

JTforME

OBNOXIOUSLY HAUGHTY LEGALISE EDITION

FOR OUR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

An Act To Strengthen Maine Family Court
Accountability and Protect Parent-Child Relationships

**A child's life does not restart
at the latest motion.**

Whole-child history first. Individual conduct over time.
Workable orders. Timely review. Protected access.

“Promptly and without delay.”

— Maine Constitution, Article I, Section 19

October 13, 2026 | rev9

Continuous process improvement, evidence integrity and whole-child review. A personal declaration of purpose precedes the identical operative bill and review notes.

Notice of express non-acquiescence

OBNOXIOUSLY HAUGHTY LEGALISE EDITION · A PROFESSIONAL COURTESY

“Beware that, when fighting monsters, you yourself do not become a monster... for when you gaze long into the abyss. The abyss gazes also into you.”

— Friedrich W. Nietzsche

Let the record reflect, with such particularity as may be necessary to forestall the familiar administrative misapprehension that a citizen's exhaustion constitutes consent:

I shall become an adversary more formidable in the lawful pursuit of accountability than those whom I challenge have been in the abuse of authority: unyielding as to purpose, exacting as to proof, and inconveniently persistent as to the performance of duties that do not become optional merely because their performance has been requested by a person without a professional title.

Should such resolve occasion the appellation “monster,” I accept the designation, with an express reservation against cruelty, intimidation, unlawful conduct, or the surrender of conscience. My instruments shall be evidence, lawful proceedings, publication, public scrutiny and the continued exercise of rights. No more sinister instrument is required where the record is sufficient.

The relief sought is not succession to their power. It is the termination of their impunity.

For Our Children and their Families.

Personal declaration of purpose and lawful intent. Separate from the proposed Act.

Memorandum concerning the obsolescence of excuses

FURTHER NOTICE, FOR THE AVOIDANCE OF PROFESSIONALLY CONVENIENT DOUBT

I. Concerning the continuity of childhood.

A child's life is not a series of severable docket entries, each enjoying the dubious privilege of forgetting its predecessor. The latest motion does not repeal the child's history. Nor does the assignment of a new judicial officer confer upon the institution a fresh allotment of permissible ignorance. Examine the material record, distinguish the conduct of the individuals concerned, and state the findings upon which the child's future is to be burdened or protected.

II. Concerning the distinction between activity and performance.

Expenditure is not performance. Installation is not implementation. A receipt is not relief. A scheduled appointment is not attendance. A closed ticket is not a corrected defect. A committee convened to consider whether another committee ought to be convened is not, notwithstanding the distinguished composition of either body, a completed improvement cycle.

III. Concerning the administrative utility of modern methods.

The proposed Act therefore requires planning, organizing, leading and controlling; small, evaluated changes; traceable responsibility; meaningful measures; and verification that the promised correction actually occurred. These are not ornamental aspirations to be admired in a strategic plan. They are proposed continuing duties, furnished with owners, dates, records and escalation. A vendor's reassurances shall not be permitted to impersonate evidence of delivery.

IV. Concerning independence and its purported accessories.

Nothing herein invites a legislator, administrator, auditor or software supplier to decide an individual custody dispute. Equally, nothing in the proposed arrangement treats the independence of adjudication as a purchased indulgence against administrative scrutiny. The precise constitutional boundary must be respected; an unexamined claim of exemption must not be permitted to do the work of identifying that boundary.

V. Concerning courtesy and the relief requested.

This translation into ceremonially elaborate prose is furnished as a professional courtesy to any reader for whom a plain request to stop wasting childhood appears insufficiently dignified. The requested result remains remarkably uncomplicated: understand the child's material history; identify who actually did what; preserve necessary protection; issue workable orders; review promptly; correct verified failure; and demonstrate what the public received for its money.

No allegation of fiscal fraud is established by this preface. The proposed response is independent examination of authority, contracts, payments, deliverables and performance—not an unsupported verdict.

Review guide

WHOLE-CHILD HISTORY FIRST. CONTINUOUS INSTITUTIONAL IMPROVEMENT NEXT.

A continuing duty—not another modernization announcement.

Section 1 remains the first substantive requirement. New section 1-B establishes the institutional duty up front. Sections 14 and 14-A define measures, responsible officials, small evaluated changes, public-money controls, reporting, independent verification and correction.

What this edition is

The complete rev9 review bill, coordinated from the supplied 49-page integrity-and-protection edition, the earlier 45-page review, the accessible R6 website archive and the supplied 38-page roadmap. It is proposed legislation, not current law, an official petition, a final fiscal note or a certified Revisor instrument. The new permanent administrative provision is drafted as 4 M.R.S. §17(19); final statutory allocation and conforming review remain required.

The three-document set

The standard bill and Haughty Legalise Edition contain the same operative Act. Only the separately labeled advocacy preface and navigation differ. The roadmap retains its volunteer-only approach, 2028 target, 2030 contingency, eleven correspondence templates and forty-eight original references, with coordinated policy updates and new source notes. No website has been changed and no letter has been sent.

What remains unresolved

The \$15,000 fee-budget trigger, replacement of broad new crimes with civil remedies and existing-law referrals, and the long professional-liability period remain flagged policy decisions. A statute cannot resolve separation of powers simply by saying “shall.” Rulemaking authority, waiting periods, fiscal capacity, privacy, access and the practicability of new deadlines require final legal and operational review. The new duties are drafted as mandatory, with those limits visible rather than hidden. [L8; M1–M3]

Source boundaries

Unchanged authority notes are carried forward from the supplied review. This pass rechecked the administrative and rulemaking foundation and used primary improvement-method sources. The archive’s reported financing and spending figures are not independently audited expenditures or proof of fraud. Its message counts are not counts of distinct filings. The new bill requires a reliable audit trail rather than declaring a dollar loss established.

The mandatory operating cycle

New proposal milestones. These are not statements of existing Maine deadlines.

WHEN	REQUIRED RESULT
30 days after effectiveness	Executive owner, operational owners and backups; controlled work and failure register.
90 days	Costed implementation plan, available baseline, data dictionary and legal-coordination register.
120 days	First bounded operational pilot underway.
180 days	Operational ownership, event tracking and escalation; initial deidentified dashboard and report. Safe manual controls bridge unfinished software.
Active improvement cycles	Evidence review at least every 30 calendar days; ordinarily two- to four-week bounded tests. No forced unsafe release or experiment on legal rights.
Each quarter	Publication within 30 days after quarter end, after the initial reporting milestone; actual results, adverse effects, defects, costs and overdue work.
12 months; then annually	First independent operational and fiscal assessment, including data reliability and verified delivery.
18 months; then annually	Broader child-and-family impact evaluation, separately from the earlier operational audit.

The accountability chain

Known duty → assigned owner → original clock → evidence of work → verification → correction or escalation. A missed individual protective deadline goes to the urgent case process; it does not wait for the next monthly or quarterly report. Repeated failures remain visible across changes of staff, court assignment or supplier.

The governing boundary

Measure the process without reducing a family to a score. No custody quotas, preferred finding rates, secret evidence channels, blanket surveillance, mandatory commercial platform or identifying public child data. Operational speed must be balanced against safety, evidence quality, meaningful participation and actual implementation. [M4–M7]

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Proposed Act

AN ACT TO STRENGTHEN MAINE FAMILY COURT ACCOUNTABILITY AND PROTECT PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIPS

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

Sec. 0. Short title; application; construction.

1. Short title.

This Act may be known and cited as “For Our Children and Families.”

2. Covered proceedings.

Except as a provision expressly states otherwise, this Act applies to proceedings within the District Court’s existing jurisdiction under Title 19-A that determine or implement a minor child’s residence, parent-child contact, parental rights and responsibilities, support, education, health care or related information access. It applies to initial, interim, final and post-judgment determinations. A protection-from-abuse proceeding remains governed by its own substantive standards, expedited procedures and safeguards; this Act supplements those protections and does not delay or displace them.

3. Related proceedings; no jurisdiction by implication.

Coordination with a criminal, Probate Court, child-protection, interstate, tribal or federal proceeding does not merge cases, change jurisdiction, import an inapplicable burden of proof or make another case’s allegations established facts. Federal law, tribal sovereignty and applicable state and interstate jurisdictional requirements remain controlling. This Act does not create standing for a person who otherwise lacks it, except for the expressly defined civil claim in section 13.

4. References and time.

Unless a Title or rule is specified, a reference to a section means a section of this Act. “Court day” means a day on which the relevant clerk’s office is open for ordinary business. Other periods are calendar days, computed under the rules applicable to the proceeding. A shorter protective deadline or a nonwaivable waiting period established by controlling law prevails. No review, referral or administrative request under this Act automatically extends an appeal deadline or stays an order.

Sec. 1. Whole-child history and longitudinal parental conduct.

19-A MRSA §1653, sub-§3-A is enacted to read:

3-A. Whole-child history; longitudinal parental conduct; mandatory findings.

The following requirements govern a determination under this chapter concerning a minor child's residence, parent-child contact, allocation of parental authority, or implementation of duties affecting the child's care, education, health, or protected family relationships. They apply to initial, interim, modification, and enforcement determinations, within the issues properly before the court. The child's safety and well-being remain primary. This subsection creates neither a preference for a particular parent nor a parental reward or punishment system.

A. Mandatory consideration of material history.

The court shall consider the child's relevant developmental and relational history and each parent's material course of conduct over time. In determining what arrangement serves the child's present and future best interests, the court shall evaluate relevant acts and omissions in chronological and cumulative context, including demonstrated good-faith efforts, protective conduct, obstruction, compliance, noncompliance, and sustained improvement. Consideration must extend to evidence unfavorable as well as favorable to each party's position.

B. Prohibition against artificial fragmentation.

The court may not disregard otherwise admissible, material evidence solely because the evidence predates the most recent order, concerns an earlier stage of the child's life, arose in a related proceeding, involves a former court-appointed professional, or concerns conduct not expressly discussed in the most recent decision. The court shall consider whether separately presented events establish a continuing, recurring, or cumulative pattern material to an issue before it.

A motion date, hearing date, change of judicial officer, or administrative case boundary does not, by itself, establish the beginning of the relevant factual history. This paragraph does not make all historical material admissible or authorize relitigation contrary to paragraph J.

C. Good faith measured by conduct and capacity.

The court shall assess each parent separately, using specific conduct, the information reasonably available at the time, actual ability to act, and legally applicable obligations. Relevant matters include dependable caregiving; school attendance and educational support; timely health care; accurate information sharing; performance of lawful communication and transportation duties; safe preservation of the child's relationships; timely efforts to obtain clarification or assistance; and feasible proposals to prevent or resolve recurring implementation failures.

The court shall distinguish inability, ambiguity, necessary protective action, and institutional or provider barriers from deliberate refusal or avoidable obstruction. It shall consider sustained conduct before and after court involvement rather than treating a last-minute action, polished presentation, or stated willingness as conclusive. Genuine rehabilitation and changed circumstances must also be considered.

Good or bad faith may not be inferred solely from representation status, poverty, disability, criticism of an institution, emotional presentation, or the number of filings. The court may assess actual threats, coercion, harassment, material falsehoods, and abusive litigation conduct under otherwise applicable law. Where litigation conduct is material, the court shall distinguish requests for new relief from

responses, corrections, and efforts to implement existing orders. Responsibility for one parent's proven conduct may not be attributed to the other merely by describing the matter as mutual conflict.

D. A usable, continuing record rather than repeated reconstruction.

Each party must have a meaningful opportunity to submit a concise, issue-specific chronology identifying dates, conduct, the child-related consequence, supporting sources, and the requested determination. The chronology must distinguish allegations, disputed facts, admitted evidence, prior findings, and unresolved issues. A chronology is a navigation aid and is not proof merely because it was filed. A missing document or lack of documentary corroboration does not, by itself, render otherwise competent testimony insufficient.

The court shall maintain, through an appropriate case-management process, a cumulative index of controlling orders, material prior findings, identified historical sources, and unresolved implementation issues. Updates should add new events without requiring unnecessary resubmission of material already available to the court. A successor judicial officer must have access to the index and the lawfully available source record. The index may not substitute for consideration of the evidence or conceal the status of a disputed source.

No private evaluator, paid chronology service, proprietary application, or new technology purchase may be required as a condition of presenting material history. The court shall provide reasonable paper, accessibility, language-access, and protected-information alternatives. Coordination of records does not merge separate jurisdictions or waive confidentiality.

