

4644--C

2013-2014 Regular Sessions

I N   S E N A T E

April 16, 2013

---

Introduced by Sen. BONACIC -- (at request of the Office of Court Administration) -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Judiciary -- committee discharged, bill amended, ordered reprinted as amended and recommitted to said committee -- committee discharged, bill amended, ordered reprinted as amended and recommitted to said committee -- committee discharged, bill amended, ordered reprinted as amended and recommitted to said committee

AN ACT to amend the family court act and the public health law, in relation to acknowledgments of paternity executed by juveniles under the age of eighteen

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK, REPRESENTED IN SENATE AND ASSEMBLY, DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

1     Section 1. Subdivisions (b) and (c) of section 516-a of the family  
2     court act, as amended by chapter 462 of the laws of 2007, are amended to  
3     read as follows:  
4     (b) (i) [An] WHERE A SIGNATORY TO AN acknowledgment of paternity  
5     executed pursuant to section one hundred eleven-k of the social services  
6     law or section four thousand one hundred thirty-five-b of the public  
7     health law HAD ATTAINED THE AGE OF EIGHTEEN AT THE TIME OF EXECUTION OF  
8     THE ACKNOWLEDGMENT, THE SIGNATORY may [be rescinded] SEEK TO RESCIND THE  
9     ACKNOWLEDGMENT by [either signator's] filing [of] a petition with the  
10    court to vacate the acknowledgment within the earlier of sixty days of  
11    the date of signing the acknowledgment or the date of an administrative  
12    or a judicial proceeding (including, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, a proceeding to  
13    establish a support order) relating to the child in which [either signa-  
14    tor] THE SIGNATORY is a party. [If, at any time before or after a peti-  
15    tion is filed, a signator dies or becomes mentally ill or cannot be  
16    found within the state, neither the proceeding nor the right to commence  
17    the proceeding shall abate but may be commenced or continued by any of  
18    the persons authorized by this article to commence a paternity proceed-

EXPLANATION--Matter in *ITALICS* (underscored) is new; matter in brackets  
[ ] is old law to be omitted.

LBD09330-08-3

ing.] For purposes of this section, the "date of an administrative or a judicial proceeding" shall be the date by which the respondent is required to answer the petition. [The]

(II) WHERE A SIGNATORY TO AN ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF PATERNITY EXECUTED PURSUANT TO SECTION ONE HUNDRED ELEVEN-K OF THE SOCIAL SERVICES LAW OR SECTION FOUR THOUSAND ONE HUNDRED THIRTY-FIVE-B OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH LAW HAD NOT ATTAINED THE AGE OF EIGHTEEN AT THE TIME OF EXECUTION OF THE ACKNOWLEDGMENT, THE SIGNATORY MAY SEEK TO RESCIND THE ACKNOWLEDGMENT BY FILING A PETITION WITH THE COURT TO VACATE THE ACKNOWLEDGMENT ANYTIME UP TO SIXTY DAYS AFTER THE SIGNATORY'S ATTAINING THE AGE OF EIGHTEEN YEARS OR SIXTY DAYS AFTER THE DATE ON WHICH THE RESPONDENT IS REQUIRED TO ANSWER A PETITION (INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, A PETITION TO ESTABLISH A SUPPORT ORDER) RELATING TO THE CHILD IN WHICH THE SIGNATORY IS A PARTY, WHICHEVER IS EARLIER; PROVIDED, HOWEVER, THAT THE SIGNATORY MUST HAVE BEEN ADVISED AT SUCH PROCEEDING OF HIS OR HER RIGHT TO FILE A PETITION TO VACATE THE ACKNOWLEDGMENT WITHIN SIXTY DAYS OF THE DATE OF SUCH PROCEEDING.

(III) WHERE A PETITION TO VACATE AN ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF PATERNITY HAS BEEN FILED IN ACCORDANCE WITH PARAGRAPH (I) OR (II) OF THIS SUBDIVISION, THE court shall order genetic marker tests or DNA tests for the determination of the child's paternity. No such test shall be ordered, however, upon a written finding by the court that it is not in the best interests of the child on the basis of res judicata, equitable estoppel, or the presumption of legitimacy of a child born to a married woman. If the court determines, following the test, that the person who signed the acknowledgment is the father of the child, the court shall make a finding of paternity and enter an order of filiation. If the court determines that the person who signed the acknowledgment is not the father of the child, the acknowledgment shall be vacated.

