



Substitute House Bill No. 5605

Public Act No. 16-70

AN ACT CONCERNING THE TERMINATION OF PARENTAL RIGHTS.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

Section 1. Subsection (j) of section 17a-112 of the 2016 supplement to the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2016*):

(j) The Superior Court, upon notice and hearing as provided in sections 45a-716 and 45a-717, as amended by this act, may grant a petition filed pursuant to this section if it finds by clear and convincing evidence that (1) the Department of Children and Families has made reasonable efforts to locate the parent and to reunify the child with the parent in accordance with subsection (a) of section 17a-111b, unless the court finds in this proceeding that the parent is unable or unwilling to benefit from reunification efforts, except that such finding is not required if the court has determined at a hearing pursuant to section 17a-111b, or determines at trial on the petition, that such efforts are not required, (2) termination is in the best interest of the child, and (3) (A) the child has been abandoned by the parent in the sense that the parent has failed to maintain a reasonable degree of interest, concern or responsibility as to the welfare of the child; (B) the child (i) has been found by the Superior Court or the Probate Court to have been

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neglected, abused or uncared for in a prior proceeding, or (ii) is found to be neglected, abused or uncared for and has been in the custody of the commissioner for at least fifteen months and the parent of such child has been provided specific steps to take to facilitate the return of the child to the parent pursuant to section 46b-129 and has failed to achieve such degree of personal rehabilitation as would encourage the belief that within a reasonable time, considering the age and needs of the child, such parent could assume a responsible position in the life of the child; (C) the child has been denied, by reason of an act or acts of parental commission or omission including, but not limited to, sexual molestation or exploitation, severe physical abuse or a pattern of abuse, the care, guidance or control necessary for the child's physical, educational, moral or emotional well-being, except that nonaccidental or inadequately explained serious physical injury to a child shall constitute prima facie evidence of acts of parental commission or omission sufficient for the termination of parental rights; (D) there is no ongoing parent-child relationship, which means the relationship that ordinarily develops as a result of a parent having met on a day-to-day basis the physical, emotional, moral and educational needs of the child and to allow further time for the establishment or reestablishment of such parent-child relationship would be detrimental to the best interest of the child; (E) the parent of a child under the age of seven years who is neglected, abused or uncared for, has failed, is unable or is unwilling to achieve such degree of personal rehabilitation as would encourage the belief that within a reasonable period of time, considering the age and needs of the child, such parent could assume a responsible position in the life of the child and such parent's parental rights of another child were previously terminated pursuant to a petition filed by the Commissioner of Children and Families; (F) the parent has killed through deliberate, nonaccidental act another child of the parent or has requested, commanded, importuned, attempted, conspired or solicited such killing or has committed an assault, through deliberate, nonaccidental act that resulted in serious

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bodily injury of another child of the parent; or (G) the parent [was convicted as an adult or a delinquent by a court of competent jurisdiction of a sexual assault resulting] committed an act that constitutes sexual assault as described in section 53a-70, 53a-70a, 53a-70c, 53a-71, 53a-72a, 53a-72b or 53a-73a or compelling a spouse or cohabitor to engage in sexual intercourse by the use of force or by the threat of the use of force as described in section 53a-70b, if such act resulted in the conception of the child. [, except a conviction for a violation of section 53a-71 or 53a-73a, provided the court may terminate such parent's parental rights to such child at any time after such conviction.]

Sec. 2. Subsections (g) to (j), inclusive, of section 45a-717 of the 2016 supplement to the general statutes are repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2016*):

(g) At the adjourned hearing or at the initial hearing where no investigation and report has been requested, the court may approve a petition terminating the parental rights and may appoint a guardian of the person of the child, or, if the petitioner requests, the court may appoint a statutory parent, if it finds, upon clear and convincing evidence, that (1) the termination is in the best interest of the child, and (2) (A) the child has been abandoned by the parent in the sense that the parent has failed to maintain a reasonable degree of interest, concern or responsibility as to the welfare of the child; (B) the child has been denied, by reason of an act or acts of parental commission or omission, including, but not limited to sexual molestation and exploitation, severe physical abuse or a pattern of abuse, the care, guidance or control necessary for the child's physical, educational, moral or emotional well-being. Nonaccidental or inadequately explained serious physical injury to a child shall constitute prima facie evidence of acts of parental commission or omission sufficient for the termination of parental rights; (C) there is no ongoing parent-child