E. Historical witnesses; evidence rulings.

A party must have a meaningful opportunity to offer relevant, otherwise admissible testimony or records from a present or former guardian ad litem, evaluator, caregiver, educator, treating professional, or other witness with an adequate foundation. The end of an appointment, passage of time, or availability of a more recent professional is not, alone, a sufficient reason to exclude material historical evidence.

Before excluding a material category of historical evidence or materially restricting a proposed historical witness, the court shall allow an offer of proof and state the particular legal or evidentiary reason on the record. The ruling must address the asserted connection to the current issue and, when practicable, consider a narrower presentation instead of categorical exclusion. A general statement that the court will not revisit the past is insufficient.

Privileges, lawful confidentiality, authentication, personal-knowledge requirements, expert qualifications, cross-examination, hearsay rules, and other applicable evidentiary protections remain in effect. No witness's former title establishes neutrality or reliability, and a historical assessment is not automatically a current clinical opinion. Repetition of an allegation does not transform it into proof.

F. Existing conditions and cumulative child impact.

Before relying materially on the duration of an existing arrangement, reduced contact, or deterioration of a relationship, the court shall consider competent evidence of how that condition arose and persisted. It shall distinguish the effects of necessary protection, parental conduct, the child's independent experience, practical barriers, and institutional delay to the extent the evidence permits.

An existing condition may not be treated as self-justifying merely because time has passed. Conversely, a finding that a parent contributed wrongfully to that condition does not authorize a remedy that disregards the child's present safety, attachments, or needs. The court shall consider demonstrated

cumulative effects, the likely effects of continued delay, and the practical consequences of each proposed remedy. It shall identify material uncertainty rather than assume causation.

The child's meaningful preference must be considered with appropriate regard for age, maturity, experience, and safety. A child's reluctance does not itself prove improper influence, establish parental noncompliance, or excuse an adult's proven failure to perform a lawful duty. The child may not be required to adjudicate the parents' dispute or bear responsibility for implementing the court's order.

G. Mandatory, issue-specific written findings.

For each contested determination materially affecting the interests identified in this subsection, the court shall make written findings sufficient to show the relevant period and issues examined; the material pattern or absence of a proven pattern; each parent's demonstrated conduct and capacity; the reasons for material historical exclusions; the child-specific safety and welfare implications; and how the relief granted or denied responds to those findings.

A general statement that all evidence or best-interest factors were considered does not satisfy this requirement when it leaves a material, properly raised historical issue unresolved. The court need not discuss every exhibit or make findings unrelated to the relief before it. It may incorporate specifically identified prior findings to the extent lawful, while addressing material subsequent evidence and asserted change.

The duty to make these findings does not depend on a separate postjudgment request. In an emergency, findings may be provisional and proportionate to the available record; the court shall identify any material gap and set a prompt review date, subject to earlier or more protective requirements of otherwise applicable law. Protective relief may not be delayed while a complete chronology is assembled.

H. Safety, reporting, and due process.

Nothing in this subsection requires unsafe contact, compelled joint treatment contrary to law, disclosure of protected locations, or delay in obtaining emergency, protection-order, criminal, or child-protection relief. A single serious event may warrant protection; proof of a recurring pattern is not a prerequisite to safety measures.

A reporting outcome alone establishes neither bad faith nor a right to continued restriction. The court shall separately assess factual support, protective necessity and deliberate misuse under section 12-A of this Act. Good-faith reporting is protected; knowing fabrication is not. Reliance on willful misuse remains subject to subsection 3, paragraph O and each required finding. Proof of bad faith is not a prerequisite to review or correction of an unsupported or disproportionate restriction.

Parties must receive notice of material relied-upon information and an opportunity to contest it, subject to lawful protective procedures. Sanctions, contempt, fees, and rights-affecting relief remain subject to their own legal elements, burdens of proof, and procedural protections. This subsection does not create a criminal offense.

I. Orders that address the proven problem.

When the court finds a recurring implementation failure, any corrective order shall, to the extent necessary and otherwise authorized, identify the responsible adult or other legally accountable actor, required action, deadline, lawful communication method, contingency for a missed action, and review date. A general direction to cooperate is insufficient when the court finds that such a direction would leave the demonstrated problem unresolved.

Relevant history must inform the terms of relief, not merely appear in a background recital. Measures must be proportionate, feasible, and directed to the child's welfare rather than punishment of a parent. The court may not direct a nonparty to act without jurisdiction and required process.

J. Existing judgments and modification standards.

This subsection does not reopen a final judgment, dispense with an applicable substantial-change-in-circumstances requirement, or permit a collateral attack on a binding determination. Material history may contextualize an alleged present change, recurrence, or implementation failure without relitigating a matter that governing law conclusively resolves. The existence of a prior order does not itself establish that every underlying allegation was adjudicated or that later conduct is immaterial. Applicable issue-preclusion, claim-preclusion, modification, and relief-from-judgment rules remain controlling.

K. Correction and appellate accountability.

An affected party may seek compliance with this subsection in the pending matter through an otherwise available motion, without an additional filing fee for a request limited to correcting the whole-history review or required findings. The court shall expressly resolve a properly presented claim of a material omission or exclusion; it may not treat a supported claim as resolved solely by repeating a general assurance that all evidence was considered.

On an otherwise authorized appeal, whether the court applied the duty imposed by this subsection is a question of law. Factual findings, credibility determinations, and evidentiary rulings remain subject to their otherwise applicable review standards. When a preserved violation affects a substantial right or prevents meaningful review of a material issue, the reviewing court shall order an appropriate correction, which may include supplemental findings, a focused hearing, or vacatur and remand. A reviewing court may not supply missing material findings by speculation.

Offers of proof, historical-evidence rulings, and required findings must be preserved in a form usable for review. This paragraph does not create an interlocutory appeal, authorize disregard of an existing order, enlarge a filing deadline, or suspend protective measures automatically. Any tolling or stay is governed by otherwise applicable law. The reviewing court shall address necessary interim protection when ordering corrective proceedings.

L. Proportionate process; no new barrier.

The court shall use proportionate means to perform this review, including source-indexed summaries, focused testimony, appropriately incorporated prior findings, protected record access, and staged proceedings when lawful. It may limit irrelevant, needlessly repetitive, or otherwise inadmissible material while giving the reasons required by paragraph E. It may not convert the duty to consider material history into a requirement that every family undergo a new investigation or trial of every past dispute.

Incomplete indexing, lack of a newly appointed professional, or lack of new software is not a ground to deny access to otherwise available relief. Administrative handling alone does not satisfy the substantive duty to evaluate material evidence. Procedures implementing this subsection must preserve the distinct jurisdiction and safeguards of related family, protection-order, criminal, and child-protection proceedings.

Sec. 1-A. Legislative findings and intent.

1. Continuous life; continuous responsibility.

A child's life is continuous. Decisions affecting that life must not be reduced to disconnected litigation episodes. The State's process must connect material history, cumulative consequences, actual parental conduct and present needs to the relief it orders. The duties in section 1 are the first substantive requirement of this Act.

2. Child time and family resources.

The purposes of this Act are to prevent avoidable loss of safe family relationships, educational opportunity, necessary care, housing stability and family resources through delay, inaccessible process or orders that cannot be implemented. Administrative convenience is not an adequate substitute for a child-specific assessment of the consequences of waiting.

3. Equal scrutiny; no predetermined outcome.

The Act requires equal procedural treatment and individualized assessment of each parent. It creates no gender preference, automatic equal-time presumption, presumption of parental wrongdoing from a child's reluctance, or entitlement to contact that would be unsafe. Loving intent does not exempt any adult from examination of the adult's conduct and its effects.

4. Accountability that reaches the problem.

Court orders must identify necessary action, responsibility, deadlines and review. Professional status does not excuse proven wrongdoing. Nor may accountability procedures punish legitimate protection, truthful testimony, competent advocacy, poverty, disability or reasonable efforts to obtain compliance.

5. Scope of findings.

These findings explain the Act's purposes. They do not adjudicate a private dispute, establish a diagnosis or convert an allegation about a person or institution into evidence. Operative duties, remedies and safeguards are contained in the sections that follow. Public expenditure, procurement completion or software installation does not by itself establish effective service. The State must test whether its administration actually delivers timely, fair and workable protection of a child's safety, development and future opportunities. This Act makes no finding that a particular expenditure was fraudulent or that a named person committed misconduct.

Sec. 1-B. Continuous institutional improvement; a continuing public duty.

1. Mandatory performance obligation.

The Judicial Branch shall maintain a continuous process improvement program for the administration of covered proceedings and the shared court services on which those proceedings depend. The program shall repeatedly identify preventable failure, test a proportionate correction, measure its effects, and retain, revise or discontinue the change on evidence. Its governing purpose is the child's safety, present well-being, developmental continuity and future opportunity, together with fair and effective access for the child and each person entitled to participate. A plan, committee, purchase, training certificate or completed installation alone does not discharge this obligation.

2. Individual adjudication; institutional accountability.

Whole-child history under section 1 is a duty in the individual proceeding. Continuous improvement under this section and sections 14 and 14-A is a duty of court administration. Neither substitutes for the other. Judicial independence protects adjudication under law; it does not dispense with the administrative measurement, reporting, fiscal control and corrective duties expressly assigned by this Act. No performance measure may dictate a custody result, discredit a report automatically, or excuse a failure to provide a legally required hearing.

3. Continuity and responsibility.

The State Court Administrator shall carry out the program subject to the Chief Justice's supervision and direction, through the permanent duties in Title 4, section 17, subsection 19, as enacted by section 14-A. Administrative responsibility, due dates and verified completion must remain traceable across staff changes, reassignment, vendor replacement and software migration. The program is continuing, not a one-time modernization project or a pilot with an automatic sunset.

Sec. 2. Access to court; safety triage; correction of filing defects.

1. No investigative prerequisite to filing.

Neither screening by the Department of Health and Human Services, appointment of a guardian ad litem, completion of a report, attendance at a course, participation in mediation nor preparation of a chronology is a prerequisite to filing or consideration of an otherwise authorized request. A clerk may not reject a filing because one of those events has not occurred. Court-directed investigation may proceed alongside, rather than in place of, timely judicial action.

2. Prompt routing and notice.

Every submission through an authorized channel must receive a receipt identifying its date, time and submission identifier. The record must distinguish submission, acceptance, rejection, service, judicial referral and disposition. An urgent request must reach the designated judicial officer for urgency screening no later than the next court day; immediate or after-hours danger remains subject to the applicable emergency process. Clerical processing must not decide the merits.

3. Curable defects.

A filing that identifies the case, requesting party and relief must not lose its original receipt date solely because of a curable formatting, caption, document-separation, form-selection or service-contact-entry error. The clerk shall identify the defects in one reasonably complete notice and provide at least seven court days to correct them, unless a longer period applies. A materially unchanged correction timely submitted under that notice retains the receipt date. A later-identified clerical defect must not erase a timely correction of the defects previously specified.

This protection does not supply a missing jurisdictional act, authenticate an unsigned declaration, complete service that has not occurred, or enlarge a nonextendable appeal period. The court shall address those questions expressly and preserve the opposing party's full response opportunity. An urgent safety request must be routed for judicial screening while a nonjurisdictional defect is being corrected.

4. Functional alternatives and outages.

The Judicial Branch shall maintain a usable paper or assisted-filing route, an accessible alternative to an unavailable electronic service, and a method for documenting an attempted timely filing. No party must purchase software, a device or a commercial account to obtain basic access. Technical relief shall be determined promptly on the available evidence; a screenshot, receipt or sworn account may establish an attempted submission without requiring vendor certification.

5. Fees and repeated submissions.

Duplicate charges arising solely from a system failure or correction of the same returned filing must be reversed or credited. A filed fee-waiver request must receive a judicial determination and may not be treated as a failure to request relief. Corrected copies, required exhibits, service notices and responses are not separate abusive filings merely because they generate separate electronic events.

Sec. 3. Office of Family Mediation and Parental Protection.

1. Function within existing services.

The Judicial Branch shall establish an Office of Family Mediation and Parental Protection as a coordinated service function within the Family Division, using existing Court Alternative Dispute Resolution Service and court-access infrastructure where practicable. The Office shall provide neutral procedural information, safe mediation access, order-implementation navigation and referral to qualified services. It may not adjudicate disputed facts, give one party confidential strategic advice, approve restrictions on a parent or child, or substitute for judicial review.

2. Voluntary participation; existing mediation requirements.

Participation in additional Office services is voluntary. Existing mediation requirements under Title 19-A, section 251 remain subject to the waivers and protections in that law and this Act. No party may be required to settle, waive a hearing, reveal protected material, or mediate a protective-order claim as the price of obtaining relief. A safety-based request to waive or separate a joint process must be decided before joint participation is required. Declining an optional service is not evidence of bad faith.

