

Sixty-second
Legislative Assembly
of North Dakota

SENATE BILL NO. 2192

Introduced by

Senators J. Lee, Dever, Heckaman

Representatives Devlin, Holman, Weisz

1 A BILL for an Act to create and enact section 27-20-30.1 of the North Dakota Century Code,
2 relating to the disposition of a child needing continued foster care services after the age of
3 eighteen and under the age of twenty-one; to amend and reenact sections 27-20-03, 27-20-11,
4 27-20-21, 27-20-22, 27-20-26, 27-20-32.2, and 27-20-36 of the North Dakota Century Code,
5 relating to jurisdiction, venue, contents of petition, summons, right to counsel, reasonable efforts
6 to prevent removal or to unify, and limitations of time on orders of disposition; and to provide an
7 effective date.

8 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NORTH DAKOTA:**

9 **SECTION 1. AMENDMENT.** Section 27-20-03 of the North Dakota Century Code is
10 amended and reenacted as follows:

11 **27-20-03. Jurisdiction.**

- 12 1. The juvenile court has exclusive original jurisdiction of the following proceedings,
13 which are governed by this chapter:
- 14 a. Proceedings in which a child is alleged to be delinquent, unruly, or deprived;
 - 15 b. Proceedings for the termination of parental rights except when a part of an
16 adoption proceeding; and
 - 17 c. Proceedings arising under sections 27-20-39 through 27-20-42;
 - 18 d. Proceedings arising under section 27-20-30.1; and
 - 19 e. Civil forfeiture proceedings arising under chapter 19-03.1 or section 29-31.1-04
20 for which a child is alleged to have possessed forfeitable property. The juvenile
21 court shall conduct the proceedings in accordance with the procedures provided
22 for under sections 19-03.1-36 through 19-03.1-37.

2. The juvenile court also has exclusive original jurisdiction of the following proceedings, which are governed by the laws relating thereto without regard to the other provisions of this chapter:

- a. Proceedings to obtain judicial consent to the marriage, employment, or enlistment in the armed services of a child, if consent is required by law;
- b. Proceedings under the interstate compact on juveniles;
- c. Proceedings under the interstate compact on the placement of children; and
- d. Proceedings arising under section 50-06-06.13 to obtain a judicial determination that the placement of a severely emotionally disturbed child in an out-of-home treatment program is in the best interests of the child.

3. The juvenile court has concurrent jurisdiction with the district court of proceedings for the appointment of a guardian for a minor which, if originated under this chapter, are governed by this chapter and chapter 30.1-27.

SECTION 2. AMENDMENT. Section 27-20-11 of the North Dakota Century Code is amended and reenacted as follows:

27-20-11. Venue.

A proceeding under this chapter may be commenced in the county in which the child resides. A proceeding under section 27-20-30.1 must be commenced in the administrative county, as determined by the department of human services. If delinquent or unruly conduct is alleged, the proceeding may be commenced in the county in which the acts constituting the alleged delinquent or unruly conduct occurred. If deprivation is alleged, the proceeding may be brought in the county in which the child is present when it is commenced, the county in which the child has resided the majority of the thirty days prior to the date of the alleged deprivation, or the county where the alleged deprivation has occurred. The court shall determine the appropriate venue for a deprivation action based upon the best interests of the child.

SECTION 3. AMENDMENT. Section 27-20-21 of the North Dakota Century Code is amended and reenacted as follows:

27-20-21. Contents of petition.

The petition must be verified and may be on information and belief. It must set forth plainly:

1. The facts which bring the child within the jurisdiction of the court, with a statement that it is in the best interest of the child and the public that the proceeding be brought and,

1 if delinquency or unruly conduct is alleged, that the child is in need of treatment or
2 rehabilitation;

3 2. The name, age, and residence address, if any, of the child on whose behalf the
4 petition is brought;

5 3. The names and residence addresses, if known to petitioner, of the parents, guardian,
6 or custodian of the child and of the child's spouse, if any. If none of the child's parents,
7 guardian, or custodian resides or can be found within the state, or if their respective
8 places of residence address are unknown, the name of any known adult relative
9 residing within the county, or, if there be none, the known adult relative residing
10 nearest to the location of the court. This subsection does not apply to an action
11 commenced under section 27-20-30.1; and

12 4. Whether the child is in custody and, if so, the place of the child's detention and the
13 time the child was taken into custody.

