

Act No. 571
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**STATE OF MICHIGAN
91ST LEGISLATURE
REGULAR SESSION OF 2002**

Introduced by Reps. Toy, Tabor, Hummel, Howell, Newell, Vander Veen, Voorhees, Caul, Vear, Patterson, Palmer, Raczkowski, George, Julian, Bisbee and Jansen

ENROLLED HOUSE BILL No. 6011

AN ACT to amend 1982 PA 294, entitled "An act to revise and consolidate the laws relating to the friend of the court; to provide for the appointment or removal of the friend of the court; to create the office of the friend of the court; to establish the rights, powers, and duties of the friend of the court and the office of the friend of the court; to establish a state friend of the court bureau and to provide the powers and duties of the bureau; to prescribe powers and duties of the circuit court and of certain state and local agencies and officers; to establish friend of the court citizen advisory committees; to prescribe certain duties of certain employers and former employers; and to repeal acts and parts of acts," by amending sections 2, 2a, 5, 9, 11, 13, 15, 17, 17b, 17c, and 26 (MCL 552.502, 552.502a, 552.505, 552.509, 552.511, 552.513, 552.515, 552.517, 552.517b, 552.517c, and 552.526), section 2 as amended by 1998 PA 63, sections 2a and 9 as amended by 1999 PA 150, section 5 as amended by 1996 PA 365, section 11 as amended by 1996 PA 266, section 13 as amended by 1996 PA 144, section 17 as amended and sections 17b and 17c as added by 1994 PA 37, and section 26 as amended by 1996 PA 366, and by adding section 5a; and to repeal acts and parts of acts.

The People of the State of Michigan enact:

Sec. 2. As used in this act:

- (a) "Bureau" means the state friend of the court bureau created in section 19.
- (b) "Centralizing enforcement" means the process authorized under section 10 of the office of the child support act, 1971 PA 174, MCL 400.231 to 400.240.
- (c) "Chief judge" means the following:
 - (i) The circuit judge in a judicial circuit having only 1 circuit judge.
 - (ii) Except in the county of Wayne, the chief judge of the circuit court in a judicial circuit having 2 or more circuit judges.
 - (iii) In the county of Wayne, the executive chief judge of the circuit court in the third judicial circuit.
- (d) "Citizen advisory committee" means a citizen friend of the court advisory committee established as provided in section 4.
- (e) "Consumer reporting agency" means a person that, for monetary fees or dues, or on a cooperative nonprofit basis, regularly engages in whole or in part in the practice of assembling or evaluating consumer credit information or other information on consumers for the purpose of furnishing consumer reports to third parties, and that uses any means or facility of interstate commerce for the purpose of preparing or furnishing consumer reports. As used in this subdivision, "consumer report" means that term as defined in section 603 of the fair credit reporting act, title VI of the consumer credit protection act, Public Law 90-321, 15 U.S.C. 1681a.

(f) “County board” means the county board of commissioners in the county served by the office. If a judicial circuit includes more than 1 county, action required to be taken by the county board means action by the county boards of commissioners for all counties composing that circuit.

(g) “Court” means the circuit court.

(h) “Current employment” means employment within 1 year before a friend of the court request for information.

(i) “Custody or parenting time order violation” means an individual’s act or failure to act that interferes with a parent’s right to interact with his or her child in the time, place, and manner established in the order that governs custody or parenting time between the parent and the child and to which the individual accused of interfering is subject.

(j) “Department” means the family independence agency.

(k) “Domestic relations matter” means a circuit court proceeding as to child custody or parenting time, or child or spousal support, that arises out of litigation under a statute of this state, including, but not limited to, the following:

(i) 1846 RS 84, MCL 552.1 to 552.45.

(ii) The family support act, 1966 PA 138, MCL 552.451 to 552.459.

(iii) Child custody act of 1970, 1970 PA 91, MCL 722.21 to 722.31.

(iv) 1968 PA 293, MCL 722.1 to 722.6.

(v) The paternity act, 1956 PA 205, MCL 722.711 to 722.730.

(vi) Revised uniform reciprocal enforcement of support act, 1952 PA 8, MCL 780.151 to 780.183.

(vii) Uniform interstate family support act, 1996 PA 310, MCL 552.1101 to 552.1901.

(l) “Domestic relations mediation” means a process by which the parties are assisted by a domestic relations mediator in voluntarily formulating an agreement to resolve a dispute concerning child custody or parenting time that arises from a domestic relations matter.