3. Safety and confidentiality.

Screening must permit confidential, separate responses and consideration of abuse, coercive control, stalking, threats and unequal bargaining power. Safe alternatives include remote or separate sessions, counsel participation and direct referral to court. Mediation communications remain protected under applicable law; a mediator must not become a merits investigator in the same dispute. Information required by a lawful reporting duty remains subject to that duty.

4. Independence and access.

Staff and contractors shall disclose conflicts, referral interests and compensation arrangements. No referral payment, exclusive commercial platform or financial interest in continued treatment may influence a referral. Services must be accessible to self-represented parties, people with disabilities and people needing language assistance. Required access services must not depend on an opponent's consent.

5. Administration and boundaries.

The State Court Administrator shall publish service standards, eligibility criteria, complaint routing, waiting times and funding limitations. The advisory body described in section 15 shall review aggregate performance. Neither the Office nor that body may exercise licensing, prosecutorial or disciplinary authority assigned elsewhere by law.

Sec. 3-A. Fee transparency; prospective budgets; protection of access to counsel.

1. Written financial information.

An attorney retained in a covered proceeding shall provide a comprehensible written engagement agreement, rates, billing practices, an initial estimate or range, and notice of material changes. Bills must identify the work performed with enough detail to permit client review without unnecessary disclosure of privileged strategy. Related firms or affiliated providers may not divide bills to evade this section.

2. Fifteen-thousand-dollar review trigger.

Before aggregate attorney fees chargeable to one client in one pending trial-stage proceeding are reasonably expected to exceed \$15,000, the attorney shall give the client an updated phase budget, an explanation of the expected work and alternatives, and notice of available fee review. Related trial-level motions in that proceeding count together. A new firm does not reset the threshold. An appeal or a genuinely new post-judgment proceeding requires a separately identified budget and disclosure of earlier expenditures; it may not be mislabeled to avoid review.

The threshold is not an absolute spending cap and does not require public disclosure of privileged information or prior judicial permission for necessary representation. The client may authorize further reasonable services in writing. Informed authorization does not make an unreasonable or fraudulent charge enforceable, waive fee arbitration, or waive the remedies in section 4.

3. Court-awarded fees and litigation costs.

Before shifting attorney, guardian, evaluator or supervision costs to a party, the court shall identify the legal basis, reasonable scope, necessity, allocation and actual capacity to pay. Ability to pay, equitable access to counsel and the effect on the child's essential needs must be addressed. A merits loss is not, by itself, misconduct. This section does not extinguish a fee entitlement otherwise established by law.

4. Confidential review and continuity of counsel.

A client may request review of disputed charges through an available court or bar process. Privileged material must be screened, redacted or reviewed privately as necessary, with procedural fairness to the attorney. Filing a fee dispute does not automatically authorize withdrawal, suspend an emergency response, or permit withholding essential client-file material contrary to professional obligations. Pro bono and limited-scope representation remain available.

Sec. 4. Remedies for knowing financial exploitation in covered proceedings.

1. Conduct-specific accountability.

After notice and a meaningful opportunity to contest the claim, a court with jurisdiction may order restitution, correction of accounts, reasonable enforcement expenses and other authorized civil relief for charges obtained by fraud, knowing material billing misrepresentation or knowing violation of an enforceable fee determination. Required findings must identify the act, applicable obligation, loss, causal connection and responsible person. Ordinary disagreement over a reasonable estimate or a promptly corrected good-faith mistake does not establish knowing misconduct.

2. Existing enforcement and discipline.

An enforceable fee order may be pursued through lawful judgment-enforcement or contempt procedures, including applicable ability-to-comply protections. The court may refer evidence to the appropriate professional regulator or prosecuting authority. A referral is not a finding of criminal guilt or professional discipline, and a separate body must apply its own standards.

3. No new billing crime.

This Act does not create a criminal offense merely because a fee exceeds the review threshold, a client disputes an invoice, or a civil fee order has been entered. Existing fraud, theft, perjury and other criminal laws remain available when their independent elements are established. No civil finding replaces proof beyond a reasonable doubt in a criminal prosecution.

Sec. 5. Equal procedural standing; conduct-based assessment.

1. Equal access and notice.

Represented and self-represented parties must have equivalent access to filing channels, orders, record materials lawfully available to them, scheduling information and opportunities to respond. Except for communications expressly permitted by law or rule, merits-related communications with the court must be disclosed to all parties. Administrative familiarity does not authorize a private decision-making channel.

2. Meaningful participation.

The court shall provide understandable procedural directions and reasonable opportunities to cure nonprejudicial errors without acting as counsel for either party. Disability accommodations, qualified interpreters, accessible notices and reasonable scheduling adjustments must be considered before attributing a participation failure to indifference or defiance. Children and opposing parties must not be used as interpreters.

3. Evaluate acts, not social status.

No adverse inference about parenting capacity or good faith may rest solely on income, housing assistance, self-representation, disability, diagnosis, lawful treatment, race, ethnicity, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, immigration status or protected political expression. Relevant conduct and demonstrated child-specific risks remain assessable. Poverty must not be relabeled as neglect without examining actual unmet needs, available assistance and the parent's efforts.

4. Speech, emotion and filing volume.

Protected criticism of a court or official, emotional presentation, a request for records or accommodation, and the number of filings are not substitutes for evidence of parenting harm. Courts retain authority to address actual threats, harassment, disruption, material falsehoods and abusive process. Findings must distinguish that conduct from disagreement, disability-related presentation, reasonable protective action, required responses and efforts to implement existing orders.

5. Professional duties preserved.

Nothing in this Act reduces counsel's duties of competence, loyalty, candor, fairness or respect for the rights of others under governing law and professional rules. Loyalty to a client does not authorize knowing deception, obstruction or violation of a lawful order. The Act does not make opposing counsel the other parent's attorney.

6. Narrow filing restrictions; route for new harm.

A restriction on future filings requires notice, a meaningful opportunity to respond, findings identifying the abusive conduct and why a narrower measure is inadequate, and a defined scope and review route. Filing volume alone is insufficient. Any screening procedure must preserve prompt judicial review of genuinely new safety concerns, material new implementation failures and time-sensitive filings necessary to preserve review rights. Administrative screening may not become indefinite nonpresentation of all future child-related requests. This subsection does not require repeated merits review of an issue conclusively decided without a material new basis.

Sec. 6. Jurisdiction; continuity; action during an appeal.

1. Existing judicial authority.

Covered family matters remain within the District Court's existing jurisdiction. This Act does not replace the provisions establishing the Family Division, alter magistrates' existing adjudicatory limits, or grant an administrative employee judicial power. A matter requiring a judge must be assigned to a judge rather than left unresolved because a magistrate lacks authority.

2. Assigned responsibility and handoff.

Each pending child-impact request must have an identifiable judicial assignment or an identified official responsible for obtaining one. Recusal, reassignment, transfer and judicial absence must preserve pending requests, receipt dates, urgency assessments, controlling orders and the cumulative history index. Within five court days after loss of an assignment, the responsible administrator shall record the new assignment or a specific interim coverage arrangement. Immediate safety requests must have coverage without waiting for that period.

3. Related orders.

Before entering a materially conflicting provision, the court shall identify known related protection, criminal, guardianship and other controlling orders. Any coordination affecting the merits must be recorded and disclosed subject to lawful protections. An operational summary must identify which court may change each restriction. No parent, lawyer or provider may treat a family-court order as permission to violate a criminal or protection order that remains in effect.

4. Pending appeal; no unexplained jurisdictional gap.

When an appeal is pending, the trial court shall promptly determine whether requested implementation, enforcement or protective action is within authority retained under the appellate rules or requires leave of the Law Court. The determination must identify the specific requested act and legal basis; an unexplained statement that nothing can occur during an appeal is insufficient.

If leave is required, the trial court shall identify the requested action and urgency in a short recorded determination, and the clerk shall provide the requesting party a copy suitable for a motion to the Law Court. The Judicial Branch shall provide a simplified linked procedure for that motion and transmission of the proposed trial-court request. No new filing fee may be charged solely for obtaining that routing determination. The Law Court retains control of leave, stays and the appeal.

5. Priority and record availability.

A properly supported request concerning continuing child harm must receive priority assessment in the court authorized to act. Record transmission must not make lawfully retained trial-court authority unusable: an accessible copy or prompt return procedure must remain available. Existing orders remain operative unless lawfully changed or stayed. This section creates no automatic interlocutory appeal or permission to alter a judgment under appellate review.

Sec. 6-A. Orders that can be carried out.

1. Required operational terms.

When necessary to resolve a contested or recurring problem, an order shall state the required act, responsible adult, deadline, safe communication method, practical contingency and review date. Depending on the dispute, the terms must address contact windows, exchanges, transportation, appointments, cancellations, holiday defaults, school attendance, records, costs and how compliance will be verified. A general direction to cooperate does not suffice when the court finds that it leaves the proven problem unresolved.

2. Cooperation without a unilateral veto.

An order may permit agreed adjustments but must supply a workable default when agreement fails. Allocated final decision-making authority must specify its subject and limits. Unless the court identifies a safety reason otherwise, the decision-maker must provide material information, a reasonable opportunity for input and notice of the decision. Final authority over an identified subject is not authority to suspend unrelated contact, withhold lawfully accessible records, or impose new prerequisites not contained in the order.

3. Communication boundaries.

Where a response protocol is necessary, the order shall distinguish emergencies, time-sensitive requests and routine coordination. A two-court-day response period may be used for a clear routine request, with a shorter or longer period where justified. Repetitive, abusive, irrelevant or already answered messages do not create unlimited response duties. A missed response is not automatic consent to a major decision. No-contact protections and approved intermediary channels control.

4. Transportation and missed opportunities.

Transportation must be allocated to an available, lawful and safe adult or service, with a backup and cost arrangement when necessary. The child must not become responsible for resolving an adult transportation dispute. A missed safe-contact or treatment opportunity must prompt consideration of a feasible replacement that respects the child's schedule and needs. Makeup contact is remedial, not a penalty imposed on the child, and cannot override a safety restriction.

5. Bounded restrictions and progression.

An order imposing supervision, therapeutic-only contact, a treatment prerequisite or other significant restriction must identify the risk addressed, objective conditions for review and a review date. A restriction must not continue solely because no parent can purchase an unavailable service. The court shall determine a safe, feasible alternative; inability to pay does not require unsafe unsupervised contact. A parent, lawyer, guardian or clinician may recommend a change but may not exercise unreviewable authority to suspend or restore legal parenting rights.

6. Third parties.

The court may regulate a party's reasonable conduct in selecting or instructing a third-party transporter or caregiver. It may not impose personal obligations or sanctions on a nonparty without jurisdiction, required notice and an opportunity to be heard. A child's disagreement or a third party's refusal does not alone establish the parent's ability to compel compliance.

7. Stability and safe family connections.

When materially affected by a proposed arrangement, the court shall examine continuity of safe sibling, extended-family, caregiving, cultural and community relationships, as well as school, disability supports, necessary treatment, sleep and age-appropriate activities. It shall assess the practical travel and transition burden and the effect of a proposed relocation rather than assume that a change of residence is neutral. Contact may not be ordered with an unsafe person merely to preserve continuity. This subsection creates no independent third-party standing or entitlement contrary to applicable parentage, parental-rights, tribal or interstate law.

Sec. 6-B. Education, health care, information and direct access.

1. Implement lawful access independently.

When a parent is entitled to school, health, insurance or other child-related information, the order shall identify practical steps for independent access rather than require reliance on the other parent as sole intermediary. Parents shall supply accurate contact and provider information and execute only those authorizations they are legally entitled and required to execute. No one must share passwords, impersonate another account holder or surrender confidential information beyond the scope of the right.

2. Routine notice and emergencies.

Subject to confidentiality and safety restrictions, a parent responsible for arranging a material appointment, school meeting or service shall give notice promptly after scheduling, including the available time, location or safe contact route, and relevant participation information. An urgent health event requires notice as soon as reasonably practicable without delaying care. An initial notice may be brief, followed by a meaningful update when information becomes available. Information rights do not create a right to enter a restricted location or attend a confidential clinical encounter.

3. School stability and actual causes.

When repeated absences, tardiness, missed work or denied educational access are material issues, the court shall examine available school information and the causes, including illness, disability, bullying, transportation, housing instability and adult conduct. A corrective plan must allocate necessary adult tasks and permit lawful educational participation by each entitled parent. Period-level attendance entries must not be mislabeled as full-day absences. The child must not be punished under this Act for a failure attributable to adults or inaccessible services.

