

Chapter 76

(Senate Bill 1)

AN ACT concerning

Paternity Proceedings – Attorney for the Child Support Administration

FOR the purpose of substituting the term “attorney for the Administration” for the term “State’s Attorney” in certain provisions of law relating to paternity proceedings; defining the term “attorney for the Administration”; making certain conforming and technical changes, including specifying that certain provisions of law apply only to certain jurisdictions; and generally relating to paternity proceedings and attorneys for the Child Support Administration.

BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,

Article – Family Law

Section 5–1001, 5–1010(e), 5–1016, 5–1019, 5–1020, and 5–1021

Annotated Code of Maryland

(2012 Replacement Volume and 2018 Supplement)

BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,

Article – Family Law

Section 10–115(c)

Annotated Code of Maryland

(2012 Replacement Volume and 2018 Supplement)

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

Article – Family Law

5–1001.

- (a) In this subtitle the following words have the meanings indicated.
- (b) “Administration” means the Child Support Administration of the Department.

(C) “ATTORNEY FOR THE ADMINISTRATION” MEANS AN ATTORNEY WHO REPRESENTS THE ADMINISTRATION IN ACCORDANCE WITH § 10–115(C) OF THIS ARTICLE.

[(c)] (D) “Complaint” means a bill or petition in equity filed in a paternity proceeding.

5–1010.

(e) (1) Except as provided in paragraph (2) of this subsection, the clerk of court may not receive a complaint starting paternity proceedings unless the consent of the [State's Attorney] **ATTORNEY FOR THE ADMINISTRATION** is attached to the complaint.

(2) The consent of the [State's Attorney] **ATTORNEY FOR THE ADMINISTRATION** is not required if[:

(i) the complaint is filed on behalf of the Administration; or
(ii)], after considering testimony or information given by affidavit, or both, the court:

[1.] **(I)** finds that the complaint is meritorious; and

[2.] **(II)** rules that the consent is not required.

(3) Except by an order of court for good cause shown, a proceeding under this subtitle may not be dismissed voluntarily without the consent of the [State's Attorney] **ATTORNEY FOR THE ADMINISTRATION**.

5-1016.

(a) (1) Before or after the filing of a complaint, the alleged father may propose a settlement concerning the child's support whether the alleged father admits or denies paternity.

(2) The proposed contribution may be in a lump sum, installments, or otherwise.

(b) A settlement agreement shall be prepared, executed, and submitted to the court for approval if:

(1) the complainant agrees to accept the settlement;

(2) the [State's Attorney] **ATTORNEY FOR THE ADMINISTRATION** is satisfied that the amount and terms of the settlement are fair and reasonable;

(3) the complainant has been advised properly regarding the contents of the settlement; and

(4) the complainant is competent to accept the settlement.

(c) If the court approves the settlement agreement, the terms of the agreement shall be incorporated in a court order.

(d) A court order incorporating a settlement agreement is as enforceable as any order that is passed after a hearing.

5-1019.

(A) THIS SECTION APPLIES ONLY TO JURISDICTIONS IN WHICH THE ADMINISTRATION IS REPRESENTED BY A STATE'S ATTORNEY.

[(a)] (B) Before or after a complaint is filed under this subtitle, the State's Attorney may hold a pretrial inquiry.

[(b)] (C) In connection with any pretrial inquiry under this section, the State's Attorney may:

- (1) issue a summons that requires a person, other than the alleged father, to appear, to testify, and to produce documents connected with the examination;
- (2) administer oaths;
- (3) examine witnesses; and
- (4) receive evidence.

[(c)] (D) (1) If a person fails to obey a summons, or fails to testify or comply with a request of the State's Attorney, the State's Attorney may request the circuit court for the county to order the person:

- (i) to obey the summons;
- (ii) to testify; or
- (iii) to produce any document that the court considers necessary for the inquiry.

(2) If a person fails or refuses to obey the order of court after the order has been served, the person is in contempt of court and the court may punish the person for the contempt.

- (3) A finding of contempt under this subsection is subject to appeal.

5-1020.

(A) THIS SECTION APPLIES ONLY TO JURISDICTIONS IN WHICH THE ADMINISTRATION IS REPRESENTED BY A STATE'S ATTORNEY.

(B) Before the State's Attorney conducts a pretrial inquiry under this subtitle, the State's Attorney shall notify the parties in writing of:

- (1) the time and place of the inquiry;
- (2) the alleged father's right to appear at the inquiry and to produce evidence or information that relates to the inquiry; and
- (3) the alleged father's right to testify in his own behalf before the State's Attorney, if the alleged father:
 - (i) notifies the State's Attorney of the alleged father's desire to testify; and
 - (ii) signs a waiver that permits his testimony to be used against him in the paternity proceeding.

5-1021.

(a) [In connection with a pretrial inquiry under this subtitle, the State's Attorney] **THE ATTORNEY FOR THE ADMINISTRATION** may request any individual [summoned to the pretrial inquiry] **NAMED IN A PATERNITY COMPLAINT** to submit to a blood or genetic test.

(b) If the individual refuses the [State's Attorney's] **ATTORNEY FOR THE ADMINISTRATION'S** request to submit to a blood or genetic test, the [State's Attorney] **ATTORNEY FOR THE ADMINISTRATION** may apply to the circuit court for an order that directs the individual to submit to the test.

10-115.

- (c) In a legal proceeding, the Administration shall be represented by:
- (1) the Attorney General;
 - (2) the State's Attorney, if the State's Attorney has agreed to provide representation under subsection (g) of this section; or
 - (3) a qualified lawyer who is appointed by and subject to supervision and removal by the Attorney General.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect October 1, 2019.

Approved by the Governor, April 18, 2019.