[(ii)] (IV) After the expiration of [sixty days of the execution of the acknowledgment] THE TIME LIMITS SET FORTH IN PARAGRAPHS (I) AND (II) OF THIS SUBDIVISION, [either signator] ANY OF THE SIGNATORIES TO AN ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF PATERNITY may challenge the acknowledgment [of paternity] in court by alleging and proving fraud, duress, or material mistake of fact. [If, at any time before or after a petition is filed, a signator dies or becomes mentally ill or cannot be found within the state, neither the proceeding nor the right to commence the proceeding shall abate but may be commenced or continued by any of the persons authorized by this article to commence a paternity proceeding.] If the petitioner proves to the court that the acknowledgment of paternity was signed under fraud, duress, or due to a material mistake of fact, the court shall THEN order genetic marker tests or DNA tests for the determination of the child's paternity. No such test shall be ordered, however, upon a written finding by the court that it is not in the best interests of the child on the basis of res judicata, equitable estoppel, or the presumption of legitimacy of a child born to a married woman. If the court determines, following the test, that the person who signed the acknowledgment is the father of the child, the court shall make a finding of paternity and enter an order of filiation. If the court determines that the person who signed the acknowledgment is not the father of the child, the acknowledgment shall be vacated.

(V) IF, AT ANY TIME BEFORE OR AFTER A SIGNATORY HAS FILED A PETITION TO VACATE AN ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF PATERNITY PURSUANT TO THIS SUBDIVISION, THE SIGNATORY DIES OR BECOMES MENTALLY ILL OR CANNOT BE FOUND WITHIN THE STATE, NEITHER THE PROCEEDING NOR THE RIGHT TO COMMENCE THE PROCEEDING

1 SHALL ABATE BUT MAY BE COMMENCED OR CONTINUED BY ANY OF THE PERSONS  
2 AUTHORIZED BY THIS ARTICLE TO COMMENCE A PATERNITY PROCEEDING.

3 (c) Neither [signator's] SIGNATORY'S legal obligations, including the  
4 obligation for child support arising from the acknowledgment, may be  
5 suspended during the challenge to the acknowledgment except for good  
6 cause as the court may find. If the court vacates the acknowledgment of  
7 paternity, the court shall immediately provide a copy of the order to  
8 the registrar of the district in which the child's birth certificate is  
9 filed and also to the putative father registry operated by the depart-  
10 ment of social services pursuant to section three hundred seventy-two-c  
11 of the social services law. In addition, if the mother of the child who  
12 is the subject of the acknowledgment is in receipt of child support  
13 services pursuant to title six-A of article three of the social services  
14 law, the court shall immediately provide a copy of the order to the  
15 child support enforcement unit of the social services district that  
16 provides the mother with such services.

17 S 2. Subdivisions 1 and 2 of section 4135-b of the public health law,  
18 subdivision 1 as added by chapter 59 of the laws of 1993, paragraph (a)  
19 of subdivision 1 as amended by chapter 214 of the laws of 1998, subdivi-  
20 sion 2 as amended by chapter 170 of the laws of 1994 and paragraph (b)  
21 of subdivision 2 as amended by chapter 398 of the laws of 1997, are  
22 amended to read as follows:

23 1. (a) Immediately preceding or following the in-hospital birth of a  
24 child to an unmarried woman, the person in charge of such hospital or  
25 his or her designated representative shall provide to the child's mother  
26 and putative father, if such father is readily identifiable and avail-  
27 able, the documents and written instructions necessary for such mother  
28 and putative father to complete an acknowledgment of paternity witnessed  
29 by two persons not related to the signatory. Such acknowledgment, if  
30 signed by both parties, at any time following the birth of a child,  
31 shall be filed with the registrar at the same time at which the certif-  
32 icate of live birth is filed, if possible, or anytime thereafter. Noth-  
33 ing herein shall be deemed to require the person in charge of such  
34 hospital or his or her designee to seek out or otherwise locate a puta-  
35 tive father who is not readily identifiable or available. The acknowl-  
36 edgment shall be executed on a form provided by the commissioner devel-  
37 oped in consultation with the appropriate commissioner of the department  
38 of family assistance, which shall include the social security number of  
39 the mother and of the putative father and provide in plain language (i)  
40 a statement by the mother consenting to the acknowledgment of paternity  
41 and a statement that the putative father is the only possible father,  
42 (ii) a statement by the putative father that he is the biological father  
43 of the child, and (iii) a statement that the signing of the acknowledg-  
44 ment of paternity by both parties shall have the same force and effect  
45 as an order of filiation entered after a court hearing by a court of  
46 competent jurisdiction, including an obligation to provide support for  
47 the child except that, only if filed with the registrar of the district  
48 in which the birth certificate has been filed, will the acknowledgment  
49 have such force and effect with respect to inheritance rights.

