resolution.

8 Section 11. Section 1003.269, Florida Statutes, is
9 created to read:

10 1003.269 Legislative intent with respect to the
11 judiciary's role.--It is the intent of the Legislature to
12 provide a comprehensive and integrated approach to handling
13 all cases involving students and families which come under the
14 jurisdiction of the court and to resolve family disputes in a
15 fair, timely, efficient, and cost-effective manner. The
16 Legislature finds that it is in the best interests of this
17 state that our courts embrace methods of resolving disputes
18 which do not result in additional emotional harm to the
19 children and families who are required to interact with the
20 judicial system. The Legislature finds that the legal system
21 should focus on the needs of children, refer families to
22 resources that will make family relationships stronger,
23 coordinate family cases in order to provide consistent
24 results, and strive to leave families more stable than when
25 they entered the system. It is therefore the intent of the
26 Legislature to support the development of a unified family
27 court and to support the efforts of the state court system to
28 improve the resolution of disputes involving children and
29 families through a comprehensive and integrated approach that
30 includes coordinated case management; the concept of "one
31 family, one judge"; collaboration with the community for

