

1                                   A bill to be entitled  
 2           An act relating to court actions involving families;  
 3           amending ss. 39.001, 61.001, 63.022, 68.07, 741.2902,  
 4           984.01, and 985.02, F.S., and creating ss. 88.1041,  
 5           742.016, 743.001, and 1003.201, F.S.; providing additional  
 6           purposes relating to implementing a unified family court  
 7           program in the circuit courts; providing legislative  
 8           intent; amending s. 61.402, F.S.; expanding eligibility  
 9           criteria for guardians ad litem; providing requirements  
 10          for and limitations on certification of guardians ad litem  
 11          by not-for-profit legal aid organizations; providing an  
 12          effective date.

13  
 14   Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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

18           39.001 Purposes and intent; personnel standards and  
 19           screening.--

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

22           (o) To provide all children and families with a fully  
 23           integrated, comprehensive approach to handling all cases that  
 24           involve children and families and a resolution of family  
 25           disputes in a fair, timely, efficient, and cost-effective  
 26           manner. It is the intent of the Legislature that the courts of  
 27           this state embrace methods of resolving disputes that do not  
 28           cause additional emotional harm to the children and families who

29 are required to interact with the judicial system. It is the  
 30 intent of the Legislature to support the development of a  
 31 unified family court and to support the efforts of the state  
 32 courts system to improve the resolution of disputes involving  
 33 children and families through a fully integrated, comprehensive  
 34 approach that includes coordinated case management; the concept  
 35 of "one family, one judge"; collaboration with the community for  
 36 referral to needed services; and methods of alternative dispute  
 37 resolution. The Legislature supports the goal that the legal  
 38 system focus on the needs of children who are involved in the  
 39 litigation, refer families to resources that will make families'  
 40 relationships stronger, coordinate families' cases to provide  
 41 consistent results, and strive to leave families in better  
 42 condition than when the families entered the system.

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

45 61.001 Purpose of chapter.--

46 (2) Its purposes are:

47 (a) To preserve the integrity of marriage and to safeguard  
 48 meaningful family relationships.~~†~~

49 (b) To promote the amicable settlement of disputes that  
 50 arise between parties to a marriage.~~†~~ ~~and~~

51 (c) To mitigate the potential harm to the spouses and  
 52 their children caused by the process of legal dissolution of  
 53 marriage.

54 (d) To provide all children and families with a fully  
 55 integrated, comprehensive approach to handling all cases that  
 56 involve children and families and a resolution of family

HB 523

2009

57 disputes in a fair, timely, efficient, and cost-effective  
58 manner. It is the intent of the Legislature that the courts of  
59 this state embrace methods of resolving disputes that do not  
60 cause additional emotional harm to the children and families who  
61 are required to interact with the judicial system. It is the  
62 intent of the Legislature to support the development of a  
63 unified family court and to support the efforts of the state  
64 courts system to improve the resolution of disputes involving  
65 children and families through a fully integrated, comprehensive  
66 approach that includes coordinated case management; the concept  
67 of "one family, one judge"; collaboration with the community for  
68 referral to needed services; and methods of alternative dispute  
69 resolution. The Legislature supports the goal that the legal  
70 system focus on the needs of children who are involved in the  
71 litigation, refer families to resources that will make families'  
72 relationships stronger, coordinate families' cases to provide  
73 consistent results, and strive to leave families in better  
74 condition than when the families entered the system.

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

77 63.022 Legislative intent.--

78 (6) It is the intent of the Legislature to provide all  
79 children and families with a fully integrated, comprehensive  
80 approach to handling all cases that involve children and  
81 families and a resolution of family disputes in a fair, timely,  
82 efficient, and cost-effective manner. It is the intent of the  
83 Legislature that the courts of this state embrace methods of  
84 resolving disputes that do not cause additional emotional harm

HB 523

2009

85 to the children and families who are required to interact with  
86 the judicial system. It is the intent of the Legislature to  
87 support the development of a unified family court and to support  
88 the efforts of the state courts system to improve the resolution  
89 of disputes involving children and families through a fully  
90 integrated, comprehensive approach that includes coordinated  
91 case management; the concept of "one family, one judge";  
92 collaboration with the community for referral to needed  
93 services; and methods of alternative dispute resolution. The  
94 Legislature supports the goal that the legal system focus on the  
95 needs of children who are involved in the litigation, refer  
96 families to resources that will make families' relationships  
97 stronger, coordinate families' cases to provide consistent  
98 results, and strive to leave families in better condition than  
99 when the families entered the system.