(m) “Friend of the court” means the person serving under section 21(1) or appointed under section 23 as the head of the office of the friend of the court.

(n) “Friend of the court case” means a domestic relations matter that an office establishes as a friend of the court case as required under section 5a. The term “friend of the court case”, when used in a provision of this act, is not effective until on and after the effective date of section 5a.

(o) “Income” means that term as defined in section 2 of the support and parenting time enforcement act, 1982 PA 295, MCL 552.602.

Sec. 2a. As used in this act:

(a) “Medical assistance” means medical assistance as established under title XIX of the social security act, chapter 531, 49 Stat. 620, 42 U.S.C. 1396 to 1396r-6 and 1396r-8 to 1396v.

(b) “Office” and “office of the friend of the court” mean an agency created in section 3.

(c) “Payer” means a person ordered by the circuit court to pay support.

(d) “Public assistance” means cash assistance provided under the social welfare act, 1939 PA 280, 400.1 to 400.119b.

(e) “Recipient of support” means the following:

(i) The spouse, if the support order orders spousal support.

(ii) The custodial parent or guardian, if the support order orders support for a minor child or a child who is 18 years of age or older.

(iii) The family independence agency, if support has been assigned to that department.

(f) “State advisory committee” means the committee established by the bureau under section 19.

(g) “State disbursement unit” or “SDU” means the entity established in section 6 of the office of child support act, 1971 PA 174, MCL 400.236.

(h) “Support” means all of the following:

(i) The payment of money for a child or a spouse ordered by the circuit court, whether the order is embodied in an interim, temporary, permanent, or modified order or judgment. Support may include payment of the expenses of medical, dental, and other health care, child care expenses, and educational expenses.

(ii) The payment of money ordered by the circuit court under the paternity act, 1956 PA 205, MCL 722.711 to 722.730, for the necessary expenses incurred by or for the mother in connection with her confinement, for other expenses in connection with the pregnancy of the mother, or for the repayment of genetic testing expenses.

(iii) A surcharge accumulated under section 3a of the support and parenting time enforcement act, MCL 552.603a.

(i) “Support and parenting time enforcement act” means 1982 PA 295, MCL 552.601 to 552.650.

(j) “Support order” means an order entered by the circuit court for the payment of support in a sum certain, whether in the form of a lump sum or a periodic payment.

(k) “Title IV-D” means part D of title IV of the social security act, chapter 531, 49 Stat. 620, 42 U.S.C. 651 to 655, 656 to 657, 658a to 660, and 663 to 669b.

(l) “Title IV-D agency” means that term as defined in section 2 of the support and parenting time enforcement act, MCL 552.602.

Sec. 5. (1) Each office of the friend of the court has the following duties:

(a) To inform each party to the domestic relations matter that, unless 1 of the parties is required to participate in the title IV-D child support program, they may choose not to have the office of the friend of the court administer and enforce obligations that may be imposed in the domestic relations matter.

(b) To inform each party to the domestic relations matter that, unless 1 of the parties is required to participate in the title IV-D child support program, they may direct the office of the friend of the court to close the friend of the court case that was opened in their domestic relations matter.

(c) To provide an informational pamphlet, in accordance with the model pamphlet developed by the bureau, to each party to a domestic relations matter. The informational pamphlet shall explain the procedures of the court and the office; the duties of the office; the rights and responsibilities of the parties, including notification that each party to the dispute has the right to meet with the individual investigating the dispute before that individual makes a recommendation regarding the dispute; the availability of and procedures used in domestic relations mediation; the availability of human services in the community; the availability of joint custody as described in section 6a of the child custody act of 1970, 1970 PA 91, MCL 722.26a; and how to file a grievance regarding the office. The informational pamphlet shall be provided as soon as possible after the filing of a complaint or other initiating pleading. Upon request, a party shall receive an oral explanation of the informational pamphlet from the office.

(d) To make available to an individual form motions, responses, and orders for requesting the court to modify the individual's child support, custody, or parenting time order, or for responding to a motion for such a modification, without assistance of legal counsel. The office shall make available instructions on preparing and filing each of those forms and instructions on service of process and on scheduling a modification hearing.

(e) To inform the parties of the availability of domestic relations mediation if there is a dispute as to child custody or parenting time.