4. Care decisions and continuity.

An order addressing missed care or parental disagreement shall distinguish emergency treatment, routine care, disputed major decisions and services to which a minor may independently consent. It shall identify who may consent, how consultation occurs, and a timely judicial route when disagreement threatens necessary care. A course or family-repair program is not a substitute for clinically indicated individual treatment. Necessary care may not be withheld as leverage over parenting time, fees or litigation.

5. Provider and school handling.

An in-state school, provider or insurer receiving a supported parental-access request shall assess the requester's actual legal authority and applicable restrictions rather than defer automatically to the parent with primary residence. Where lawful access exists, separate contact or proxy arrangements must be provided when technically available; an accessible alternative must be offered when the portal cannot provide appropriately limited access.

Within ten business days, the recipient shall acknowledge the request, identify missing authorization or a restriction, or provide an expected response date. Existing shorter response duties and applicable production deadlines control. A lawful denial must identify a review route and, to the extent permitted without compromising safety or confidentiality, its legal basis. An order compelling a nonparty requires jurisdiction and appropriate process.

6. Confidentiality and preservation.

Nothing in this Act overrides federal privacy law, educational-record law, substance-use-record protections, a minor's independent consent and confidentiality rights, privileges, protected addresses or an authorized safety-based denial. On a specific, relevant preservation request, a recipient shall preserve existing responsive access and change-history records within its control, subject to lawful limits and a reasonable preservation period. This creates no unrestricted right to inspect security logs or another person's account. Fault may not be inferred solely from a portal malfunction or changed verification screen.

Sec. 6-C. Financial capacity, child support and access to remedies.

1. No purchase requirement for basic parental opportunity.

The court shall consider actual ability to pay before imposing privately funded supervision, evaluation, treatment, transportation or technology as a condition of exercising a right. It shall identify a safe affordable alternative or an available funding route and a prompt review if the proposed service cannot be obtained. A waiting list, insurance denial or poverty is not deliberate refusal merely because the original order assumed access.

2. Support and parenting time are separate obligations.

A parent may not withhold support because contact is disputed, or withhold otherwise authorized contact because support is unpaid. Support remains governed by the applicable guidelines, income definitions, modification standards and federal requirements. A court evaluating income or earning capacity shall address relevant evidence of employment opportunity, health, disability, caregiving, legally imposed restrictions and access to work rather than assume capacity from a former job title alone.

3. Prompt financial correction.

A properly presented request based on material changed circumstances or an error in an account must receive timely consideration under governing law. Statements of arrears and reimbursement obligations must identify principal, credits, disputed items and the order authorizing them. This Act neither authorizes unilateral modification nor retroactively erases vested support obligations contrary to law.

4. Contempt and incarceration safeguards.

No person may be coercively confined for an act the person lacks the present ability to perform. Before coercive confinement, the court must make particular findings of present ability, identify a feasible purge condition, afford required counsel and other procedural protections, and consider less restrictive effective measures and the consequences for the child. Remedial and punitive contempt must not be conflated. A child's refusal to engage in contact is not, by itself, proof that a parent can produce a different emotional response.

5. Access assistance.

Financial review must preserve essential resources for the child in both households. Existing fee-waiver and indigency determinations apply to the no-fee reviews established by this Act unless lawfully reconsidered after notice. Reasonable interpreter and disability-access measures required by law may not be charged as a penalty for requesting them.

Sec. 7. Timely hearings; no automatic procedural reset.

1. Urgency extends beyond physical injury.

Urgency assessment shall consider abuse and immediate danger, as well as credible risk of serious emotional harm, avoidable disruption of an established safe relationship, missed necessary care, substantial educational harm, loss of essential support or housing, and other irreparable child-specific consequences. This does not change the elements required for ex parte relief or eliminate the respondent's right to a prompt hearing.

2. Scheduling duties.

Following proper submission, the court shall make an initial urgency and routing determination no later than the next court day. A supported urgent, non-ex parte request must receive a status or scheduling determination within five court days and, when material facts require a hearing, an evidentiary hearing within fourteen days after adequate service, unless a specifically identified safety or due-process need requires a different date. That exception requires interim protective consideration and a fixed review date.

Other contested interim or implementation requests must be set for consideration within thirty days after adequate service. The court shall issue a case-specific plan targeting final resolution of the child-related issues within ninety days after the matter is ready for adjudication, subject to applicable waiting periods and genuine evidentiary needs. Readiness must be determined within thirty days after the initial case-management event; unresolved child issues must not be withheld indefinitely pending unrelated property discovery.

3. Necessary hearings and continuances.

There is no numerical ceiling on necessary interim hearings. The court may consolidate issues and use focused evidence to avoid duplication, but may not deny needed review because two hearings already occurred. A continuance must state the concrete reason, responsible next step, interim arrangement and new date. It shall distinguish an unavoidable safety or fairness need from avoidable delay. Congestion must trigger administrative correction rather than an unexplained indefinite extension.

4. Cumulative clock.

Time already spent under a materially similar restriction or unresolved implementation problem must remain visible after an amended motion, new docket number, stipulated extension, reassignment or appeal. Agreement to a temporary arrangement is not proof that the arrangement is optimal indefinitely. The court must review the child-specific consequences before approving a further extension.

5. Missed deadlines and assignment escalation.

When a required review date passes without action, the clerk shall flag the omission to the assigned judicial officer and responsible administrator within two court days. Within five further court days, the court shall issue a status determination, new date and necessary interim directions within its authority. A party may submit a short, no-fee status request without restating the entire case. The administrator shall provide coverage or reassignment when needed, without directing the merits.

6. No automatic substantive forfeiture.

Expiration of a scheduling period does not automatically terminate protection, transfer custody, establish contempt, admit an allegation or dismiss a claim. The remedy for institutional delay must not expose the child to danger or reward a party by default. Available review remains subject to jurisdiction, preservation and appellate rules.

7. Prompt decisions after submission.

After the evidentiary record and authorized final submissions close, the court shall issue a decision on a supported urgent interim request within five court days and on other covered contested matters within thirty days, unless particular evidentiary, safety or fairness needs require a different date. Any extension must be recorded before the deadline, identify the remaining task and a fixed decision date, and address necessary interim protection. A shortage of available decision-making capacity requires administrative coverage or other lawful correction rather than unexplained inaction. The safeguard in subsection 6 applies to a missed decision deadline.

Sec. 8. Children's voice, dignity and freedom from adult litigation burdens.

1. Meaningful participation without responsibility for the decision.

The court shall consider a child's meaningful views through a developmentally appropriate process, with attention to age, maturity, communication needs, experiences, safety and possible pressure from any source. A child must not be made to choose which parent deserves a relationship or to enforce the order. The court must not assume that reluctance proves manipulation, that a stated preference is entirely independent, or that silence establishes agreement.

2. Attendance and interviews.

A child may be required to attend a hearing or submit to litigation-focused questioning only on findings of necessity and protective measures. Avoidable repeated interviews must be minimized. Any judicial interview used for a merits decision must be recorded and handled under lawful confidentiality and fairness procedures that permit meaningful review. A child's attorney, duly appointed guardian, qualified evaluator or authorized advocate may communicate within the person's proper role.

3. Independent legal representation.

On request or its own motion, the court shall determine whether independent counsel for the child is necessary because of a serious conflict of interests, proposed major separation, unresolved abuse concerns or inability to protect the child's legal position by a less burdensome method. The determination must be reasoned. A guardian's best-interest recommendation is not automatically a substitute for client-directed representation. Appointment, compensation and the lawyer's duties must be expressly defined under applicable law and the access plan in section 17-C.

4. No coercion of the child.

No child may be punished by contempt, incarceration, humiliation, deprivation of essential care or coercive transport solely for reluctance to have contact. Family-repair treatment must not depend on isolating the child from a safe bonded caregiver or requiring a recantation. Clinically justified emergency care and independently authorized protective placement are not prohibited, but must not be relabeled to evade this protection.

5. Adult conduct and disclosures.

A narrowly tailored order may prohibit coaching false accounts, pressuring a child to keep harmful secrets, recruiting the child to carry threats or litigation messages, or directing blame-focused disparagement to the child. A parent must take reasonable steps concerning adults the parent selects to supervise or transport the child; strict liability for every third-party remark is not authorized. Age-appropriate explanation, truthful safety planning, confidential support and reports to a provider, lawyer or protective authority remain permitted.

6. Privacy and speech.

Orders concerning publication must identify the child-specific interest and constitutional basis, use the least restrictive lawful means, and protect access to courts and legitimate public criticism. This Act does not authorize a blanket ban on criticizing public institutions. No public reporting system created by this Act may disclose a child's identity, confidential health or school material, protected location, or facts that enable re-identification.

Sec. 9. Treatment, parenting education and qualified assessment.

1. Distinct roles and purposes.

The court shall distinguish individual treatment for the child, treatment for a parent, parenting education, supervised contact, family-repair treatment and forensic evaluation. Each ordered service must have an identified purpose and lawful basis. A treating clinician is not automatically a custody evaluator; a guardian is not automatically qualified to offer a clinical diagnosis. Applicable professional qualifications, including the domestic-abuse expertise requirements of Title 19-A, section 1653, subsection 6, paragraph H, remain controlling.

2. Individualized participation.

Equal procedural treatment does not require identical session counts or joint sessions. A clinician shall use a safe and clinically justified method of obtaining relevant information; when offering a forensic opinion, the clinician must disclose the information obtained from each parent, important missing perspectives and limitations. No victim may be compelled into joint counseling contrary to law. Clinicians retain the right to decline an unsafe or clinically inappropriate modality and shall promptly inform the court through a lawful channel when an order cannot safely be implemented.

3. Evidence, limits and consent.

A court-ordered intervention must have a professionally defensible basis for its safety, effectiveness and therapeutic purpose, disclose material risks and alternatives, and be delivered by an appropriately qualified provider. Treatment may not require proof of loyalty to a parent, suppression of an abuse disclosure or adoption of a disputed legal narrative. A label of alienation alone does not establish a diagnosis, causation or fitness for an intervention.

A parenting order must not impose blanket obedience to every future treatment recommendation or medication prescription as an unreviewable condition of contact. Any restriction based on treatment participation requires a defined child-safety nexus, lawful consent procedures, feasible access, objective review criteria and judicial review. Clinical prescribing and emergency mental-health authority remain governed by applicable law.

4. Prompt child treatment.

When credible evidence indicates that the child may need individual counseling or other care, the court shall decide the request and address consent, referral, provider availability, payment and review. It shall not treat family-repair sessions as automatically satisfying the child's separate treatment needs. The order must preserve confidential therapeutic space to the extent required by law.

5. Parenting education directed to demonstrated needs.

When recurrent conduct shows a potentially remediable gap in safe communication, developmental understanding, school responsibility or cooperation, the court shall consider suitable parenting education or individual counseling for the responsible parent or parents. It shall state the decision and reasons when the request is material. A service order requires a feasible provider, cost plan, completion criteria and review; enrollment cannot serve as a new barrier to urgent relief. An abuse intervention must not be substituted with generic co-parenting education when that would be unsafe or inadequate.

6. Progress and provider accountability.

Significant restrictions tied to services must be reviewed at least every forty-five days until meaningful implementation is established, or sooner under section 17-A. A provider's report must distinguish attendance, actual progress, observations, third-party statements and unresolved safety issues. Payment, referral conflicts and dual roles must be disclosed. A failure to progress requires examination of the intervention and adult conduct, not automatic blame of the child or an unaffiliated parent.

Sec. 10. Protective processes and safety reporting.

1. Existing protection remains available.

Protection-from-abuse, child-protection, criminal and emergency health processes remain available under their own standards. No new corroboration requirement, mediation prerequisite, clinical label or requirement to prove a pattern is imposed before relief otherwise authorized by law. One serious event may justify protection. A mental-health emergency may require treatment and protective action concurrently; treatment is not a substitute for necessary safety measures.

2. Individual evaluation of allegations.

A report, dismissal, acquittal, temporary order, consent order and final adjudication have different meanings. The court must identify the nature of a source before relying on it. Lack of prosecution or substantiation does not establish fabrication; issuance of an ex parte order does not resolve contested merits permanently. Competent testimony may be sufficient where governing law permits it, without expert or documentary corroboration.

3. Safe participation.

Protective measures may include separate arrivals, secure waiting space, remote appearance, confidential locations, approved intermediaries and qualified support. No party must disclose a protected address or contact an alleged abuser directly to demonstrate cooperation. A refusal of an unsafe joint process must not be treated as obstruction.

