

6768

2015-2016 Regular Sessions

I N   A S S E M B L Y

April 1, 2015

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Introduced by M. of A. ORTIZ -- read once and referred to the Committee  
on Judiciary

AN ACT to amend the domestic relations law, in relation to child custody  
when a parent is deployed on military active duty

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

1     Section 1. Section 70 of the domestic relations law is amended by  
2     adding a new subdivision (c) to read as follows:  
3     (C) NOTWITHSTANDING ANY OTHER PROVISION OF LAW TO THE CONTRARY, THE  
4     COURT SHALL NOT CONSIDER THE PAST OR CURRENT DEPLOYMENT, OR POSSIBLE  
5     FUTURE DEPLOYMENT OF A PARENT IN ACTIVE SERVICE OF THE ARMED FORCES OF  
6     THE UNITED STATES OR OF THE ORGANIZED MILITIA OF THE STATE AS A DETRI-  
7     MENTAL FACTOR TO THE AWARDING OF CUSTODY OF A CHILD WHERE A SUITABLE  
8     CHILD CARE PLAN HAS BEEN PRESENTED TO THE COURT BY THE PETITIONING  
9     PARENT.  
10    S 2. Subdivision 3 of section 75-1 of the domestic relations law, as  
11    amended by chapter 473 of the laws of 2009, is amended to read as  
12    follows:  
13    3. Unless the parties have otherwise stipulated or agreed, if an order  
14    is issued under this section, the return of the parent from active mili-  
15    tary service, deployment or temporary assignment shall be considered a  
16    substantial change in circumstances, AND WITHIN THIRTY DAYS OF SUCH  
17    RETURN THE CHILD CUSTODY ORDER IN EFFECT IMMEDIATELY PRIOR TO ANY  
18    MODIFICATIONS THEREOF PURSUANT TO SUBDIVISIONS ONE AND TWO OF THIS  
19    SECTION SHALL BE REINSTATED AND BE IN FULL FORCE AND EFFECT. [Upon the  
20    request of either parent, the court shall determine on the basis of the  
21    child's best interests whether the custody judgment or order previously  
22    in effect should be modified.]  
23    S 3. Paragraph (a) of subdivision 1 of section 240 of the domestic  
24    relations law, as amended by chapter 476 of the laws of 2009, is amended  
25    and a new subdivision 1-d is added to read as follows:

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

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(a) In any action or proceeding brought (1) to annul a marriage or to declare the nullity of a void marriage, or (2) for a separation, or (3) for a divorce, or (4) to obtain, by a writ of habeas corpus or by petition and order to show cause, the custody of or right to visitation with any child of a marriage, the court shall require verification of the status of any child of the marriage with respect to such child's custody and support, including any prior orders, and shall enter orders for custody and support as, in the court's discretion, justice requires, having regard to the circumstances of the case and of the respective parties and to the best interests of the child and subject to the provisions of [subdivision] SUBDIVISIONS one-c AND ONE-D of this section. Where either party to an action concerning custody of or a right to visitation with a child alleges in a sworn petition or complaint or sworn answer, cross-petition, counterclaim or other sworn responsive pleading that the other party has committed an act of domestic violence against the party making the allegation or a family or household member of either party, as such family or household member is defined in article eight of the family court act, and such allegations are proven by a preponderance of the evidence, the court must consider the effect of such domestic violence upon the best interests of the child, together with such other facts and circumstances as the court deems relevant in making a direction pursuant to this section and state on the record how such findings, facts and circumstances factored into the direction. If a parent makes a good faith allegation based on a reasonable belief supported by facts that the child is the victim of child abuse, child neglect, or the effects of domestic violence, and if that parent acts lawfully and in good faith in response to that reasonable belief to protect the child or seek treatment for the child, then that parent shall not be deprived of custody, visitation or contact with the child, or restricted in custody, visitation or contact, based solely on that belief or the reasonable actions taken based on that belief. If an allegation that a child is abused is supported by a preponderance of the evidence, then the court shall consider such evidence of abuse in determining the visitation arrangement that is in the best interest of the child, and the court shall not place a child in the custody of a parent who presents a substantial risk of harm to that child, and shall state on the record how such findings were factored into the determination. An order directing the payment of child support shall contain the social security numbers of the named parties. In all cases there shall be no prima facie right to the custody of the child in either parent. Such direction shall make provision for child support out of the property of either or both parents. The court shall make its award for child support pursuant to subdivision one-b of this section. Such direction may provide for reasonable visitation rights to the maternal and/or paternal grandparents of any child of the parties. Such direction as it applies to rights of visitation with a child remanded or placed in the care of a person, official, agency or institution pursuant to article ten of the family court act, or pursuant to an instrument approved under section three hundred fifty-eight-a of the social services law, shall be enforceable pursuant to part eight of article ten of the family court act and sections three hundred fifty-eight-a and three hundred eighty-four-a of the social services law and other applicable provisions of law against any person having care and custody, or temporary care and custody, of the child. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, any written application or motion to the court for the establishment, modification or enforcement of a child support obligation for persons not in