(f) To inform the parents of the availability of joint custody as described in section 6a of the child custody act of 1970, 1970 PA 91, MCL 722.26a, if there is a dispute between the parents as to child custody.

(g) To investigate all relevant facts, and to make a written report and recommendation to the parties and to the court regarding child custody or parenting time, or both, if there is a dispute as to child custody or parenting time, or both, and domestic relations mediation is refused by either party or is unsuccessful, or if ordered to do so by the court. The investigation may include reports and evaluations by outside persons or agencies if requested by the parties or the court, and shall include documentation of alleged facts, if practicable. If requested by a party, an investigation shall include a meeting with the party. A written report and recommendation regarding child custody or parenting time, or both, shall be based upon the factors enumerated in the child custody act of 1970, 1970 PA 91, MCL 722.21 to 722.31.

(h) To investigate all relevant facts and to make a written report and recommendation to the parties and their attorneys and to the court regarding child support, if ordered to do so by the court. The written report and recommendation shall be placed in the court file. The investigation may include reports and evaluations by outside persons or agencies if requested by the parties or the court, and shall include documentation of alleged facts, if practicable. If requested by a party, an investigation shall include a meeting with the party. The child support formula developed by the bureau under section 19 shall be used as a guideline in recommending child support. The written report shall include the support amount determined by application of the child support formula and all factual assumptions upon which that support amount is based. If the office of the friend of the court determines from the facts of the case that application of the child support formula would be unjust or inappropriate, the written report shall also include all of the following:

(i) An alternative support recommendation.

(ii) All factual assumptions upon which the alternative support recommendation is based, if applicable.

(iii) How the alternative support recommendation deviates from the child support formula.

(iv) The reasons for the alternative support recommendation.

(2) If a party who requests a meeting during an investigation fails to attend the scheduled meeting without good cause, the investigation may be completed without a meeting with that party.

Sec. 5a. (1) Except as required by this section, an office of the friend of the court shall open and maintain a friend of the court case for a domestic relations matter. If there is an open friend of the court case for a domestic relations matter,

the office of the friend of the court shall administer and enforce the obligations of the parties to the friend of the court case as provided in this act. If there is not an open friend of the court case for a domestic relations matter, the office of the friend of the court shall not administer or enforce an obligation of a party to the domestic relations matter.

(2) The parties to a domestic relations matter are not required to have a friend of the court case opened or maintained for their domestic relations matter. With their initial pleadings, the parties to a domestic relations matter may file a motion for the court to order the office of the friend of the court not to open a friend of the court case for the domestic relations matter. If the parties to a domestic relations matter file a motion under this subsection, the court shall issue that order unless the court determines 1 or more of the following:

(a) A party to the domestic relations matter is eligible for title IV-D services because of the party's current or past receipt of public assistance.

(b) A party to the domestic relations matter applies for title IV-D services.

(c) A party to the domestic relations matter requests that the office of the friend of the court open and maintain a friend of the court case for the domestic relations matter, even though the party may not be eligible for title IV-D services because the domestic relations matter involves, by way of example and not limitation, only spousal support, child custody, parenting time, or child custody and parenting time.

(d) There exists in the domestic relations matter evidence of domestic violence or uneven bargaining positions and evidence that a party to the domestic relations matter has chosen not to apply for title IV-D services against the best interest of either the party or the party's child.

(e) The parties have not filed with the court a document, signed by each party, that includes a list of the friend of the court services and an acknowledgment that the parties are choosing to do without those services.

(3) If a friend of the court case is not opened for a domestic relations matter, the parties to the domestic relations matter have full responsibility for administration and enforcement of the obligations imposed in the domestic relations matter.

(4) The parties to a friend of the court case may file a motion for the court to order the office of the friend of the court to close their friend of the court case. The court shall issue an order that the office of the friend of the court shall close the friend of the court case unless the court determines 1 or more of the following:

(a) A party to the friend of the court case objects.

(b) A party to the friend of the court case is eligible for title IV-D services because the party is receiving public assistance.

(c) A party to the friend of the court case is eligible for title IV-D services because the party received public assistance and an arrearage is owed to the governmental entity that provided the public assistance.

(d) The friend of the court case record shows that, within the previous 12 months, a child support arrearage or custody or parenting time order violation has occurred in the case.

(e) Within the previous 12 months, a party to the friend of the court case has reopened a friend of the court case.