14 **SECTION 4. AMENDMENT.** Section 27-20-22 of the North Dakota Century Code is
15 amended and reenacted as follows:

16 **27-20-22. Summons.**

17 1. After the petition has been filed, the court shall fix a time for hearing, except if a
18 petition has been filed under section 27-20-30.1, the court may fix a time for hearing, if
19 necessary. Except as otherwise provided in this subsection, the hearing may not be
20 later than thirty days after the filing of the petition. If the child is in detention, the time
21 for the initial hearing may not be later than fourteen days after the child has been
22 taken into custody. If a child is in shelter care, the hearing on the petition must be held
23 within sixty days of the initial shelter care hearing. The court may extend the time for
24 hearing for good cause shown. The court shall direct the issuance of a summons in
25 proceedings not commenced under section 27-20-30.1 to the parents, guardian, or
26 other custodian, a guardian ad litem, and any other persons as appear to the court to
27 be proper or necessary parties to the proceeding, requiring them to appear before the
28 court at the time fixed to answer the allegations of the petition. The summons must
29 also be directed to the child if the child is fourteen or more years of age or is alleged to
30 be a delinquent or unruly child. A copy of the petition must accompany the summons
31 unless the summons is served by publication in which case the published summons

1 must indicate the general nature of the allegations and where a copy of the petition
2 can be obtained.

3 2. ~~The~~In a proceeding commenced under section 27-20-30.1, the court may order the
4 child to appear personally. In all other proceedings, the court may endorse upon the
5 summons an order directing the parents, guardian, or other custodian of the child to
6 appear personally at the hearing and directing the person having the physical custody
7 or control of the child to bring the child to the hearing.

8 3. If it appears from an affidavit filed or from sworn testimony before the court in a
9 proceeding not commenced under section 27-20-30.1 that the conduct, condition, or
10 surroundings of the child are endangering the child's health or welfare or those of
11 others, or that the child may abscond or be removed from the jurisdiction of the court
12 or will not be brought before the court, notwithstanding the service of the summons,
13 the court may endorse upon the summons an order that a law enforcement officer
14 shall serve the summons and take the child into immediate custody and bring the child
15 before the court.

16 4. The summons must state that a party is entitled to counsel in the proceedings and that
17 counsel will be provided at public expense if the party is indigent.

18 5. A party, other than the child, may waive service of summons by written stipulation or
19 by voluntary appearance at the hearing. If the child is present at the hearing, the
20 child's counsel, with the consent of the parent, guardian, or other custodian, or
21 guardian ad litem, may waive service of summons in the child's behalf. This
22 subsection does not apply in a proceeding commenced under section 27-20-30.1.

23 6. When a child is in detention or shelter care and good cause is shown why service was
24 not completed upon an absent or noncustodial parent, the court may proceed with the
25 hearing on the petition in order to comply with any time limitations under this chapter.

26 **SECTION 5. AMENDMENT.** Section 27-20-26 of the North Dakota Century Code is
27 amended and reenacted as follows:

28 **27-20-26. Right to counsel - Exceptions.**

29 1. Except as otherwise provided in this section, a party who is indigent and unable to
30 employ legal counsel is entitled to counsel at public expense at proceedings
31 commenced under section 27-20-30.1, and at custodial, post-petition, and informal

adjustment stages of proceedings under this chapter. During the informal adjustment stage of a proceeding or in a proceeding commenced under section 27-20-30.1 only the child, if determined to be indigent, is entitled to counsel at public expense. In proceedings regarding allegations of unruliness or delinquency, a child's parent, legal guardian, or custodian, if determined to be indigent, is entitled to counsel at public expense only during the dispositional stage of the proceedings. If a party appears without counsel the court shall ascertain whether the party knows the party may be represented by counsel and that the party is entitled to counsel at public expense if indigent. The court may continue the proceeding to enable a party to obtain counsel and, subject to this section, counsel must be provided for an unrepresented indigent party upon the party's request. Counsel must be provided for a child who is under the age of eighteen years and is not represented by the child's parent, guardian, or custodian at custodial, post-petition, and informal adjustment stages of proceedings under this chapter. If the interests of two or more parties conflict, separate counsel must be provided for each of them.

2. An indigent party is one who at the time of requesting counsel is unable, without undue financial hardship, to provide for full payment of legal counsel and all other necessary expenses for representation. A child who, at the time of the proceeding, is under the age of eighteen years is not to be considered indigent under this section if the child's parent can, without undue financial hardship, provide full payment for legal counsel and other expenses of representation. Any parent of a child who is under the age of eighteen and is involved in a proceeding under this chapter is, unless undue financial hardship would ensue, responsible for providing legal counsel and for paying other necessary expenses of representation for the parent's child. The court may enforce performance of this duty by appropriate order.

