
DIGEST

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HB 254 Original

2019 Regular Session

Leger

Abstract: Provides for the burden of proof required for consideration of a custody award to a person other than a parent.

Present law (C.C. Art. 133) provides that if an award of custody to either parent would result in substantial harm to the child, the court shall award custody to another person with whom the child has been living in a wholesome and stable environment, or otherwise to any other person able to provide an adequate and stable environment.

Present law requires a court to award custody of a child in accordance with the best interest of the child (C.C. Art. 131) and enumerates factors the court shall consider in determining the child's best interest (C.C. Art. 134).

Proposed law expressly requires the court to consider the factors listed in present law when awarding custody to a person other than a parent.

Proposed law provides that in seeking modification of custody awarded by considered decree to a person other than a parent, a parent seeking custody bears the burden of proof of the risk of substantial harm to the child if joint or sole custody were to be subsequently awarded to the parent.

Proposed law further provides that in seeking modification of custody awarded by nonconsidered decree to a person other than a parent, a parent may petition the court at any time to have the child's custody award reviewed by the court without a showing of a material change in circumstances. The person awarded joint or sole custody shall have the burden of proof of the risk of substantial harm to the child if joint or sole custody were to be subsequently awarded to the parent.

(Amends C.C. Art. 133)