(f) There exists in the friend of the court case evidence of domestic violence or uneven bargaining positions and evidence that a party to the friend of the court case has chosen to close the case against the best interest of either the party or the party's child.

(g) The parties have not filed with the court a document, signed by each party, that includes a list of the friend of the court services and an acknowledgment that the parties are choosing to do without those services.

(5) The closure of a friend of the court case does not release a party from the party's obligations imposed in the underlying domestic relations matter. The parties to a closed friend of the court case assume full responsibility for administration and enforcement of obligations imposed in the underlying domestic relations matter.

(6) If a party to the underlying domestic relations matter wants to ensure that child support payments made after a friend of the court case is closed will be taken into account in any possible future office of the friend of the court enforcement action, the child support payments must be made through the SDU. If the parties choose to continue to have child support payments made through the SDU, the office of the friend of the court shall not close its friend of the court case until each party provides the SDU with the information necessary to process the child support payments required in the underlying domestic relations matter.

(7) If a party to a domestic relations matter for which there is not an open friend of the court case applies for services from the office of the friend of the court or applies for public assistance, the office of the friend of the court shall open or reopen a friend of the court case. If the office of the friend of the court opens or reopens a friend of the court case as required by this subsection, the court shall issue an order in that domestic relations matter that contains the provisions required by this act and by the support and parenting time enforcement act for a friend of the court case.

(8) If the parties to a domestic relations matter file a motion under subsection (2) or (4), the friend of the court shall advise the parties in writing as to the services that the office of the friend of the court is not required to provide. The

state court administrative office shall develop and make available a form for use by an office of the friend of the court under this subsection and a document for use by parties to a domestic relations matter under subsection (2) or (4).

Sec. 9. (1) Except as otherwise provided in subsections (2) and (3) or in the order or judgment, after a support order is entered in a friend of the court case, the office shall receive each payment and service fee under the support order; shall, not less than once each month, record each support payment due, paid, and past due; and shall disburse each support payment to the recipient of support within 14 days after the office receives each payment or within the federally mandated time frame, whichever is shorter.

(2) An office shall receive support order and service fee payments, and shall disburse support, as required by subsection (1) until the state disbursement unit implements support and fee receipt and disbursement for the cases administered by that office. At the family independence agency's direction and in cooperation with the SDU, an office shall continue support and fee receipt and support disbursement to facilitate the transition of that responsibility to the SDU as directed in, and in accordance with the transition schedule developed as required by, the office of child support act, 1971 PA 174, MCL 400.231 to 400.240.

(3) After SDU support and fee receipt and disbursement is implemented in a circuit court circuit, the office for that court may accept a support payment made in cash or by cashier's check or money order. If the office accepts such a payment, the office shall transmit the payment to the SDU and shall inform the payer of the SDU's location and the requirement to make payments through the SDU.

(4) Promptly after November 3, 1999, each office shall establish and maintain the support order and account records necessary to enforce support orders and necessary to record obligations, support and fee receipt and disbursement, and related payments. Each office shall provide the SDU with access to those records and shall assist the SDU to resolve support and fee receipt and disbursement problems related to inadequate identifying information.

(5) The office shall provide annually to each party, without charge, 1 statement of account upon request. Additional statements of account shall be provided at a reasonable fee sufficient to pay for the cost of reproduction. Statements provided under this subsection are in addition to statements provided for administrative and judicial hearings.

(6) The office shall initiate and carry out proceedings to enforce an order in a friend of the court case regarding custody, parenting time, health care coverage, or support in accordance with this act, the support and parenting time enforcement act, and supreme court rules.

(7) Upon request of a child support agency of another state, the office shall initiate and carry out certain proceedings to enforce support orders entered in the other state without the need to register the order as a friend of the court case in this state. The order shall be enforced using automated administrative enforcement actions authorized under the support and parenting time enforcement act.

Sec. 11. (1) Each office shall initiate 1 or more support enforcement measures under the support and parenting time enforcement act when 1 of the following applies:

(a) Except as otherwise provided in this subdivision, the arrearage under the support order is equal to or greater than the monthly amount of support payable under the order. If the support order was entered ex parte, an office shall not initiate enforcement under this subdivision until the office receives a copy of proof of service for the order and at least 1 month has elapsed since the date of service. An office is not required to initiate enforcement under this subdivision if 1 or more of the following circumstances exist:

(i) Despite the existence of the arrearage, an order of income withholding is effective and payment is being made under the order of income withholding in the amount required under the order.