3. For purposes of this section and section 27-20-49, "party" means the child and the child's parent, legal guardian, or custodian, and includes "child" as defined in subsection 1 of section 27-20-30.1.

SECTION 6. Section 27-20-30.1 of the North Dakota Century Code is created and enacted as follows:

1 **27-20-30.1. Disposition of child needing continued foster care services.**

2 1. For purposes of this section, "child" means an individual between the ages of eighteen
3 and twenty-one years who is in the need of continued foster care services.

4 2. A petition to commence an action under this section must contain information required
5 under section 27-20-21 along with an affidavit prepared by the administrative county,
6 as determined by the department of human services.

7 3. The court shall issue a summons in accordance with section 27-20-22 upon the filing
8 of a petition and affidavit.

9 4. If a child is in need of continued foster care services as determined by the department
10 of human services and as set forth in a continued foster care agreement, the court
11 shall make the following judicial determination:

12 a. That the child is not deprived, delinquent, or unruly but is in need of continued
13 foster care services;

14 b. That the child will remain in or will return to foster care pursuant to the child's
15 continued foster care agreement;

16 c. That the child's continued foster care agreement has been willfully entered
17 between the department of human services or its agent, the child, and the foster
18 parent;

19 d. That it is in the best interest of the child to remain in or return to foster care;

20 e. That reasonable efforts were made in accordance with subsection 7 of section
21 27-20-32.2;

22 f. That the child has attained the age of eighteen or older but does not exceed the
23 age of twenty-one years;

24 g. That the child has satisfied the education, employment, or disability requirements
25 under the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of
26 2008 [Pub. L. 110-351] and as set forth by the department of human services;

27 h. That the administrative county, as determined by the department, shall continue
28 foster care case management, unless otherwise agreed to or required by the
29 department;

30 i. That the administrative county or division of juvenile services must have care and
31 placement responsibility of the child;

1 j. That permanency hearing must be as set forth in section 27-20-36; and

2 k. That there are no grounds to file a petition to terminate parental rights under
3 chapter 27-20.

4 5. Pursuant to section 27-20-37, a court may modify or vacate the judicial determination
5 made under subsection 4.

6 **SECTION 7. AMENDMENT.** Section 27-20-32.2 of the North Dakota Century Code is
7 amended and reenacted as follows:

8 **27-20-32.2. Reasonable efforts to prevent removal or to reunify - When required.**

9 1. As used in this section, "reasonable efforts" means the exercise of due diligence, by
10 the agency granted authority over the child under this chapter, to use appropriate and
11 available services to meet the needs of the child and the child's family in order to
12 prevent removal of the child from the child's family or, after removal, to use appropriate
13 and available services to eliminate the need for removal, to reunite the child and the
14 child's family, and to maintain family connections. In determining reasonable efforts to
15 be made with respect to a child under this section, and in making reasonable efforts,
16 the child's health and safety must be the paramount concern.

17 2. Except as provided in subsection 4, reasonable efforts must be made to preserve
18 families, reunify families, and maintain family connections:

19 a. Prior to the placement of a child in foster care, to prevent or eliminate the need
20 for removing the child from the child's home;

21 b. To make it possible for a child to return safely to the child's home;

22 c. To place siblings in the same foster care, relative, guardianship, or adoptive
23 placement, unless it is determined that such a joint placement would be contrary
24 to the safety or well-being of any of the siblings; and

25 d. In the case of siblings removed from their home who are not jointly placed, to
26 provide for frequent visitation or other ongoing interaction between the siblings,
27 unless it is contrary to the safety or well-being of any of the siblings.

28 3. If the court or the child's custodian determined that continuation of reasonable efforts,
29 as described in subsection 2, is inconsistent with the permanency plan for the child,
30 reasonable efforts must be made to place the child in a timely manner in accordance

1 with the permanency plan and to complete whatever steps are necessary to finalize
2 the permanent placement of the child.

3 4. Reasonable efforts of the type described in subsection 2 are not required if:

4 a. A court of competent jurisdiction has determined that a parent has subjected a
5 child to aggravated circumstances; or

6 b. The parental rights of the parent, with respect to another child of the parent, have
7 been involuntarily terminated.

8 5. Efforts to place a child for adoption, with a fit and willing relative or other appropriate
9 individual as a legal guardian, or in another planned permanent living arrangement,
10 may be made concurrently with reasonable efforts of the type described in
11 subsection 2.