4. Effect of protective allocations.

Parenting allocations contained in a protective order must be treated consistently with Title 19-A, section 1653, subsection 5-A. The court shall examine admissible evidence and current conditions rather than convert a temporary protective arrangement into a permanent parenting presumption. Existing abuse findings and safety needs remain material; this paragraph is not permission to disregard them.

5. Protected reporting; independent restriction review.

Good-faith reporting, reasonable safety planning and lawful help-seeking remain protected. Allegation integrity, severe temporary restrictions and deliberate misuse must receive the separate findings and review required by section 12-A. Correction of an unsupported or disproportionate restriction does not depend on proving fabrication or improper purpose. The court shall provide a safe transition and preserve independently justified protection.

Sec. 11. Guardians ad litem; targeted investigation; accountable reports.

1. Necessity and defined scope.

A guardian ad litem may be appointed as authorized by law when the court identifies a need that cannot be met adequately by a less burdensome process. An allegation alone does not trigger an automatic private-pay appointment or halt litigation. The appointment order must identify the issues, authorized tasks, relevant historical scope, expected deliverables, time limit, cost ceiling, allocation and review date. Existing mandatory appointments in other proceedings remain unaffected.

2. Qualifications, independence and workload.

The appointee must satisfy applicable qualifications and disclose material personal, professional, financial and prior-case conflicts, including referral relationships. The court shall consider relevant expertise and available capacity. A guardian must disclose when workload or unavailable information will prevent timely performance. Reappointment is not automatic merely because the guardian previously served; prior service is not itself disqualifying.

3. Whole-history method.

A report shall identify the material historical sources examined, the period covered, prior findings, direct observations, reported statements, contrary evidence, important gaps and the basis for recommendations. A former guardian's information must be considered when material and lawfully available, but former status does not establish truth or current clinical competence. A chronology must distinguish allegations from findings and evidence. A guardian may not treat repeated allegations as independent corroboration of each other.

4. Disclosure and opportunity to challenge.

A report to be used at a contested hearing shall ordinarily be disclosed at least fourteen days before the hearing, subject to lawful confidentiality protections. The guardian must be available for appropriate questioning. An emergency may justify a preliminary report on a shorter schedule, but the court shall identify its limits and provide a prompt opportunity to contest material assertions. No adverse merits decision may rest on undisclosed information without a lawful protective procedure preserving essential fairness.

5. Deadlines and financial access.

The first appointment review must occur within thirty days unless a shorter period is necessary. Delay in the report does not stay urgent relief or justify an indefinite parenting restriction. A scope increase or cost overrun requires notice and judicial review. Indigency, unavailable services and conflicts must be resolved through lawful funding or a suitable alternative, not an automatic adverse inference about a parent.

6. Judicial responsibility and complaints.

The guardian recommends; the court decides. No order may delegate final adjudication of parenting rights, contempt or a disputed legal prerequisite to the guardian. Complaints about the guardian must have a defined route and cannot be conditioned on withdrawing a pending parental request. Necessary reassignment must preserve useful records and prevent an avoidable restart. Existing guardian confidentiality, immunity and disciplinary rules remain in force except as expressly changed by law; this Act does not silently abolish them.

Sec. 11-A. Training and service capacity.

1. Required implementation subjects.

The Judicial Branch shall include whole-history analysis, child development, domestic abuse and coercive control, child abuse, supported versus unsupported inferences, disability and language access, financial capacity, digital evidence, child privacy, actionable order drafting and role boundaries in training for personnel carrying out this Act. Training must address how genuine protective conduct differs from deliberate obstruction and how cumulative conduct differs from repetitive allegations. Personnel with administrative responsibility must also receive role-appropriate instruction in continuous process improvement, measurement validity, service-management systems, privacy, cybersecurity, change control and escalation. Training completion is not a substitute for demonstrated competence or verified corrective work.

2. Independence and evaluation.

Training may not require adherence to an ideological custody outcome or a disputed diagnosis. Contractors shall disclose commercial interests and use qualified instruction. The Branch shall publish the curriculum framework, completion standards, aggregate participation and review method without disclosing private cases.

3. Capacity is not a filing condition.

Recruitment, regional provider availability, caseload controls and public funding must be addressed in the section 17-C plan. A shortage does not authorize a new filing barrier, an automatic default, forced unsafe contact or waiver of the core duties after their operative date. Courts must use safe alternatives and record unresolved resource constraints.

Sec. 12. Deliberate interference with lawful parent-child relationships.

1. Conduct, not a diagnostic label.

For the additional civil accountability measures in this section, deliberate interference must be established by clear and convincing evidence. The court must find a material course of acts or omissions, or a single independently serious act; an identified legal obligation or protected relationship; actual knowledge and practical ability to comply where noncompliance is alleged; and intentional conduct causing substantial interference without a lawful or reasonable protective justification.

Examples may include knowingly defeating a clear contact obligation despite feasible safe compliance; intentional concealment of information that a parent is entitled to receive; fabrication of material records; pressuring a child to deliver false accusations or threats; or deliberately obstructing a court-authorized service for the purpose of impairing a lawful relationship. Each alleged act must be proved, not assumed from a label. A single serious protective concern remains sufficient for relief under the law applicable to protection.

2. Distinguish inability, protection and independent child experience.

The claimant retains the ultimate burden of proof, including proof sufficient to negate a reasonably raised lawful or protective explanation. Service failure, ambiguity, poverty, disability, a genuine health barrier, unavailable treatment, a child's independent experiences and reasonable action based on the information available must be examined. This section does not require physical force against a child or require an abuse survivor to surrender a safety protection.

3. Evidentiary safeguards.

Neither estrangement, a child's reluctance, a rejected settlement proposal, a dismissed report nor a professional's unsupported assertion establishes the required conduct. Expert evidence is neither automatically required nor automatically sufficient. When specialized knowledge is offered, applicable qualification and reliability rules apply. No statutory presumption of a psychological syndrome is created.

4. Corrective response.

Upon the required findings, the court shall select a proportionate, child-protective response or state particular reasons why additional relief is unnecessary. Responses may include clarified responsibilities, safe replacement contact, removal of a proven logistical barrier, direct information access, bounded education or treatment requirements, verified compliance reporting and a prompt review. Proven unnecessary expenses may be allocated to the responsible actor after notice and consideration of applicable legal standards and capacity.

5. Separate burdens and no custody punishment.

This section does not raise the ordinary burden for obtaining best-interest, clarification or protective relief under existing law. Contempt retains its independent elements and procedures. Parenting modification requires the applicable modification and best-interest findings; it is not a sanction automatically awarded to the parent who proves misconduct. The child's safety, attachments and developmental needs remain primary even when an adult's conduct warrants a remedy.

6. No new alienation crime.

This section establishes civil protections, not a criminal offense of intentional parental alienation. Independently criminal conduct may be referred under section 13-A, but a relationship outcome or civil interference finding does not itself establish a crime.

Sec. 12-A. Allegation integrity; proportionate protection; misuse review.

1. Three separate determinations; no false choice.

The court shall separately determine what facts are established, what protective restrictions are presently justified, and whether a person deliberately misused the process. Neither a failure to prove abuse nor a failure to prove bad faith resolves the other inquiry. A person need not prove fabrication or improper motive to obtain review, narrowing or termination of an unsupported or disproportionate restriction. Conversely, suspected misuse does not justify withholding otherwise lawful emergency protection. This section adds review and integrity duties in covered Title 19-A proceedings; it does not raise the burden for protection, create a corroboration requirement or alter criminal or child-protection burdens. Earlier hearing rights remain controlling.

2. Identify the allegation, its basis and the requested relief.

At the earliest safe opportunity, the court shall identify the material conduct alleged; its approximate time and context when known; whether the account rests on observation, a disclosure, inference or another identified source; and the requested restriction. Uncertainty must be identified, not converted into an established fact. A sworn account or recorded testimony may supply the necessary information. The court shall provide assistance, interpretation and disability accommodations when needed. A person seeking emergency protection is not required to investigate, obtain documents, confront an alleged abuser or complete a chronology before applying. A limited initial account may be supplemented without an automatic adverse inference.

3. Trace sources; preserve and test material evidence.

The court shall use a bounded allegation-and-source index for materially disputed allegations, distinguishing statements, independent observations, professional opinions, temporary decisions and adjudicated findings. Repetition of the same account in police, clinical, agency and court records may not be counted as independent corroboration unless independent knowledge is identified. Relevant contextual portions of a communication must be considered when needed to prevent a materially misleading presentation. Reliability, admissibility and weight remain separate questions.

Upon a specific showing of relevance and need, the court shall order timely preservation or targeted production of lawfully obtainable material records, including original communications or authentication information when genuinely disputed. The court shall identify the custodian, scope and deadline, and resolve privilege or access objections promptly. No blanket access to therapy files, protected locations or private accounts is created. Lawful redaction and protective review must preserve a meaningful opportunity to contest material evidence. The index is not itself proof and may not become a new private-pay prerequisite.

4. Match each restriction to the demonstrated need.

A temporary parenting restriction based on a disputed protective allegation must identify the legal authority, provisional factual basis, person at risk, nature of the risk and connection between the risk and each restriction. The court shall consider less restrictive measures that can adequately protect the child and affected adults, explain why those alternatives are insufficient when rejected, and specify review and implementation terms. Protection of an adult may be independently necessary; it does not automatically resolve every child-contact question. No parent, attorney or provider acquires authority to expand an order beyond its terms merely by making or repeating an allegation. The court retains responsibility for rights-affecting restrictions.

5. Automatic review of severe temporary parenting restrictions.

This subsection applies when an order based on a disputed protective allegation suspends otherwise lawful parent-child contact, eliminates all previously permitted unsupervised contact, changes primary care, or grants one parent substantially exclusive authority previously shared. Within 7 calendar days after entry, the court shall conduct a recorded status review addressing service, immediate safety, available evidence, necessary access assistance and the hearing schedule. Contested merits may not be adjudicated without lawful notice and a fair opportunity to respond.

A focused, recorded evidentiary review of the severe restriction must occur as soon as safely practicable and no later than 7 calendar days after valid service or the restricted party's appearance, unless an earlier hearing governs. A full hearing addressing the same issues satisfies this requirement. The court shall address uncompleted service at intervals no longer than 7 calendar days; a party may not profit

from deliberate evasion. The 21-day full-hearing requirement in Title 19-A, section 4109 and the expedited motion procedure in section 4108, subsection 6 are not displaced by a later deadline under this Act.

If the full hearing is continued, a severe temporary parenting restriction requires renewed, issue-specific findings at intervals no longer than 21 calendar days. A continuance must state its particular necessity, interim safeguards and next hearing date. Docket congestion, a pending investigation, consent or a change of judicial officer does not alone establish continuing protective necessity. A case-specific emergency may justify a further delay of no more than 7 calendar days before renewed review; repeated extensions require fresh findings and expedited assignment review under section 14.

A missed deadline requires immediate administrative escalation and priority judicial review; it does not silently dissolve a protective order or authorize self-help. The court shall state that the existing order remains binding until lawfully changed. This subsection limits the continuation of severe temporary parenting terms, not independent, justified protection for an adult.

6. Keep the protective burden where the law places it.

At review, the party bearing the burden under governing law must establish the basis for the challenged restriction. For a temporary protection-from-abuse finding challenged by affidavit, the plaintiff's burden under Title 19-A, section 4108, subsection 6 remains controlling. The court may not shift the burden to the restricted parent to disprove every possible allegation, prove parental perfection or prove an improper motive. A child's current safety and legally material evidence must still be considered. The standards for final findings of abuse and for deliberate misuse remain distinct.

7. A focused hearing on a specific misuse claim.

A party requesting a deliberate-misuse determination shall identify the particular assertion or act, the available evidence of knowledge and improper purpose, the claimed injury and the requested remedy. The court shall first decide whether the proffer, if credited, could satisfy subsection 8. A qualifying proffer requires a focused evidentiary hearing, ordinarily within 21 calendar days after service; a later setting requires particular reasons, interim safeguards and a firm date. A denial must identify what necessary element the proffer fails to address. Mere denial of abuse, dislike of the reporter, an adverse reporting outcome or a conclusory charge of alienation does not require collateral discovery or a separate misuse trial. Safety and necessary contact review may not await that trial.

8. Conduct-based proof of deliberate misuse.

Additional civil relief under this Act for misuse of a protective-allegation process requires clear and convincing evidence that the person knowingly made or procured a materially false factual assertion, knowingly presented fabricated evidence, or intentionally distorted a material fact for an improper purpose, and thereby caused the particular harm for which relief is sought. An improper purpose includes obtaining a tactical benefit, punishment, coercion or control through the proven deception. Seeking lawful protection or a custody determination is not itself improper.