(ii) Despite the existence of the arrearage and even though an order of income withholding is not effective, payment is being made in the amount required under the order.

(iii) One or more support enforcement measures have been initiated and an objection to 1 or more of those measures has not been resolved.

(b) A parent fails to obtain or maintain health care coverage for the parent's child as ordered by the court. The office shall initiate enforcement under this subdivision at the following times:

(i) Within 60 days after the entry of a support order containing health care coverage provisions.

(ii) When a review is conducted as provided in section 17.

(iii) Concurrent with enforcement initiated by the office under subdivision (a).

(iv) Upon receipt of a written complaint from a party.

(v) Upon receipt of a written complaint from the department if the child for whose benefit health care coverage is ordered is a recipient of public assistance or medical assistance.

(c) A person legally responsible for the actual care of a child incurs an uninsured health care expense and submits to the office a written complaint that meets the requirements of section 11a.

(2) An arrearage amount that arises at the moment a court issues an order imposing or modifying support, because the order relates back to a petition or motion filing date, shall not be considered as an arrearage for the purpose of initiating support enforcement measures, centralizing enforcement, or other action required or authorized in response to a support arrearage under this act or the support and parenting time enforcement act, unless the payer fails to become current with the court ordered support payments within 2 months after entry of the order imposing or modifying support.

Sec. 13. (1) The office shall provide, either directly or by contract, domestic relations mediation to assist the parties in settling voluntarily a dispute concerning child custody or parenting time that arises in a friend of the court case. Parties shall not be required to meet with a domestic relations mediator. The service may be provided directly by the office only if such a service is in place on July 1, 1983, if the service is not available from a private source, or if the court can demonstrate that providing the service within the friend of the court office is cost beneficial. Any expansion of existing services provided by the court on July 1, 1983 shall be provided by an individual meeting the domestic relations mediator minimum qualifications listed under subsection (4).

(2) If an agreement is reached by the parties through domestic relations mediation, a consent order incorporating the agreement shall be prepared by an employee of the office who is a member of the state bar of Michigan; under section 22, by a member of the state bar of Michigan; or by the attorney for 1 of the parties. The consent order shall be provided to, and shall be entered by, the court.

(3) Except as provided in subsection (2), a communication between a domestic relations mediator and a party to a domestic relations mediation is confidential. The secrecy of the communication shall be preserved inviolate as a privileged communication. The communication shall not be admitted in evidence in any proceedings. The same protection shall be given to communications between the parties in the presence of the mediator.

(4) A domestic relations mediator who performs mediation under this act shall have all of the following minimum qualifications:

(a) One or more of the following:

(i) A license or a limited license to engage in the practice of psychology under parts 161 and 182 of the public health code, 1978 PA 368, MCL 333.16101 to 333.16349 and 333.18201 to 333.18237, or a master's degree in counseling, social work, or marriage and family counseling; and successful completion of the training program provided by the bureau under section 19(3)(b).

(ii) Not less than 5 years of experience in family counseling, preferably in a setting related to the areas of responsibility of the friend of the court and preferably to reflect the ethnic population to be served, and successful completion of the training program provided by the bureau under section 19(3)(b).

(iii) A graduate degree in a behavioral science and successful completion of a domestic relations mediation training program certified by the bureau with not less than 40 hours of classroom instruction and 250 hours of practical experience working under the direction of a person who has successfully completed a program certified by the bureau.

(iv) Membership in the state bar of Michigan and successful completion of the training program provided by the bureau under section 19(3)(b).

(b) Knowledge of the court system of this state and the procedures used in domestic relations matters.

(c) Knowledge of other resources in the community to which the parties to a domestic relations matter can be referred for assistance.

(d) Knowledge of child development, clinical issues relating to children, the effects of divorce on children, and child custody research.

Sec. 15. An employee of the office who performs domestic relations mediation in a friend of the court case involving a particular party shall not perform referee functions, investigation and recommendation functions, or enforcement functions as to any domestic relations matter involving that party.

Sec. 17. (1) After a final judgment containing a child support order has been entered in a friend of the court case, the office shall periodically review the order, as follows:

(a) If a child is being supported in whole or in part by public assistance, not less than once each 24 months unless both of the following apply:

(i) The office receives notice from the department that good cause exists not to proceed with support action.