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

102 68.07 Change of name.--

103 (9) It is the intent of the Legislature to provide all  
104 children and families with a fully integrated, comprehensive  
105 approach to handling all cases that involve children and  
106 families and a resolution of family disputes in a fair, timely,  
107 efficient, and cost-effective manner. It is the intent of the  
108 Legislature that the courts of this state embrace methods of  
109 resolving disputes that do not cause additional emotional harm  
110 to the children and families who are required to interact with  
111 the judicial system. It is the intent of the Legislature to  
112 support the development of a unified family court and to support

HB 523

2009

113 the efforts of the state courts system to improve the resolution  
114 of disputes involving children and families through a fully  
115 integrated, comprehensive approach that includes coordinated  
116 case management; the concept of "one family, one judge";  
117 collaboration with the community for referral to needed  
118 services; and methods of alternative dispute resolution. The  
119 Legislature supports the goal that the legal system focus on the  
120 needs of children who are involved in the litigation, refer  
121 families to resources that will make families' relationships  
122 stronger, coordinate families' cases to provide consistent  
123 results, and strive to leave families in better condition than  
124 when the families entered the system.

125 Section 5. Section 88.1041, Florida Statutes, is created  
126 to read:

127 88.1041 Legislative intent.--It is the intent of the  
128 Legislature to provide all children and families with a fully  
129 integrated, comprehensive approach to handling all cases that  
130 involve children and families and a resolution of family  
131 disputes in a fair, timely, efficient, and cost-effective  
132 manner. It is the intent of the Legislature that the courts of  
133 this state embrace methods of resolving disputes that do not  
134 cause additional emotional harm to the children and families who  
135 are required to interact with the judicial system. It is the  
136 intent of the Legislature to support the development of a  
137 unified family court and to support the efforts of the state  
138 courts system to improve the resolution of disputes involving  
139 children and families through a fully integrated, comprehensive  
140 approach that includes coordinated case management; the concept

141 of "one family, one judge"; collaboration with the community for  
 142 referral to needed services; and methods of alternative dispute  
 143 resolution. The Legislature supports the goal that the legal  
 144 system focus on the needs of children who are involved in the  
 145 litigation, refer families to resources that will make families'  
 146 relationships stronger, coordinate families' cases to provide  
 147 consistent results, and strive to leave families in better  
 148 condition than when the families entered the system.

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

151 741.2902 Domestic violence; legislative intent with  
 152 respect to judiciary's role.--

153 (3) It is the intent of the Legislature to provide all  
 154 children and families with a fully integrated, comprehensive  
 155 approach to handling all cases that involve children and  
 156 families and a resolution of family disputes in a fair, timely,  
 157 efficient, and cost-effective manner. It is the intent of the  
 158 Legislature that the courts of this state embrace methods of  
 159 resolving disputes that do not cause additional emotional harm  
 160 to the children and families who are required to interact with  
 161 the judicial system. It is the intent of the Legislature to  
 162 support the development of a unified family court and to support  
 163 the efforts of the state courts system to improve the resolution  
 164 of disputes involving children and families through a fully  
 165 integrated, comprehensive approach that includes coordinated  
 166 case management; the concept of "one family, one judge";  
 167 collaboration with the community for referral to needed  
 168 services; and methods of alternative dispute resolution. The

HB 523

2009

169 Legislature supports the goal that the legal system focus on the  
170 needs of children who are involved in the litigation, refer  
171 families to resources that will make families' relationships  
172 stronger, coordinate families' cases to provide consistent  
173 results, and strive to leave families in better condition than  
174 when the families entered the system.

175 Section 7. Section 742.016, Florida Statutes, is created  
176 to read:

177 742.016 Legislative intent.--It is the intent of the  
178 Legislature to provide all children and families with a fully  
179 integrated, comprehensive approach to handling all cases that  
180 involve children and families and a resolution of family  
181 disputes in a fair, timely, efficient, and cost-effective  
182 manner. It is the intent of the Legislature that the courts of  
183 this state embrace methods of resolving disputes that do not  
184 cause additional emotional harm to the children and families who  
185 are required to interact with the judicial system. It is the  
186 intent of the Legislature to support the development of a  
187 unified family court and to support the efforts of the state  
188 courts system to improve the resolution of disputes involving  
189 children and families through a fully integrated, comprehensive  
190 approach that includes coordinated case management; the concept  
191 of "one family, one judge"; collaboration with the community for  
192 referral to needed services; and methods of alternative dispute  
193 resolution. The Legislature supports the goal that the legal  
194 system focus on the needs of children who are involved in the  
195 litigation, refer families to resources that will make families'  
196 relationships stronger, coordinate families' cases to provide

HB 523

2009

197 consistent results, and strive to leave families in better  
198 condition than when the families entered the system.

199 Section 8. Section 743.001, Florida Statutes, is created  
200 to read:

201 743.001 Legislative intent.--It is the intent of the  
202 Legislature to provide all children and families with a fully  
203 integrated, comprehensive approach to handling all cases that  
204 involve children and families and a resolution of family  
205 disputes in a fair, timely, efficient, and cost-effective  
206 manner. It is the intent of the Legislature that the courts of  
207 this state embrace methods of resolving disputes that do not  
208 cause additional emotional harm to the children and families who  
209 are required to interact with the judicial system. It is the  
210 intent of the Legislature to support the development of a  
211 unified family court and to support the efforts of the state  
212 courts system to improve the resolution of disputes involving  
213 children and families through a fully integrated, comprehensive  
214 approach that includes coordinated case management; the concept  
215 of "one family, one judge"; collaboration with the community for  
216 referral to needed services; and methods of alternative dispute  
217 resolution. The Legislature supports the goal that the legal  
218 system focus on the needs of children who are involved in the  
219 litigation, refer families to resources that will make families'  
220 relationships stronger, coordinate families' cases to provide  
221 consistent results, and strive to leave families in better  
222 condition than when the families entered the system.