An omission qualifies only when the person knew the omitted fact, a legal duty or the context of the person's own presentation required disclosure to avoid a materially misleading account, and the omission was intentional and materially deceptive. Incomplete emergency reporting, a mistaken inference or inability to produce evidence is insufficient. Procurement includes knowingly inducing a child or other witness to give a materially false account. A finding must identify the act and proof; a label such as "coaching" or "manipulation" is not a substitute.

Knowledge and purpose may be proved through reliable circumstantial evidence; an admission or criminal conviction is not required. The court shall consider, when admissible and material, authenticated communications, falsified or deceptively altered records, contemporaneous contrary knowledge, a threat to fabricate evidence to obtain a concession, and deliberate concealment or destruction in violation of a legal duty. Ordinary settlement discussions, lawful assertion of rights and protected evidentiary material do not lose their protection. Each actor's conduct must be evaluated individually, including any knowing procurement or substantial assistance; family affiliation or legal representation alone proves nothing.

9. Good faith, incomplete proof and competing explanations.

Good faith is evaluated in light of what the person actually and reasonably understood when reporting, including a child's disclosure, reasonable fear, the urgency of the circumstances and limitations on safe access to information. An account need not be ultimately proved to have been honestly advanced. The court shall examine evidence supporting and contradicting the asserted belief, and whether a later disputed assertion concerns new information or a materially unchanged account.

Repeated reporting, withdrawal, dismissal, lack of prosecution, acquittal, inability to substantiate, delay in disclosure or an adverse credibility assessment does not alone establish deception. Neither trauma, disability, poverty, anger, emotional restraint nor polished courtroom presentation is a substitute for evidence. Material contradictions may be tested, with a fair opportunity to explain them; the absence of documentation or imperfect recall is not automatic proof of fabrication. These safeguards do not prohibit a finding supported by specific evidence of knowing falsehood or intentional distortion.

10. Correct known falsehoods; do not impose hindsight liability.

A person who actually learns that a material factual assertion the person advanced to obtain continuing relief was false shall, as soon as safely practicable, correct that assertion through the court or another lawful channel. The court shall assess any proven knowing repetition or material failure to correct separately from the initial report. A new disagreement, retraction, unsubstantiated outcome or disputed contrary evidence does not itself establish such knowledge. Correction is not an automatic admission of original bad faith and does not require direct contact with an alleged abuser or waiver of a constitutional privilege.

11. Written findings; no temporary-order advantage by inertia.

The court shall state separately which allegations are established under the applicable burden, which remain unresolved, which restrictions remain necessary, and whether each deliberate-misuse element has been proved. Any claimed pattern must be examined chronologically with contrary evidence, material context and reasonable alternative explanations. A generic reference to "high conflict" or competing accusations does not decide individual responsibility.

Reliance on willful misuse of the protection-from-abuse process as a best-interest factor remains subject to Title 19-A, section 1653, subsection 3, paragraph O and each of its clear-and-convincing findings. Parenting allocations must receive the independent determination required by section 1653, subsection 5-A and section 4110, subsection 3, paragraph I. A temporary order, the time spent under it or consent to a continuance may not replace findings or create an automatic parenting presumption. The court shall examine how the present condition developed without ignoring the child's current attachments or safety.

12. Proportionate remedies; protected access; enforceable correction.

When a restriction lacks a continuing legal basis, the court shall narrow or end it and order any necessary safe transition without conditioning relief on proof of bad faith. Proven misuse warrants an issue-specific corrective order or stated reasons why further relief is unnecessary. Relief may include correction of the litigation record, bounded parental authority, safe replacement contact and legally available compensation for proved loss. Parenting modification requires its own statutory findings; custody is not punishment. Fees sought against a PFA plaintiff remain subject to Title 19-A, section 4110, subsection 3, paragraph R. Contempt, professional liability and criminal referral retain their own elements. No finding bars a new good-faith report, requires a bond or waives privileges. Material omissions remain subject to the correction and review provisions of section 1 and otherwise authorized review.

Sec. 13. Civil accountability for knowing professional participation.**1. Defined statutory claim.**

A child or parent directly injured by an attorney's intentional substantial assistance in conduct satisfying section 12 or section 12-A, subsection 8 may bring a civil action for that person's own injury in a court of competent civil jurisdiction. The claimant must prove by clear and convincing evidence the underlying unlawful conduct, the attorney's actual knowledge of its material wrongful character, an intentional act of substantial assistance, and injury proximately caused by that assistance. Notice of an allegation alone does not establish actual knowledge.

2. Protected representation distinguished.

Representation of an unpopular client, ordinary advice, an objection, a good-faith factual or legal contention, a request for review, a refusal to settle or a client's adverse conduct does not alone establish liability. There is no duty to adopt an opponent's account. A claim must identify the attorney's own conduct and causal role rather than infer guilt from association, tone or professional status.

A common-law litigation privilege is displaced only to the extent it would otherwise bar this expressly defined claim for knowing fabrication or procurement of materially false evidence, intentional destruction or concealment of material evidence in violation of a legal duty, or affirmative substantial assistance in violating a clear order. Protected testimony, legal argument and legitimate advocacy remain protected. Attorney-client privilege, lawful work-product protection and constitutional rights are not abrogated.

3. Relief and boundaries.

Available relief includes proven compensatory damages, reasonable costs and fees, and prospective relief necessary to stop the professional's independently actionable conduct. No speculative award, automatic multiplier or custody transfer is authorized. Punitive damages remain governed by otherwise applicable law. Double recovery is prohibited. An action under this section does not serve as an appeal from the parenting judgment or confer authority to modify another court's order.

4. Child claimant and litigation control.

A minor claimant must have independent representation and any required representative who does not have a material conflict with the child. The court shall control discovery to protect the child, confidential treatment and ongoing family proceedings. A parent may not waive the child's claim in exchange for a personal benefit. A proposed settlement for a child requires appropriate independent and judicial review. Filing this claim does not automatically disqualify counsel in the family matter or stay child-protective proceedings.

5. Limitation period and prospective application.

For a child injured while a minor, an action under this section may be commenced until twenty years after the child reaches eighteen years of age, or within six years after the child knew or reasonably should have known the material facts establishing the statutory claim, whichever is later. For a parent's own claim, the period is six years after the parent knew or reasonably should have known those facts. Otherwise applicable disability and fraudulent-concealment rules remain available.

This section applies only to actionable professional conduct occurring after its operative date. It does not revive a previously barred claim, alter the limitations period for a different cause of action, or create personal liability against a judge or court employee.

Sec. 13-A. Existing criminal law; professional referrals; independent safeguards.

1. Evidence-based referral.

A court may refer specific evidence of conduct potentially constituting an existing crime or professional violation to the body authorized to investigate it. A referral must identify the alleged act and source material, respect confidentiality and privilege, and distinguish a reported allegation from an adjudicated fact. Automatic referrals based solely on filing volume, a relationship outcome or a rejected claim are prohibited.

2. Independent process.

The receiving authority shall apply its own jurisdiction, elements, burdens of proof and procedural protections. A civil order or fee determination does not direct prosecution, substitute for proof of a criminal element, or predetermine discipline. No party acquires a right to dictate a prosecution. This Act creates no new Class D or Class C offense for advocacy or family conflict.

3. No leverage over protection.

No settlement or order may require a child or parent to suppress a truthful report, withdraw a good-faith safety request or waive prospective protection as the price of avoiding a referral. Lawful reporting and settlement communications remain governed by existing professional and criminal law.

Sec. 14. Child-centered performance measures; public reporting; protection against misuse.

1. Required measurement system.

The State Court Administrator shall maintain a documented measurement system for covered proceedings and their administrative dependencies. The system must distinguish a submission, an accepted filing, service, judicial presentment, a hearing, a decision, an implementation review and verified implementation. A scheduled appointment is not proof of attendance; an entered order is not proof of compliance; an acknowledgment is not resolution. Corrections, exhibits, service notices and automated messages must be linked to their underlying event and not counted as independent motions or failures.

2. Required domains.

A. Timeliness and continuity. Measure elapsed time from the first identifiable submission through acceptance, urgency review, service, assignment, hearing, record closure, decision, notice, implementation review and correction. Report active pending age, unassigned work, overdue decisions and reviews, continuances and their stated reasons, handoffs, and repeat proceedings concerning the same unresolved implementation issue. Retain both total elapsed time and any separately justified legal adjustment; reopening, recaptioning, transfer or a replacement order must not erase the original clock.

B. Restrictions and child-related implementation. Measure the duration and review status of materially restrictive interim arrangements; the timely consideration of identified care, education, safe contact, transportation and records-access barriers; and whether corrective directions were followed by reported action, independently documented action, a disputed outcome or an unresolved need. Duration alone does not establish that a restriction was wrongful. The system must distinguish necessary protection, disputed circumstances, proven noncompliance and institutional delay rather than attribute all delay to a parent.

C. Decision and record integrity. Use appropriately authorized sampling to examine whether material historical issues, sources, offers of proof, exclusions and required findings were addressed and whether successor personnel could locate the controlling orders and cumulative index. Measure hearing-record availability, loss or corruption, funding decisions, production time, correction of material record errors and review prevented by a missing record. An auditor evaluates documented process, not whether a parent should prevail.

D. Access and burden. Measure filing-rejection reasons, first-pass completion, repeat correction loops, technical outages, fee-waiver processing, duplicate charges and refunds, accommodation and interpreter fulfillment, avoidable travel and waiting, access to counsel or required services, and complaint response and reopening. Distinguish inability, missing capacity and an unresolved safety issue from an adjudicated refusal. Voluntary feedback must be available through accessible paper and non-digital channels; participation is not a condition of service.

E. Operational reliability and public cost. Measure successful end-to-end authorized transactions, availability of essential services and usable alternatives, failed notifications, recovery and repair time, reopened incidents, recurring defects, workload and staffing capacity. Track acquisition and continuing costs, accepted deliverables, defects, service credits and verified benefits. A system that is technically online but cannot complete a required transaction may not be reported as fully available for that transaction.

F. Balancing measures. Pair speed and cost measures with safety, meaningful participation, evidence quality, unnecessary repeat interviews, burdens on children, service continuity and access. A faster closure accompanied by unresolved implementation, lost protection or increased barriers must not be reported as unqualified improvement. Long-term child-impact evaluation must use lawfully available, appropriately protected information and disclose the limits of attributing an outcome to court administration; this Act creates no compulsory tracking of a child into adulthood.

3. Definitions and honest comparisons.

Each published measure must identify its definition, unit, denominator, source, owner, time period, update frequency, limitations and correction history. Publish the median and ninetieth and ninety-fifth percentiles where meaningful, as well as the oldest pending categories and counts beyond an applicable deadline. Report open work, missing data, exclusions and case-mix differences. Averages alone may not hide severe delay. Distinguish goals, statutory deadlines and demonstrated outcomes. Estimates, sampling and survey results must be labeled; a changed definition must not silently improve the historical series.

4. Collection limits and protection.

Collect the minimum information reasonably necessary for these purposes, using existing authorized records where possible. No new general waiver of clinical, educational, attorney-client or other protected confidentiality is created. Identifiable internal data require role-based access, logged use, appropriate retention and secure deletion subject to lawful preservation duties. Public outputs must suppress small cells, exact dates, identifiers, locations and linked combinations capable of reidentifying a child or protected person. Missing protected data must be labeled as unavailable, not invented or treated as adverse evidence.

5. No harmful targets or automated judgments.

A performance target may not reward a particular custody allocation, the number of removals, a rate of substantiated or rejected abuse reports, criminal referrals, fee revenue, suppression of filings, hurried settlements or closure without implementation. No automated score may decide credibility, danger, parenting fitness or access to a hearing. Staff surveillance unrelated to service delivery, private judicial deliberations and continuous monitoring of family communications are not authorized. Lawful protected activity, an accommodation, a complaint or a reasonable request for evidence is not a performance defect.

6. Reporting and corrective use.

The baseline, dashboard, quarterly reports, independent verification and corrective register must follow section 14-A. An overdue individual event shall be routed through the case-specific process in section 7 or another controlling expedited procedure without waiting for a reporting cycle. Aggregate statistics do not prove the merits of a private dispute. This limitation does not prevent lawful proof of a systemic access failure or use of the underlying case's own admissible records. A metric identifies a question for examination; it does not determine fault or authorize a sanction.

Sec. 14-A. Permanent continuous process improvement and service accountability.

Enactment.