(ii) Neither party has requested a review.

(b) At the initiative of the office, if there are reasonable grounds to believe that the amount of child support awarded in the judgment should be modified or that dependent health care coverage is available and the support order should be modified to include an order for health care coverage. Reasonable grounds to review an order under this subdivision include temporary or permanent changes in the physical custody of a child that the court has not ordered, increased or

decreased need of the child, probable access by an employed parent to dependent health care coverage, or changed financial conditions of a recipient or a payer of child support including, but not limited to, application for or receipt of public assistance, unemployment compensation, or worker's compensation.

(c) Upon receipt of a written request from either party. Within 15 days after receipt of the review request, the office shall determine whether the order is due for review. The office is not required to investigate more than 1 request received from a party each 24 months.

(d) If a child is receiving medical assistance, not less than once each 24 months unless either of the following applies:

(i) The order requires provision of health care coverage for the child and neither party has requested a review.

(ii) The office receives notice from the department that good cause exists not to proceed with support action and neither party has requested a review.

(e) If requested by the initiating state for a recipient of services in that state under title IV-D, not less than once each 24 months. Within 15 days after receipt of a review request, the office shall determine whether an order is due for review.

(2) Within 180 days after determining that a review is required under subsection (1), the office shall send notices as provided in section 17b(2) and (3), conduct a review, and obtain a modification of the order if appropriate.

(3) The office shall use the child support formula developed by the bureau under section 19 in calculating the child support award. If the office determines from the facts of the case that application of the child support formula would be unjust or inappropriate, or that income should not be based on actual income earned by the parties, the office shall prepare a written report that includes all of the following:

(a) The support amount, based on actual income earned by the parties, determined by application of the child support formula and all factual assumptions upon which that support amount is based.

(b) An alternative support recommendation and all factual assumptions upon which the alternative support recommendation is based.

(c) How the alternative support recommendation deviates from the child support formula.

(d) The reasons for the alternative support recommendation.

(e) All evidence known to the friend of the court that the individual is or is not able to earn the income imputed to him or her.

(4) The office shall petition the court if modification is determined to be necessary under subsection (3) unless either of the following applies:

(a) The difference between the existing and projected child support award is within the minimum threshold for modification of a child support amount as established by the formula.

(b) The court previously determined that application of the formula was unjust or inappropriate and the office determines under subsection (3) that the facts of the case and the reasons and amount of the prior deviation remain unchanged.

(5) A petition for modification may be made at the same time the parties are provided with notice under section 17b(3). A hearing held on a proposed modification shall be scheduled no earlier than 30 days after the date of the notice provided for in section 17b(3).

(6) If the office determines there should be no change in the order and a party objects to the determination in writing to the office within 30 days after the date of the notice provided for in section 17b(3), the office shall schedule a hearing before the court.

(7) If a support order lacks provisions for health care coverage, the office shall petition the court for a modification to require that 1 or both parents obtain or maintain health care coverage for the benefit of each child who is subject to the support order if either of the following is true:

(a) Either parent has health care coverage available, as a benefit of employment, for the benefit of the child at a reasonable cost.

(b) Either parent is self-employed, maintains health care coverage for himself or herself, and can obtain health care coverage for the benefit of the child at a reasonable cost.

(8) The office shall determine the costs to each parent for dependent health care coverage and child care costs and shall disclose those costs in the report under section 17b(4).

Sec. 17b. (1) Each party subject to a child support order shall be notified of the right to request a review of the order as provided in section 17, and the place and manner in which to make the request. For a friend of the court case, the notice shall be provided by the office or, pursuant to court rule, by the plaintiff, using the informational pamphlet required under section 5. The notice shall be sent to the party's last known address.

(2) The office shall notify each party of a review of a child support order under section 17 at least 30 days before the review is conducted. The notice shall request income, expense, or other information as needed from the party to conduct the review and shall specify the date by which that information is due. The notice shall be sent to each party to his or her last known address.

(3) After a review of a child support order has been conducted, the office shall notify each party of a proposed increase or decrease in the amount of child support, a proposed modification to order health care coverage, or a determination that there should be no change in the order. Notice of an increase or decrease in child support or a modification to order health care coverage can be provided by or with a copy of the petition for modification. The notice shall also inform the parties of both of the following:

(a) That the party may object to the proposed modification or determination that there should be no change in the order at a hearing before a referee or the court.

