

The State of Florida now leads the Nation in Rights for Unwed Fathers

Now, Fathers who have voluntarily acknowledged paternity have the same rights as the unwed mother. Instead of limiting the rights of the biological father,

MIAMI, FLORIDA, UNITED STATES, June 26, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Governor signed [House Bill #775](#) into law. According to the Parental Rights Amendment, a child has a right to be raised by both of his or her parents unless a court finds that a parental bond is detrimental to the child's best interest. Both parents have the fundamental right to parent their children and to make decisions regarding their care, custody, and education of children without interference from the government or third-party actors.

Prior to this Bill #775 the law in Florida did not prohibit unmarried women from going against their children's unwed father by taking their children out of the State of Florida without any penalty. Instead, the past laws permitted them to do so without the risk of any punishment. The past laws of Florida did not clearly provide a definition of what it meant to be a father in the eyes of the law. For example, an unwed woman can give birth to a baby and declare that she is the "mother" of the child and prevent the biological father from accessing the child even though he has been paying child support for years. Currently, establishing paternity only establishes the financial responsibility of the unwed father.

In this year's legislative session, Dr. Bernard Wh Jennings, a Florida Supreme Court Certified Mediator, wrote a proposal to the State Legislature regarding unwed Fathers not having the same rights as unwed Mothers. District #107 State Representative Christopher Benjamin, Esq. (D) took interest and introduced Bill #775, "Parental Responsibility After Acknowledgment of Paternity,". The Bill was later coined; the "[Good Dad Act](#)". Bill #775 ensures that unwed fathers



Bernard WH Jennings

Florida Supreme Court Certified Mediator

have equal rights as mothers when it comes to parenting their children. "Paternity Rights of Unwed Fathers has passed all committees unanimously - the Bill seeks to place unwed fathers on even ground with wed fathers by making both parents of a child born out of wedlock the natural guardians of the child, said Representative Benjamin.

"This bill is about fairness," said Dr. Jennings.

"Ensuring that Unwed fathers have the same rights as mothers to love, care for, and support their children. This bill will ensure that they are treated equally under the law."

The bill would do the following:

- Allow unwed fathers to establish paternity without having to go to court.
- Give unwed fathers the same rights as mothers to shared parental responsibility.
- Prohibit unwed mothers from absconding with children out of state without the father's consent.

"This bill is about giving children the best possible chance to succeed," said Dr. Jennings.

"Children who grow up with both parents are more likely to be healthy, happy, and successful. This bill will help ensure that all children have that opportunity."

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The past laws had a negative impact on both the father and the child, forcing them to live apart because.

1. The biological father had no legal incentive to own up to his responsibilities to the newborn baby. Some fathers have to be forced to care for their children by taking them to court and the long and tedious legal process of the court.
2. The previous law robbed the child of the opportunity of growing up with both parents. There have been instances

where a mother places her child in foster care without the father's acknowledgment or consent because she is unwilling to raise her child.

To ensure that children have the right to be raised by both parents, Florida Law is now changed to ensure that the rights of biological fathers are protected and enforced. This law will ensure an unwed man who steps up after the child's birth has equal rights as the mother. The Unwed Father for the child out of wedlock has to complete and sign or notarize a voluntary

THE FLORIDA SENATE
2023 SUMMARY OF LEGISLATION PASSED
Committee on Children, Families,
and Elder Affairs

CS/CS/HB 775 — Shared Parental Responsibility after Establishment of Paternity - "Ethan's Good Dad Act"

by Judiciary Committee; Civil Justice Subcommittee; and Reps. Benjamin, Hawkins, and others (CS/CS/SB 1146 by Judiciary Committee; Children, Families, and Elder Affairs Committee; and Senator Yarbrough)

The bill clarifies that after the birth of a child a parent may request a determination of parental responsibility and child support and for the creation of a parenting plan and timesharing schedule pursuant to ch. 61, F.S. Absent such a determination of parental responsibility and child support, a mother retains sole parental responsibility and there is no requirement for timesharing.

The bill requires that any action to establish paternity include a determination of parental responsibility and a parenting plan, establish a timesharing schedule, and child support. The bill attaches determinations of parental responsibility and timesharing to the establishment of paternity for a father under ch. 742, F.S.

The bill also clarifies that an unwed mother and a father who sign a voluntary acknowledgment of paternity or have established paternity through a court judgment are the natural guardians of the child. As such, they are subject to the rights and responsibilities of parents that a married parent would enjoy. If a father has not established paternity, the mother is the natural parent and is entitled to primary residential care and custody of the child.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2023.
Vote: Senate 38-0; House 114-0

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CS/CS/HB 775 Page: 1

Bill #775

acknowledgment of paternity form constituting an establishment of paternity. This form will result in shared parental responsibility between both parties. The father does not have to file paternity documents in court to establish parental rights. Thousands of men have faced and currently are entangled with this issue throughout the State of Florida.

Dr. Bernard Wh Jennings, said, "This Bill #775 (The Good Dad - Unwed Fathers Act) will support the concept of family by putting unwed men on an equal footing with mothers when it comes to parenting their children"., "Fathers will no longer be helpless and feel emasculated and robbed of their fatherhood.", "Fathers will now have a lawful opportunity to take full responsibility of caring and providing for their children.", said Jennings.



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Now, Fathers who have voluntarily acknowledged paternity have the same rights as the unwed mother. Instead of limiting the rights of the biological father, the law is changed to encourage men to take responsibility for their children financially and otherwise. This Bill #775 and the Senate version Bill #1146 coined by District #4 Republican State Senator Clay Yarborough -"the Good Dad Act", will protect the family unit, reduce the financial burden borne by families and the tax paying public due to the current legal entanglement faced by similarly situated unwed natural fathers. Both Bills have passed both the House and the Senate without opposition. The Bill is now signed by the Governor. The law will go into effect on July 1, 2023. There is an effort by the Good Dad Act Committee to assist Fathers across the nation to pass the same Bill in other States starting with Georgia, Illinois, Texas, New Jersey, and North Carolina. Unwed Fathers may become Members of the Committee or Team Leaders in their County or State. Fathers can join the private Facebook page "[Facebook.com/GoodDadAct](https://www.facebook.com/GoodDadAct)". Support this effort by going here: www.GoodDadAct.com

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