50 (B) Prior to the execution of an acknowledgment of paternity, the  
51 mother and the putative father shall be provided orally, which may be  
52 through the use of audio or video equipment, and in writing with such  
53 information as is required pursuant to this section with respect to  
54 their rights and the consequences of signing a voluntary acknowledgment  
55 of paternity including, but not limited to[, ]:

1 (I) that the signing of the acknowledgment of paternity shall estab-  
2 lish the paternity of the child and shall have the same force and effect  
3 as an order of paternity or filiation issued by a court of competent  
4 jurisdiction establishing the duty of both parties to provide support  
5 for the child;

6 (II) that if such an acknowledgment is not made, the putative father  
7 can be held liable for support only if the family court, after a hear-  
8 ing, makes an order declaring that the putative father is the father of  
9 the child whereupon the court may make an order of support which may be  
10 retroactive to the birth of the child;

11 (III) that if made a respondent in a proceeding to establish paternity  
12 the putative father has a right to free legal representation if indi-  
13 gent;

14 (IV) that the putative father has a right to a genetic marker test or  
15 to a DNA test when available;

16 (V) that by executing the acknowledgment, the putative father waives  
17 his right to a hearing, to which he would otherwise be entitled, on the  
18 issue of paternity;

19 (VI) that a copy of the acknowledgment of paternity shall be filed  
20 with the putative father registry pursuant to section three hundred  
21 seventy-two-c of the social services law, and that such filing may  
22 establish the child's right to inheritance from the putative father  
23 pursuant to clause (B) of subparagraph two of paragraph (a) of section  
24 4-1.2 of the estates, powers and trusts law;

25 (VII) that, if such acknowledgment is filed with the registrar of the  
26 district in which the birth certificate has been filed, such acknowledg-  
27 ment will establish inheritance rights from the putative father pursuant  
28 to clause (A) of subparagraph two of paragraph (a) of section 4-1.2 of  
29 the estates, powers and trusts law;

30 (VIII) that no further judicial or administrative proceedings are  
31 required to [ratio] RATIFY an unchallenged acknowledgment of paternity  
32 provided, however, that [both the putative father and the mother of the  
33 child]:

34 (A) A SIGNATORY TO AN ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF PATERNITY, WHO HAD ATTAINED  
35 THE AGE OF EIGHTEEN AT THE TIME OF EXECUTION OF THE ACKNOWLEDGMENT,  
36 SHALL have the right to rescind the acknowledgment within the earlier of  
37 sixty days from the date of signing the acknowledgment or the date of an  
38 administrative or a judicial proceeding (including, BUT NOT LIMITED TO,  
39 a proceeding to establish a support order) relating to the child in  
40 which [either] THE signatory is a party[;], PROVIDED that the "date of  
41 an administrative or a judicial proceeding" shall be the date by which  
42 the respondent is required to answer the petition;

43 (B) A SIGNATORY TO AN ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF PATERNITY, WHO HAD NOT  
44 ATTAINED THE AGE OF EIGHTEEN AT THE TIME OF EXECUTION OF THE ACKNOWLEDG-  
45 MENT, SHALL HAVE THE RIGHT TO RESCIND THE ACKNOWLEDGMENT ANYTIME UP TO  
46 SIXTY DAYS AFTER THE SIGNATORY'S ATTAINING THE AGE OF EIGHTEEN YEARS OR  
47 SIXTY DAYS AFTER THE DATE ON WHICH THE RESPONDENT IS REQUIRED TO ANSWER  
48 A PETITION (INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, A PETITION TO ESTABLISH A  
49 SUPPORT ORDER) RELATING TO THE CHILD, WHICHEVER IS EARLIER; PROVIDED,  
50 HOWEVER, THAT THE SIGNATORY MUST HAVE BEEN ADVISED AT SUCH PROCEEDING OF  
51 HIS OR HER RIGHT TO FILE A PETITION TO VACATE THE ACKNOWLEDGMENT WITHIN  
52 SIXTY DAYS OF THE DATE OF SUCH PROCEEDING;

53 (IX) that after the expiration of [sixty days of the execution of the  
54 acknowledgment] THE TIME LIMITS SET FORTH IN CLAUSES (A) AND (B) OF  
55 SUBPARAGRAPH (VIII) OF THIS PARAGRAPH, [either signatory] ANY OF THE  
56 SIGNATORIES may challenge the acknowledgment of paternity in court only

1 on the basis of fraud, duress, or material mistake of fact, with the  
2 burden of proof on the party challenging the voluntary acknowledgment;

3 (X) that [they] THE PUTATIVE FATHER AND MOTHER may wish to consult  
4 with [an attorney] ATTORNEYS before executing the acknowledgment; and  
5 that they have the right to seek legal representation and supportive  
6 services including counseling regarding such acknowledgment;

7 (XI) that the acknowledgment of paternity may be the basis for the  
8 putative father establishing custody and visitation rights to the child  
9 [; if the acknowledgment is signed, it may be the basis] AND for requir-  
10 ing the putative father's consent prior to an adoption proceeding;

11 (XII) THAT the mother's refusal to sign the acknowledgment shall not  
12 be deemed a failure to cooperate in establishing paternity for the  
13 child; and

14 (XIII) THAT the child may bear the last name of either parent, which  
15 name shall not affect the legal status of the child.