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relationship which is defined as the relationship that ordinarily develops as a result of a parent having met on a continuing, day-to-day basis the physical, emotional, moral and educational needs of the child and to allow further time for the establishment or reestablishment of the parent-child relationship would be detrimental to the best interests of the child; (D) a child of the parent (i) was found by the Superior Court or the Probate Court to have been neglected, abused or uncared for, as those terms are defined in section 46b-120, in a prior proceeding, or (ii) is found to be neglected, abused or uncared for and has been in the custody of the commissioner for at least fifteen months and such parent has been provided specific steps to take to facilitate the return of the child to the parent pursuant to section 46b-129 and has failed to achieve such degree of personal rehabilitation as would encourage the belief that within a reasonable time, considering the age and needs of the child, such parent could assume a responsible position in the life of the child; (E) a child of the parent, who is under the age of seven years is found to be neglected, abused or uncared for, and the parent has failed, is unable or is unwilling to achieve such degree of personal rehabilitation as would encourage the belief that within a reasonable amount of time, considering the age and needs of the child, such parent could assume a responsible position in the life of the child and such parent's parental rights of another child were previously terminated pursuant to a petition filed by the Commissioner of Children and Families; (F) the parent has killed through deliberate, nonaccidental act another child of the parent or has requested, commanded, importuned, attempted, conspired or solicited such killing or has committed an assault, through deliberate, nonaccidental act that resulted in serious bodily injury of another child of the parent; (G) except as provided in subsection (h) of this section, the parent committed an act that constitutes sexual assault as described in section 53a-70, 53a-70a, 53a-70c, 53a-71, 53a-72a, 53a-72b or 53a-73a or compelling a spouse or cohabitor to engage in sexual intercourse by the use of force or by the threat of the use of force as

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described in section 53a-70b, if such act resulted in the conception of the child; or [(G)] (H) the parent was [convicted as an adult or a delinquent by a court of competent jurisdiction of sexual assault resulting] finally adjudged guilty of sexual assault under section 53a-70, 53a-70a, 53a-70c, 53a-71, 53a-72a, 53a-72b or 53a-73a or of compelling a spouse or cohabitor to engage in sexual intercourse by the use of force or by the threat of the use of force under section 53a-70b, if such act resulted in the conception of [a] the child. [except for a violation of section 53a-71 or 53a-73a provided the court may terminate such parent's parental rights to such child at any time after such conviction.]

(h) If the petition alleges an act described in subparagraph (G) of subdivision (2) of subsection (g) of this section that resulted in the conception of the child as a basis for termination of parental rights and the court determines that the respondent parent was finally adjudged not guilty of such act of sexual assault under section 53a-70, 53a-70a, 53a-70c, 53a-71, 53a-72a, 53a-72b or 53a-73 or of compelling a spouse or cohabitor to engage in sexual intercourse by the use of force or by the threat of the use of force under section 53a-70b, the court shall transfer the case to the Superior Court and the clerk of the Probate Court shall transmit to the clerk of the Superior Court to which the case was transferred, the original files and papers in the case. The Superior Court, upon hearing after notice as provided in this section and section 45a-716, may grant the petition as provided in this section.

[(h)] (i) Except in the case where termination is based on consent, in determining whether to terminate parental rights under this section, the court shall consider and shall make written findings regarding: (1) The timeliness, nature and extent of services offered, provided and made available to the parent and the child by a child-placing agency to facilitate the reunion of the child with the parent; (2) the terms of any applicable court order entered into and agreed upon by any individual

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or child-placing agency and the parent, and the extent to which all parties have fulfilled their obligations under such order; (3) the feelings and emotional ties of the child with respect to the child's parents, any guardian of the child's person and any person who has exercised physical care, custody or control of the child for at least one year and with whom the child has developed significant emotional ties; (4) the age of the child; (5) the efforts the parent has made to adjust such parent's circumstances, conduct or conditions to make it in the best interest of the child to return the child to the parent's home in the foreseeable future, including, but not limited to, (A) the extent to which the parent has maintained contact with the child as part of an effort to reunite the child with the parent, provided the court may give weight to incidental visitations, communications or contributions and (B) the maintenance of regular contact or communication with the guardian or other custodian of the child; and (6) the extent to which a parent has been prevented from maintaining a meaningful relationship with the child by the unreasonable act or conduct of the other parent of the child, or the unreasonable act of any other person or by the economic circumstances of the parent.

[(i)] (j) If the parental rights of only one parent are terminated, the remaining parent shall be sole parent and, unless otherwise provided by law, guardian of the person.

[(j)] (k) In the case where termination of parental rights is granted, the guardian of the person or statutory parent shall report to the court within thirty days of the date judgment is entered on a case plan, as defined by the federal Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act of 1980, as amended from time to time, for the child. At least every three months thereafter, such guardian or statutory parent shall make a report to the court on the implementation of the plan. The court may convene a hearing upon the filing of a report and shall convene a hearing for the purpose of reviewing the plan no more than twelve

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months from the date judgment is entered or from the date of the last permanency hearing held pursuant to subsection (k) of section 46b-129 if the child or youth is in the care and custody of the Commissioner of Children and Families, whichever is earlier, and at least once a year thereafter until such time as any proposed adoption plan has become finalized. If the Commissioner of Children and Families is the statutory parent for the child, at such a hearing the court shall determine whether the department has made reasonable efforts to achieve the permanency plan. In the case where termination of parental rights is granted, the guardian of the person or statutory parent shall obtain the approval of the court prior to placing the child or youth for adoption outside the state. Before ordering or approving such placement, the court shall make findings concerning compliance with the provisions of section 17a-175. Such findings shall include, but not be limited to: (1) A finding that the state has received notice in writing from the receiving state, in accordance with subsection (d) of Article III of section 17a-175, indicating that the proposed placement does not appear contrary to the interests of the child, (2) the court has reviewed such notice, (3) whether or not an interstate compact study or other home study has been completed by the receiving state, and (4) if such a study has been completed, whether the conclusions reached by the receiving state as a result of such study support the placement.

Approved May 26, 2016