1 receipt of public assistance and care must contain either a request for  
2 child support enforcement services which would authorize the collection  
3 of the support obligation by the immediate issuance of an income  
4 execution for support enforcement as provided for by this chapter,  
5 completed in the manner specified in section one hundred eleven-g of the  
6 social services law; or a statement that the applicant has applied for  
7 or is in receipt of such services; or a statement that the applicant  
8 knows of the availability of such services, has declined them at this  
9 time and where support enforcement services pursuant to section one  
10 hundred eleven-g of the social services law have been declined that the  
11 applicant understands that an income deduction order may be issued  
12 pursuant to subdivision (c) of section fifty-two hundred forty-two of  
13 the civil practice law and rules without other child support enforcement  
14 services and that payment of an administrative fee may be required. The  
15 court shall provide a copy of any such request for child support  
16 enforcement services to the support collection unit of the appropriate  
17 social services district any time it directs payments to be made to such  
18 support collection unit. Additionally, the copy of any such request  
19 shall be accompanied by the name, address and social security number of  
20 the parties; the date and place of the parties' marriage; the name and  
21 date of birth of the child or children; and the name and address of the  
22 employers and income payors of the party from whom child support is  
23 sought or from the party ordered to pay child support to the other  
24 party. Such direction may require the payment of a sum or sums of money  
25 either directly to the custodial parent or to third persons for goods or  
26 services furnished for such child, or for both payments to the custodial  
27 parent and to such third persons; provided, however, that unless the  
28 party seeking or receiving child support has applied for or is receiving  
29 such services, the court shall not direct such payments to be made to  
30 the support collection unit, as established in section one hundred  
31 eleven-h of the social services law. Every order directing the payment  
32 of support shall require that if either parent currently, or at any time  
33 in the future, has health insurance benefits available that may be  
34 extended or obtained to cover the child, such parent is required to  
35 exercise the option of additional coverage in favor of such child and  
36 execute and deliver to such person any forms, notices, documents or  
37 instruments necessary to assure timely payment of any health insurance  
38 claims for such child.

39 1-D. NOTWITHSTANDING ANY OTHER PROVISION OF LAW TO THE CONTRARY, THE  
40 COURT SHALL NOT CONSIDER THE PAST OR CURRENT DEPLOYMENT, OR POSSIBLE  
41 FUTURE DEPLOYMENT OF A PARENT IN ACTIVE SERVICE OF THE ARMED FORCES OF  
42 THE UNITED STATES OR OF THE ORGANIZED MILITIA OF THE STATE AS A DETRI-  
43 MENTAL FACTOR TO THE AWARDING OF CUSTODY OF A CHILD TO A PETITIONING  
44 PARENT WHERE A SUITABLE CHILD CARE PLAN HAS BEEN PRESENTED TO THE COURT  
45 BY SUCH PARENT.

46 S 4. This act shall take effect immediately.