16 In addition, the governing body of such hospital shall insure that  
17 appropriate staff shall provide to the child's mother and putative  
18 father, prior to the mother's discharge from the hospital, the opportu-  
19 nity to speak with hospital staff to obtain clarifying information and  
20 answers to their questions about paternity establishment, and shall also  
21 provide the telephone number of the local support collection unit.

22 [(b)] (C) Within ten days after receiving the certificate of birth,  
23 the registrar shall furnish without charge to each parent or guardian of  
24 the child or to the mother at the address designated by her for that  
25 purpose, a certified copy of the certificate of birth and, if applica-  
26 ble, a certified copy of the written acknowledgment of paternity. If the  
27 mother is in receipt of child support enforcement services pursuant to  
28 title six-A of article three of the social services law, the registrar  
29 also shall furnish without charge a certified copy of the certificate of  
30 birth and, if applicable, a certified copy of the written acknowledgment  
31 of paternity to the social services district of the county within which  
32 the mother resides.

33 2. (a) When a child's paternity is acknowledged voluntarily pursuant  
34 to section one hundred eleven-k of the social services law, the social  
35 services official shall file the executed acknowledgment with the  
36 registrar of the district in which the birth occurred and in which the  
37 birth certificate has been filed.

38 (b) Where a child's paternity has not been acknowledged voluntarily  
39 pursuant to paragraph (a) of subdivision one of this section or para-  
40 graph (a) of this subdivision, the child's mother and the putative  
41 father may voluntarily acknowledge a child's paternity pursuant to this  
42 paragraph by signing the acknowledgment of paternity [provided, however,  
43 that both the putative father and the mother of the child].

44 (C) A SIGNATORY TO AN ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF PATERNITY, WHO HAS ATTAINED  
45 THE AGE OF EIGHTEEN AT THE TIME OF EXECUTION OF THE ACKNOWLEDGMENT SHALL  
46 have the right to rescind the acknowledgment within the earlier of sixty  
47 days from the date of signing the acknowledgment or the date of an  
48 administrative or a judicial proceeding (including, BUT NOT LIMITED TO,  
49 a proceeding to establish a support order) relating to the child in  
50 which either signatory is a party; PROVIDED that for purposes of this  
51 section, the "date of an administrative or a judicial proceeding" shall  
52 be the date by which the respondent is required to answer the petition[;  
53 that after].

54 (D) A SIGNATORY TO AN ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF PATERNITY, WHO HAS NOT  
55 ATTAINED THE AGE OF EIGHTEEN AT THE TIME OF EXECUTION OF THE ACKNOWLEDG-  
56 MENT, SHALL HAVE THE RIGHT TO RESCIND THE ACKNOWLEDGMENT ANYTIME UP TO

1 SIXTY DAYS AFTER THE SIGNATORY'S ATTAINING THE AGE OF EIGHTEEN YEARS OR  
2 SIXTY DAYS AFTER THE DATE ON WHICH THE RESPONDENT IS REQUIRED TO ANSWER  
3 A PETITION (INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, A PETITION TO ESTABLISH A  
4 SUPPORT ORDER) RELATING TO THE CHILD IN WHICH THE SIGNATORY IS A PARTY,  
5 WHICHEVER IS EARLIER; PROVIDED, HOWEVER, THAT THE SIGNATORY MUST HAVE  
6 BEEN ADVISED AT SUCH PROCEEDING OF HIS OR HER RIGHT TO FILE A PETITION  
7 TO VACATE THE ACKNOWLEDGMENT WITHIN SIXTY DAYS OF THE DATE OF SUCH  
8 PROCEEDING.

9 (E) AFTER the expiration of [sixty days of the execution of the  
10 acknowledgment] THE TIME LIMITS SET FORTH IN PARAGRAPHS (C) AND (D) OF  
11 THIS SUBDIVISION, [either signator] ANY OF THE SIGNATORIES may challenge  
12 the acknowledgment of paternity in court only on the basis of fraud,  
13 duress, or material mistake of fact, with the burden of proof on the  
14 party challenging the voluntary acknowledgment. The acknowledgment shall  
15 have full force and effect once so signed. The original or a copy of the  
16 [acknowledgement] ACKNOWLEDGMENT shall be filed with the registrar of  
17 the district in which the birth certificate has been filed.

18 S 3. This act shall take effect on the ninetieth day after it shall  
19 have become a law.