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



HB 523

2009

225 984.01 Purposes and intent; personnel standards and  
 226 screening.--

227 (1) The purposes of this chapter are:

228 (g) To provide all children and families with a fully  
 229 integrated, comprehensive approach to handling all cases that  
 230 involve children and families and a resolution of family  
 231 disputes in a fair, timely, efficient, and cost-effective  
 232 manner. It is the intent of the Legislature that the courts of  
 233 this state embrace methods of resolving disputes that do not  
 234 cause additional emotional harm to the children and families who  
 235 are required to interact with the judicial system. It is the  
 236 intent of the Legislature to support the development of a  
 237 unified family court and to support the efforts of the state  
 238 courts system to improve the resolution of disputes involving  
 239 children and families through a fully integrated, comprehensive  
 240 approach that includes coordinated case management; the concept  
 241 of "one family, one judge"; collaboration with the community for  
 242 referral to needed services; and methods of alternative dispute  
 243 resolution. The Legislature supports the goal that the legal  
 244 system focus on the needs of children who are involved in the  
 245 litigation, refer families to resources that will make families'  
 246 relationships stronger, coordinate families' cases to provide  
 247 consistent results, and strive to leave families in better  
 248 condition than when the families entered the system.

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

251 985.02 Legislative intent for the juvenile justice  
 252 system.--

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

256 (j) A fully integrated, comprehensive approach to handling  
 257 all cases that involve children and families and a resolution of  
 258 family disputes in a fair, timely, efficient, and cost-effective  
 259 manner. It is the intent of the Legislature that the courts of  
 260 this state embrace methods of resolving disputes that do not  
 261 cause additional emotional harm to the children and families who  
 262 are required to interact with the judicial system. It is the  
 263 intent of the Legislature to support the development of a  
 264 unified family court and to support the efforts of the state  
 265 courts system to improve the resolution of disputes involving  
 266 children and families through a fully integrated, comprehensive  
 267 approach that includes coordinated case management; the concept  
 268 of "one family, one judge"; collaboration with the community for  
 269 referral to needed services; and methods of alternative dispute  
 270 resolution. The Legislature supports the goal that the legal  
 271 system focus on the needs of children who are involved in the  
 272 litigation, refer families to resources that will make families'  
 273 relationships stronger, coordinate families' cases to provide  
 274 consistent results, and strive to leave families in better  
 275 condition than when the families entered the system.

276 Section 11. Section 1003.201, Florida Statutes, is created  
 277 to read:

278 1003.201 Legislative intent.--It is the intent of the  
 279 Legislature to provide all children and families with a fully  
 280 integrated, comprehensive approach to handling all cases that

HB 523

2009

281 involve children and families and a resolution of family  
282 disputes in a fair, timely, efficient, and cost-effective  
283 manner. It is the intent of the Legislature that the courts of  
284 this state embrace methods of resolving disputes that do not  
285 cause additional emotional harm to the children and families who  
286 are required to interact with the judicial system. It is the  
287 intent of the Legislature to support the development of a  
288 unified family court and to support the efforts of the state  
289 courts system to improve the resolution of disputes involving  
290 children and families through a fully integrated, comprehensive  
291 approach that includes coordinated case management; the concept  
292 of "one family, one judge"; collaboration with the community for  
293 referral to needed services; and methods of alternative dispute  
294 resolution. The Legislature supports the goal that the legal  
295 system focus on the needs of children who are involved in the  
296 litigation, refer families to resources that will make families'  
297 relationships stronger, coordinate families' cases to provide  
298 consistent results, and strive to leave families in better  
299 condition than when the families entered the system.

300 Section 12. Section 61.402, Florida Statutes, is amended  
301 to read:

302 61.402 Qualifications of guardians ad litem.--A guardian  
303 ad litem must be either a citizen certified by the Guardian Ad  
304 Litem Program to act in family law cases, a citizen certified by  
305 a not-for-profit legal aid organization as defined in s. 68.096,  
306 or an attorney who is a member in good standing of The Florida  
307 Bar. Prior to certifying a guardian ad litem to be appointed  
308 under this chapter, the Guardian Ad Litem Program must conduct a

HB 523

2009

309 security background investigation as provided in s. 39.821.  
310 Certification by a not-for-profit legal aid organization shall  
311 qualify a guardian ad litem to serve only in actions described  
312 in s. 61.401 other than actions in which the court has  
313 determined that there are well-founded allegations of child  
314 abuse, abandonment, or neglect as defined in s. 39.01. Prior to  
315 certifying a guardian ad litem, a not-for-profit legal aid  
316 organization must conduct a security background investigation  
317 that conforms to the requirements of s. 39.821.

318 Section 13. This act shall take effect upon becoming a  
319 law.