4 MRSA §17, sub-§19 is enacted to read:

19. Continuous process improvement; child and family access.

Establish, operate and continuously improve an administrative service-accountability program for District Court proceedings under Title 19-A affecting minor children, and for the shared court systems and administrative handoffs necessary to those proceedings, subject to the following requirements. The program does not expand adjudicative jurisdiction, merge separate cases or alter a governing burden of proof.

A. Accountable management.

Within thirty days after the effective date of this subsection, designate an executive program owner and operational owners with named backup responsibility; establish a controlled register of known service failures, required work and corrective actions; and publish the nonconfidential responsibility map. Maintain sufficient management authority to assign and escalate work. Contracting out a task does not transfer the administrator's responsibility to ensure completion or account for an unresolved failure.

B. Planning, organizing, leading and controlling.

Use an integrated planning, organizing, leading and controlling framework, or a demonstrably equivalent management framework. Planning must define the child-and-family service problem, baseline, lawful objective, measures and risks. Organizing must assign resources, responsibilities, handoffs and decision authority. Leading must provide training, timely decisions, meaningful staff and court-user input, and protected escalation. Controlling means quality assurance: compare actual results with lawful requirements, investigate variation and require verified correction. It does not mean controlling a family's views, dictating adjudicative outcomes or using a target to displace law. The administrator shall document each function; merely naming a management framework is insufficient.

C. Small, rapid, evaluated changes.

Use repeated plan-do-study-act cycles or an equally rigorous test-and-learning method. For each active priority improvement, establish an evidence review interval no longer than thirty calendar days; ordinarily use two- to four-week bounded tests where safe and practicable. Each cycle must identify a hypothesis, accountable owner, defined users or workflow, baseline and balancing measures, an authorized test, observed results, and a recorded decision to adopt, revise, stop or undertake a specifically identified next test. A meeting, a purchase order or a progress narrative without observed work does not constitute a completed cycle.

No unsafe production release or change in a person's substantive rights is required to meet a cycle interval. A simulation, accessible form test or bounded administrative pilot may be used while a legal, security or technical dependency is resolved. A blocked test must have a concrete reason, interim protection, responsible decision-maker and dated escalation. The register must preserve failed tests and adverse effects. Essential services and individual hearing rights may not be withheld to create a comparison group. No pilot may randomize custody, protection, access to counsel or a governing legal standard.

D. Service-management capabilities; no prescribed vendor.

Maintain the capabilities commonly supplied by professional services automation or service-management systems: controlled intake; unique work identifiers; assigned owners and backups; due-date and elapsed-time tracking; workload and dependency views; incident, recurring-problem and change records; accessible knowledge and forms; and auditable completion and reopening. For this subsection, professional services automation does not mean an automated public-safety assessment or a parental risk-scoring system. Existing court systems, interoperable modules or equivalent tools may supply these capabilities. No named product, new enterprise purchase or commercial account for a litigant is required.

E. Reliable workflow and record separation.

Link operational work to the authorized case or service record without making an administrative ticket a pleading, evidence or an order. Preserve the first receipt time, subsequent events, reasons for adjustment, person responsible and verifiable outcome. A transfer requires an identified receiving owner; reassignment, vendor handoff or reopening must not erase age or closure history. Mark allegations, party reports, independently verified administrative events and judicial findings distinctly. Record corrections must retain an audit trail. Material information used in adjudication must enter the lawful case process with appropriate notice and an opportunity to respond; an internal dashboard is not a secret evidence channel.

F. Baseline and implementation milestones.

Within ninety days after effectiveness, publish a costed implementation plan, the measurement dictionary and the available baseline for the required domains. Identify unavailable or unreliable data, the plan to remedy each gap, the resources needed and any rule-coordination question. The baseline must include active unresolved work and cannot be limited to newly filed cases. The plan shall integrate the access and staffing plan required by this Act and distinguish existing resources from additional lawful appropriations requested.

Begin a bounded operational pilot by one hundred twenty days after effectiveness. By one hundred eighty days, operate the required ownership, event tracking and escalation controls for covered workflows and publish the initial deidentified dashboard and status report. Safe interim manual controls shall be used for a function not yet supported electronically. Failure to complete software procurement does not suspend a manual ownership, routing, notice or correction duty. A milestone missed because of a demonstrated legal or resource impediment remains reportable and requires a dated corrective plan; it is not silently redefined as completion.

G. Escalation and recurring failure.

Route an identified critical operational failure threatening court access, a protective deadline or the integrity of a required record to an accountable administrator no later than the next court day, and sooner when immediate protection requires. Preserve evidence and arrange a lawful usable alternative. This administrative route does not delay emergency judicial presentation or extend a court deadline.

A mandatory individual deadline missed, or a serious safety, access, security or record-integrity incident, requires immediate appropriate escalation. Three verified materially similar operational failures within ninety days, or failure of the same published service target in two successive monthly periods, requires a documented recurring-problem review; fewer events may warrant one. Within ten court days after that review is triggered, identify the known causes, unresolved questions and immediate controls. Within twenty court days after the trigger, issue a corrective plan with an owner,

resources, completion date and verification method. Where causation remains uncertain, require a bounded investigation rather than invent a cause. A high-volume pattern may be addressed in one linked problem record without suppressing the underlying incidents.

The executive owner shall review overdue corrective actions at least monthly. A repeated deadline miss must be escalated to the Chief Justice's designated administrative authority and included in the next public status report, with the actual unresolved age. A generic statement that an office is doing its best or is awaiting a vendor does not satisfy the required explanation, interim action or dated decision.

H. Test before claiming completion.

Before a material administrative or technology change is placed into general use, document legal authority, security and privacy review proportionate to risk, accessibility and representative-user testing, preservation of records, training, operating responsibility and a safe fallback or rollback method. Test end-to-end completion of the required user task, including notification and accessible alternatives, rather than only whether software starts. Record accepted defects and their risk decisions. Verify the actual effect after adoption and reopen the problem when the supposed correction fails. A closed ticket, signed invoice or vendor assurance alone is not verification.

I. Public-money and supplier controls.

Maintain an auditable inventory of contracts, statements of work, amendments, funding sources, approved budgets, actual payments, recurring charges, acceptance milestones, material defects, remedies and service credits for systems and contracted services supporting the program. Distinguish authorized financing, appropriations, encumbrances, invoices and money actually paid. Distinguish statewide platform costs from a courthouse or regional project. Claimed savings and benefits must identify the baseline, method and verification; untested projections may not be reported as achieved savings.

Before approving a payment contingent on acceptance, the responsible official shall document the contracted requirement, test or other evidence of delivery, authorized acceptance and unresolved defect treatment. Respect existing contractual obligations; this subsection does not authorize withholding a sum otherwise legally due. For future solicitations, renewals and amendments within lawful procurement authority, require measurable acceptance criteria, accessible interoperable exports, proportionate security duties, incident notice, audit access, correction responsibilities, exit assistance and restrictions on secondary use of protected information. Do not lock a family's basic access into a proprietary paid product. Publish the nonconfidential inventory, verified performance and reasons for material cost or schedule variance, with narrowly justified redactions.

J. Quarterly publication; preserved records.

Within thirty days after each calendar quarter, beginning with the first quarter ending after the initial one-hundred-eighty-day report, publish an accessible dashboard and explanatory report to the Chief Justice, the Governor and the legislative committees with jurisdiction over judiciary and appropriations matters. Include current and historical measures, data gaps, completed tests, adverse effects, accepted changes, overdue duties, resources requested, supplier performance and the corrective register. Publish reusable deidentified data where safe. Keep previous reports and corrections accessible; do not replace an unfavorable period without preserving the earlier series and explanation. Document public-withholding grounds and provide a safe aggregate substitute when possible.

K. Independent verification.

Arrange a qualified operational and fiscal assessment independent of the personnel and suppliers responsible for designing or operating the work under review. The first assessment is due within twelve months after effectiveness and at least annually thereafter. A reviewer must disclose relevant financial, professional and organizational conflicts, including design, operation or paid advisory work on the evaluated system during the preceding three years, and may not assess the reviewer's own work. The review must test data reliability, sampled task completion, procurement acceptance, costs, access and balancing measures, including unintended harms. Provide lawful access subject to confidentiality and security protections; use aggregate or controlled review where disclosure of a case is not authorized. The public report must state access limitations and unresolved disagreements. The Branch may respond and correct factual errors but may not suppress an adverse conclusion by withholding publication approval. The State Auditor, Government Oversight Committee and Office of Program Evaluation and Government Accountability retain only their otherwise lawful jurisdictions; this subsection does not give any reviewer authority over a judge's deliberations or the merits of an individual case.

L. Complaint, correction and escalation.

Provide a no-fee, accessible administrative request to correct a documented service failure within the administrator's authority. Acknowledge within five court days; provide a substantive response within fifteen court days; and correct the failure within thirty calendar days or provide a particular, dated corrective plan, interim protection and named owner. A matter presenting urgent harm must enter the earlier urgent route immediately. A materially overdue response or corrective action must be escalated automatically to the executive owner and the Chief Justice's designated administrative authority. Include unresolved obligations and repeat failures in the quarterly report and independent assessment; do not rely on the complainant to file a new complaint at each level. A contested administrative closure must have a review route by a person not responsible for that closure. Existing appeal, judicial, disability-access, audit and disciplinary remedies remain available. Administrative exhaustion under this paragraph is not a condition of urgent judicial relief and does not toll an appeal deadline.

M. Limits and nonretaliation.

Apply the privacy, fair-measurement, anti-gaming and automated-decision safeguards of this Act to every phase of the program. No adverse family-law finding, denial of service or performance penalty may rest solely on a lawful complaint, refusal to surrender protected information or a good-faith report of a system defect. Ordinary operational records are not made confidential merely by placing them in this program; existing lawful public-access and confidentiality rules remain controlling. The program authorizes no personal damages against a judicial officer, disciplinary shortcut, automatic custody change, automatic lapse of protection or administrative reversal of an order. Existing lawful judicial enforcement of a ministerial duty is not displaced, but this subsection creates no new court jurisdiction or interlocutory appeal.

N. Continuity and resources.

Operate the program as a continuing duty. A vendor change, staff vacancy, fiscal shortfall, study or pilot completion does not extinguish it. Identify a lawful interim method and escalate a genuine capacity deficiency with a specific request for resources. Do not finance compliance through an unauthorized charge on a family or automatically cut essential hearing, interpretation, record-access or protective services because a target was missed. This subsection does not appropriate an unspecified sum, authorize deficit spending or certify the sufficiency of existing resources.

Sec. 15. Advisory oversight; complaint routing; protection of service funding.

1. Existing commission and public participation.

The Family Law Advisory Commission shall conduct continuing review of implementation of this Act and convene a balanced advisory working group with parents who have used the courts, an appropriate youth or former-youth perspective, disability and language-access expertise, domestic-abuse and child-safety expertise, legal-services expertise, and relevant professional and administrative experience. No regulated profession or commercial provider may control the working group. Participation does not authorize access to confidential private-case records.

2. Advisory operational review.

At least annually, the commission shall publish recommendations addressing whole-history review, access barriers, service capacity, safe implementation, cost and recurring failure patterns. The report must state which recommendations were accepted, rejected or remain unanswered and identify the institution responsible for responding. Findings about systemic operations must distinguish verified information from inference. The commission's advisory work supplements, and does not replace, the independent operational and fiscal verification required by section 14-A. The administrator shall respond to each formal recommendation within sixty days, identifying action, reasons for rejection, or the responsible official and fixed date for further decision.

3. Complaint pathways.

The Judicial Branch and participating administrative agencies shall publish clear routes for administrative, disability-access, professional and judicial-conduct complaints. A misdirected complaint shall be referred to the proper body with notice to the sender when lawful; when referral is not lawful, the office shall identify the available route without disclosing protected material. An administrative complaint does not substitute for an appeal, and the notice must say so. Complaints must not disappear into an unlabeled intake: the responsible office shall provide an acknowledgment and a status or closure explanation consistent with governing confidentiality requirements. Operational complaints within the administrator's authority are subject to the time, correction and escalation requirements in section 14-A; separate disciplinary bodies retain their own lawful procedures.

4. Independence and nonretaliation.

Oversight may examine process and aggregate performance but may not direct a judge's decision, change a private order, adjudicate attorney discipline or disclose protected information. No adverse family-law finding may be based solely on lawful use of oversight or records-access processes. Conflicts of interest must be disclosed and managed.

5. Funding safeguards.

Performance findings shall inform remedial staffing, access and technology plans. Funding decisions must not punish children or court users by automatically withdrawing essential interpreters, records access, supervision or timely-hearing capacity because the responsible institution missed a target. No provider's compensation may depend on a favored custody result or the continuation of restrictions.

