
By: Delegates Montague, Doory, and Curran
Introduced and read first time: February 1, 1996
Assigned to: Judiciary

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Divorce - Educational Seminar on Effects on Children**

3 FOR the purpose of requiring the parties to certain divorce actions, prior to the granting
4 of a divorce decree, to attend an educational seminar that is designed to educate
5 parents about the effects, and minimize the disruption, of a divorce on the lives of
6 children; providing that the court may require parties to complete the seminar in a
7 certain amount of time; providing that the court may sanction parties for failure to
8 complete the seminar; providing that the court may assess or waive the cost of the
9 seminar; providing for the application of this Act; and generally relating to a
10 requirement that, under certain circumstances, parties to an action for divorce
11 attend a certain educational seminar prior to the granting of the divorce.

12 BY adding to

13 Article - Family Law
14 Section 7-103.2
15 Annotated Code of Maryland
16 (1991 Replacement Volume and 1995 Supplement)

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

19 **Article - Family Law**

20 7-103.2.

21 (A) THIS SECTION APPLIES TO AN ACTION FOR DIVORCE IN WHICH ISSUES OF
22 CHILD SUPPORT, CUSTODY, OR VISITATION ARE RAISED.

23 (B) PRIOR TO GRANTING A DECREE OF DIVORCE ALL PARTIES SHALL
24 PARTICIPATE IN AN EDUCATIONAL SEMINAR THAT IS DESIGNED TO EDUCATE
25 PARENTS ABOUT THE EFFECTS AND TO MINIMIZE THE DISRUPTION OF A DIVORCE
26 ON THE LIVES OF CHILDREN.

27 (C) SUBJECT TO THE ORDER OF THE COURT:

28 (1) ALL PARTIES MAY BE REQUIRED TO COMPLETE THE SEMINAR
29 WITHIN A SPECIFIED TIME AFTER THE SERVICE OF THE ORIGINAL COMPLAINT UPON
30 THE DEFENDANT;

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1 (2) SANCTIONS FOR FAILURE TO SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETE THE
2 SEMINAR REQUIRED UNDER THIS SECTION MAY BE ESTABLISHED;

3 (3) A FEE MAY BE ASSESSED AS COST OR MAY BE WAIVED UNDER
4 APPROPRIATE CIRCUMSTANCES; AND

5 (4) CRITERIA FOR EXEMPTION FROM THE REQUIREMENT THAT THE
6 PARTIES PARTICIPATE IN AN EDUCATIONAL SEMINAR MAY BE ESTABLISHED.

7 (D) THE SEMINAR REQUIRED UNDER THIS SECTION MAY BE PROVIDED
8 UNDER CONTRACT WITH A PUBLIC OR PRIVATE AGENCY.

9 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall apply to all
10 actions for divorce filed on or after October 1, 1996.

11 SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
12 October 1, 1996.