

By Senator Steube

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1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to permanency; amending s. 39.621,
3 F.S.; deleting a provision listing the order of
4 preference of permanency goals; providing that the
5 best interest of the child is the court's sole
6 consideration, rather than the primary consideration,
7 in determining a permanency goal for a child in the
8 dependency system; requiring a court to consider
9 specified factors in determining the best interest of
10 the child; providing an effective date.

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

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14 Section 1. Subsections (3) and (6) of section 39.621,
15 Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

16 39.621 Permanency determination by the court.—

17 (3) The permanency goals available under this chapter,
18 ~~listed in order of preference,~~ are:

19 (a) Reunification.+

20 (b) Adoption, if a petition for termination of parental
21 rights has been or will be filed.+

22 (c) Permanent guardianship of a dependent child under s.
23 39.6221.+

24 (d) Permanent placement with a fit and willing relative
25 under s. 39.6231.~~+~~~~or~~

26 (e) Placement in another planned permanent living
27 arrangement under s. 39.6241.

28 (6) The best interest of the child is the sole ~~primary~~
29 consideration in determining the permanency goal for the child.

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30 In determining the best interest of the child, the court must
31 ~~also consider,~~ but is not limited to, the following factors:

32 (a) The reasonable preference of the child if the court has
33 found the child to be of sufficient intelligence, understanding,
34 and experience to express a preference; and

35 (b) Any recommendation of the guardian ad litem.

36 Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2018.