(b) The time, place, and manner in which to raise objections.

(4) The office shall make available to each party and his or her attorney a copy of the written report, transcript, recommendation, and supporting documents or a summary of supporting documents prepared or used by the office under section 17 before the court modifies a support order.

Sec. 17c. (1) If Michigan is the initiating state in an interstate friend of the court case involving child support, the office shall determine whether a review of a support order in another state is appropriate in accordance with section 17 and is appropriate based upon the residence and jurisdiction of the parties.

(2) If the office determines that a review of a support order in another state is appropriate, the office shall obtain income, expense, and other information needed to conduct the review from the requesting party or recipient of public assistance or medical assistance.

(3) The office shall initiate a request for a review within 20 calendar days after receipt of the information requested under subsection (2).

(4) The office shall forward to a party who resides in Michigan a copy of each notice issued by the responding state in conjunction with the review and modification of a support order, which notice is sent to the office for distribution.

Sec. 26. (1) A party to a friend of the court case who has a grievance concerning office operations or employees shall utilize the following grievance procedure:

(a) File the grievance, in writing, with the appropriate friend of the court office. The office shall cause the grievance to be investigated and decided as soon as practicable. Within 30 days after a grievance is filed, the office shall respond to the grievance or issue a statement to the party filing the grievance stating the reason a response is not possible within that time.

(b) A party who is not satisfied with the decision of the office under subdivision (a) may file a further grievance, in writing, with the chief judge. The chief judge shall cause the grievance to be investigated and decided as soon as practicable. Within 30 days after a grievance is filed, the court shall respond to the grievance or issue a statement to the party filing the grievance stating the reason a response is not possible within that time.

(2) Each office shall maintain a record of grievances received and a record of whether the grievance is decided or outstanding. The record shall be transmitted not less than biannually to the bureau. Each office shall provide public access to the report of grievances prepared by the bureau under section 19.

(3) In addition to the grievance procedure provided in subsection (1), a party to a friend of the court case who has a grievance concerning office operations may file, at any time during the proceedings, the grievance in writing with the appropriate citizen advisory committee. In its discretion, the citizen advisory committee shall conduct a review or investigation of, or hold a formal or informal hearing on, a grievance submitted to the committee. The citizen advisory committee may delegate its responsibility under this subsection to subcommittees appointed as provided in section 4a.

(4) In addition to action taken under subsection (3), the citizen advisory committee shall establish a procedure for randomly selecting grievances submitted directly to the office of the friend of the court. The citizen advisory committee shall review the response of the office to these grievances and report its findings to the court and the county board, either immediately or in the committee's annual report.

(5) The citizen advisory committee shall examine the grievances filed with the friend of the court under this section and shall review or investigate each grievance that alleges that a decision was made based on gender rather than the best interests of the child.

(6) If a citizen advisory committee reviews or investigates a grievance, the committee shall respond to the grievance as soon as practicable.

(7) A grievance filed under subsection (3) is limited to office operations, and the citizen advisory committee shall inform an individual who files with the committee a grievance that concerns an office employee or a court or office decision or recommendation regarding a specific case that such a matter is not a proper subject for a grievance.

Enacting section 1. Section 17a of the friend of the court act, 1982 PA 294, MCL 552.517a, is repealed.

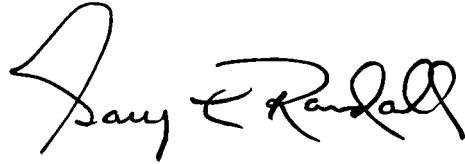
Enacting section 2. (1) Sections 2, 2a, 5, 9, 11, 13, 15, 17, 17b, 17c, and 26 of the friend of the court act, MCL 552.502, 552.502a, 552.505, 552.509, 552.511, 552.513, 552.515, 552.517, 552.517b, 552.517c, and 552.526, as amended by this amendatory act, take effect June 1, 2003.

(2) Section 5a of the friend of the court act, MCL 552.505a, as added by this amendatory act, takes effect December 1, 2002.

Enacting section 3. This amendatory act does not take effect unless all of the following bills of the 91st Legislature are enacted into law:

- (a) House Bill No. 6008.
- (b) House Bill No. 6009.
- (c) House Bill No. 6010.

This act is ordered to take immediate effect.



Clerk of the House of Representatives.



Secretary of the Senate.

Approved

Governor.