12 6. Removal of a child from the child's home for placement in foster care must be based
13 on judicial findings stated in the court's order, and determined on a case-by-case basis
14 in a manner that complies with the requirements of titles IV-B and IV-E of the Social
15 Security Act [42 U.S.C. 620 et seq. and 42 U.S.C. 6701 et seq.], as amended, and
16 federal regulations adopted thereunder, provided that this subsection may not provide
17 a basis for overturning an otherwise valid court order.

18 7. For the purpose of section 27-20-30.1, reasonable efforts were made under this
19 section to meet the child's needs before a foster care placement for a child remaining
20 in care for continued foster care purposes.

21 **SECTION 8. AMENDMENT.** Section 27-20-36 of the North Dakota Century Code is
22 amended and reenacted as follows:

23 **27-20-36. Limitations of time on orders of disposition.**

24 1. An order terminating parental rights or establishing a legal guardianship is without limit
25 as to duration.

26 2. An order of disposition committing a delinquent or unruly child to the division of
27 juvenile services continues in force for not more than twelve months, excluding any
28 period of time the child is on parole from an institution, or until the child is sooner
29 discharged by an institution.

30 a. The court which made the order may extend its duration for additional
31 twelve-month periods subject to like discharge, if:

- 1 (1) A hearing is held upon motion of the division, or on the court's own motion,
2 prior to the expiration of the order;
- 3 (2) Reasonable notice of the hearing and an opportunity to be heard are given
4 to the child and the parent, guardian, or other custodian; and
- 5 (3) The court finds that the extension is necessary for the treatment or
6 rehabilitation of the child.
- 7 b. A permanency hearing must be conducted within thirty days after a court
8 determines that aggravated circumstances of the type described in subdivisions
9 a, c, d, or e of subsection 3 of section 27-20-02 exist, or within twelve months
10 after a child, subject to an order of disposition under this subsection, is
11 considered to have entered foster care, or is continued in foster care following a
12 previous permanency hearing, including a hearing conducted on a petition filed
13 under section 27-20-30.1. The permanency hearing may be conducted:
14 (1) By the division of juvenile services as a placement hearing under chapter
15 27-21; or
16 (2) By the court, if the court requires, or if it appears that an appropriate
17 permanency plan could not be carried out without exceeding the authority of
18 the division of juvenile services.
- 19 3. Except as provided in subsection 2, an order of disposition pursuant to which a child is
20 placed in foster care may not continue in force for more than twelve months after the
21 child is considered to have entered foster care. Before the extension of any court order
22 limited under this subsection, a permanency hearing must be conducted. Any other
23 order of disposition may not continue in force for more than twelve months.
- 24 4. Except as provided in subsection 1, the court may terminate an order of disposition
25 before the expiration of the order or extend its duration for further periods. An order of
26 extension may be made if:
27 a. A hearing is held before the expiration of the order upon motion of a party or on
28 the court's own motion;
29 b. Reasonable notice of the hearing and opportunity to be heard are given to the
30 parties affected;

1 c. The court finds the extension is necessary to accomplish the purposes of the
2 order extended; and

3 d. The extension does not exceed twelve months from the expiration of an order
4 limited by subsection 3 or two years from the expiration of any other limited order.

5 5. Except as provided in subsection 2, the court may terminate an order of disposition or
6 extension prior to its expiration, on or without an application of a party, if it appears to
7 the court that the purposes of the order have been accomplished. If a party may be
8 adversely affected by the order of termination, the order may be made only after
9 reasonable notice and opportunity to be heard have been given to the party.

10 6. Except as provided in subsection 1, when the child attains the age of twenty years, all
11 orders affecting the child then in force terminate and the child is discharged from
12 further obligation or control.

13 7. If an order of disposition is made with respect to a child under the age of ten years
14 pursuant to which the child is placed in foster care without terminating parental rights
15 and the parent and child relationship, the court, before extending the duration of the
16 order, shall determine upon the extension hearing whether the child is adoptable and
17 whether termination of those rights and that relationship is warranted under section
18 27-20-44 and is in the best interest of the child. In that case the notice of the extension
19 hearing must also inform the parties affected that the court will determine whether the
20 child is adoptable and whether termination of their parental rights and the parent and
21 child relationship is warranted and in the best interest of the child and that a further
22 order of disposition may be made by the court placing the child with a view to
23 adoption. If the court determines that the child is adoptable and that termination of
24 parental rights and the parent and child relationship is warranted and is in the best
25 interest of the child, the court shall make a further order of disposition terminating
26 those rights and that relationship and committing the child under section 27-20-47.

27 **SECTION 9. EFFECTIVE DATE.** This Act becomes effective on January 1, 2012.