Sec. 16. Non-waiver of child protections; voluntary and informed agreements.

1. Prospective safeguards.

A parent, lawyer, guardian or provider may not waive a child's future access to lawful protection, necessary care, meaningful review or the independent safeguards of this Act. An agreement cannot authorize coercion prohibited by section 8 or shield deliberate misconduct from a competent authority.

2. Agreements remain possible.

Parents may make lawful parenting arrangements and resolve disputes by informed agreement, subject to required judicial approval and the child's best interests. No equal-time, joint-treatment or settlement agreement may be presumed voluntary solely because a party signed while unrepresented. The court shall address a material claim of coercion, misunderstanding, lack of accommodation or inability to obtain necessary advice.

3. Temporary agreements and confidentiality.

A temporary compromise is not an admission of unfitness or agreement to indefinite restriction. Legitimate confidential settlements and narrowly tailored protective orders remain possible, but may not suppress lawful safety reporting, conceal evidence from a competent authority or require false statements. Public advocacy is not itself a waiver of a child's confidential records.

Sec. 17. Rules, construction and coordinated implementation.

1. Substantive protections and judicial procedure.

The Supreme Judicial Court shall adopt and maintain the rules and administrative orders necessary to implement this Act within its constitutional authority. The State Court Administrator shall implement the administrative duties assigned by this Act, subject to the supervision and direction of the Chief Justice. The substantive rights and duties stated here are not optional administrative goals. Forms, training and software must facilitate, not substitute for, those duties. No implementing rule may create a new investigation, payment or technology prerequisite to urgent relief. This section does not authorize the Legislature, an administrator, an auditor or a vendor to direct the merits of a pending case.

2. Existing law preserved except for express changes.

The Act supplements existing rights and remedies except where it expressly provides otherwise. It does not generally replace the Family Division statute, the Court Alternative Dispute Resolution Service, the Family Law Advisory Commission, protection-from-abuse law or professional-regulation structures. Rules of evidence, finality, modification, notice, service, privilege and jurisdiction remain applicable unless expressly and lawfully changed.

3. Coordinated rule review.

Before the operative date, the Judicial Branch shall identify necessary coordination concerning civil findings, contempt, fee waivers, record preservation, electronic filing, appellate authority, guardians ad litem and child participation. Particular attention must be given to the independent findings duty in section 1, filing-date protection in section 2, and the record-access entitlement in section 17-B. Any unresolved conflict must be identified publicly with a proposed correction; it may not be hidden by treating the new duty as already supplied by an existing rule. The review must also address section 12-A's interim-restriction clocks and sections 14 and 14-A's permanent administrative duties. The Branch shall publish a rule-coordination register within ninety days after effectiveness, specifying the legal source of each conflict, the responsible decision-maker, the proposed instrument and the earliest lawful implementation date. Required promulgation or waiting periods, including those applicable under Title 4, section 8, must be respected. Any needed legislative correction must be identified in a concrete proposal. Publication of a conflict does not itself stay a right, amend a rule or authorize an indefinite exemption; lawful interim administrative measures must proceed.

4. Scope of judicial remedies.

Except for the express civil remedies in sections 4 and 13, this Act creates no separate damages action based merely on a procedural error and no new personal damages action against judicial officers. It does create the express duties, no-fee correction procedures and review protections stated in its text. Existing lawful remedies are not displaced. Relief must address a material violation and protect the child during correction.

Sec. 17-A. Early implementation review of covered orders.

1. Covered order and purpose.

A covered order is an order in a covered proceeding that materially requires, changes, restricts or prohibits parenting time, parental authority, exchanges, communication, education or medical access, support, supervision, treatment, transportation, document production or another child-related implementation step. A prohibitory order is not exempt merely because it commands no affirmative act. Review concerns actual receipt, understanding, lawful implementation, safety, access and practical barriers; it is not an automatic rehearing on the merits.

2. Scheduling at entry.

At entry of a covered order, the court shall set an implementation review within thirty days. An order initially eliminating contact with a parent, materially restricting an established relationship, or requiring a time-critical care or school action shall receive an implementation and safety checkpoint within fourteen days, subject to any earlier status, evidentiary or protective review required by section 12-A or other controlling law. That checkpoint does not presume that contact must be restored.

For an ordinary thirty-day review, the court may once extend the date to no later than forty-five days after entry on specific written findings explaining necessity and interim safeguards. A later order, extension or recaptioning of materially the same arrangement does not restart the cumulative review clock. A review may be combined with another timely hearing if its purpose is expressly addressed.

3. Narrow exceptions.

A separate review is unnecessary if the order fully resolves a completed ministerial act or expires before review and leaves no continuing child-related effect, and the court states that determination. Any unresolved safety or implementation concern defeats that exception. An expiring protective order remains subject to the hearing and continuation requirements of the law governing it; this section does not extend or terminate it automatically.

4. Notice and implementation statements.

The order or accompanying notice must state the review date, method, scope, accommodation and interpreter routes, safe-participation options, and the warning that review does not stay the order or extend appeal deadlines. Each party may submit a short verified statement identifying actual implementation, missed steps, ability to comply, record access, child-safety concerns, recurring historical problems and requested clarification. A usable equivalent to the prescribed form must be accepted. A missing statement does not itself prove compliance, noncompliance or waiver.

5. Early failure notice.

A party may file a short notice of a material implementation failure or safety barrier before the scheduled review, without a new filing fee or complete evidentiary packet. The court shall screen the notice no later than the next court day and follow the urgency provisions of section 7. Neither party must wait thirty or forty-five days while a supported urgent problem continues. The court may consolidate genuinely repetitive notices while providing a route for material new events.

6. Paper review, remote participation and cancellation.

Paper or remote review shall be used when it protects safety and fairness while reducing unnecessary travel, missed work and expense. A live event may be cancelled only after an individualized recorded determination that material implementation is established and no unresolved safety or disputed factual issue requires a hearing, or because the issues will be addressed at an identified timely hearing. An opponent's silence, an attorney's assurance or a provider's unexplained nonresponse is not alone sufficient for cancellation.

7. Matters the court shall examine.

The court shall distinguish a new issue from a recurring failure, an ambiguous order, an unavailable service, a safety concern or deliberate noncompliance. It shall consult the relevant history index and prior implementation findings. Where necessary, it shall clarify logistics, allocate feasible next steps, preserve lawful access, identify responsible actors and deadlines, and schedule any separately required enforcement, contempt, protective or modification hearing. A referral without an identified next step and review is not a completed remedy.

8. Merits changes and sanctions.

The court may clarify the implementation of an order but may not label a material substantive change as a clerical clarification. Contested rights-affecting relief, fees, sanctions and contempt require appropriate pleadings or notice, jurisdiction, evidence and procedural protections. When necessary, the court shall set a separately noticed hearing; interim emergency action remains available under governing law.

9. Safety, children and cost.

Safe participation shall include appropriate separate arrivals, confidential locations, approved intermediaries, remote access and screening against unsafe joint processes. A child need not attend without necessity and protective findings. No additional filing fee may be charged. The court may not require a new private provider, proprietary application or retained attorney merely to participate. Required interpreters and disability accommodations remain available.

10. Closure and follow-through.

The review shall end with a recorded determination identifying completed steps, unresolved issues, responsibility, deadlines and any next review. Administrative closure is permitted only as to issues actually resolved; unresolved child-impact requests remain visible. The court shall not require a new modification action merely to clarify or enforce a duty when the existing proceeding supplies authority. Review data shall be reported only under the privacy safeguards in section 14.

Sec. 17-B. Accessible forms, hearing records and meaningful review.

1. Practical forms and notices.

The Judicial Branch shall provide plain-language forms for a source-indexed chronology, implementation statement, early failure notice, historical-evidence offer of proof, status request, cost-barrier request and record-access request. Forms must permit explanation beyond fixed checkboxes, preserve necessary confidentiality and identify whether the requested act requires a separate motion or service. They must distinguish an administrative acknowledgment from an order. No form may imply that an appeal deadline stops while a request is pending.

2. Reliable hearing record.

Covered contested evidentiary hearings, material oral findings, offers of proof and decisions excluding material evidence must be recorded through an official method. Off-record merits determinations are prohibited. Recordings, admitted exhibits, orders and the cumulative index must be preserved under a published retention schedule appropriate to child-related review and applicable preservation duties. Protected information must remain access-controlled; preserving a record does not make it public.

3. Usable access and authentication.

A party shall have timely access to the nonprivileged portions of the case record that the party is entitled to use, including an available recording in an accessible format. A court may protect third-party material, child interviews and sensitive information through targeted procedures, but shall state the basis of a material denial and provide a review route. Automated transcripts and summaries must be identified as such and may not substitute for the official source without lawful verification and an opportunity to correct errors.

4. Adequate record for indigent parties.

When an indigent party pursues a nonfrivolous, good-faith appeal in a covered proceeding and reasonably identifies a material issue requiring a hearing record, the court shall ensure access at state expense to an adequate reviewable record. A certified transcript of the necessary portions shall be provided when a recording or settled statement would not adequately permit presentation and review of the issue, including because of accessibility needs, disputed testimony or the reviewing court's requirements. The court shall state its adequacy determination. This entitlement is additional to, and must be coordinated with, existing fee-waiver and appellate-record rules.

5. Decision and production schedule.

A record-access or necessary-record funding request must receive a determination within seven court days, or sooner when a review deadline requires. The determination shall identify what exists, who will produce it, the authorized format and the due date. An available recording shall be provided within fourteen days after authorization; a longer period requires particular reasons and an interim access plan. A necessary transcript must receive a specific feasible completion schedule. Cancellation for nonpayment may not bypass a pending timely request for a public-payment determination.

6. No review defeated by an unexplained missing record.

A record may not be treated as complete merely because a private transcript order was cancelled when a timely request for an authorized substitute or funding remains unresolved. The reviewing court shall decide the record's adequacy and any available deadline relief rather than assume what missing testimony would show. Deadlines remain in force unless changed under applicable law; the clerk's notice shall make that distinction clear. If an irreplaceable missing record prevents meaningful review, the court shall consider the corrective remedy within its authority, with necessary interim safety protection.

7. No automated adjudication or compulsory commercial system.

A digital index or artificial-intelligence tool may assist organization but may not make credibility or parenting decisions, create facts, conceal source gaps or replace judicial evaluation. Court-provided outputs must identify their sources, remain contestable and avoid unauthorized use of confidential records for model training. Paper and accessible alternatives must remain available. Vendors may not condition basic record use on payment for a proprietary chronology or scoring product.

Sec. 17-C. Costed implementation; access funding; public evaluation.

1. Implementation plan.

Within ninety days after the effective date, the State Court Administrator, in consultation with the Family Law Advisory Commission and relevant agencies, shall publish a costed plan identifying staffing, judicial coverage, records work, interpreter and accommodation capacity, independent child representation, provider access, training, secure technology and service-funding needs. The plan shall separate existing resources from additional appropriations requested and identify a responsible office and milestone for each task. The plan must integrate the permanent improvement program, baseline measures, independent verification and procurement controls required by sections 14 and 14-A. It shall identify recurring operating costs as well as acquisition costs and assess the workload imposed by new review and reporting duties.

2. Family Justice Access Fund.

A dedicated Family Justice Access Fund is established for money lawfully appropriated or granted for the access purposes of this Act. Authorized purposes include necessary hearing records for indigent parties, approved independent child representation, required access services and safe supervision or evaluation when otherwise unobtainable. Eligibility and payment standards must be public, needs-based and independent of custody outcomes. No fine, fee-recovery quota or mandatory private donation may finance a decision-maker's compensation.

3. Fiscal honesty and appropriations.

The implementation plan shall provide the information necessary for a legislative fiscal estimate and appropriation decision. This section does not appropriate an unspecified amount, authorize deficit spending or represent that existing resources are sufficient. Resource deficiencies must be identified, escalated and addressed through lawful appropriations and safe interim alternatives, not converted into a new private payment requirement or an unexplained indefinite restriction on a family.

4. Phasing without suspension of core rights.

Technology, event-code and administrative reporting pilots may be phased by region or function. After the operative date, no pilot exemption may suspend the whole-history duty, access to a necessary hearing, protection of good-faith reporting, required findings or basic correction procedures. Existing systems and manual processes must be used where safe and workable. Any delayed administrative component must have a published reason and completion plan.

5. Evaluation and correction.

Within eighteen months after the effective date, and annually thereafter, the Branch shall publish an anonymized evaluation of actual implementation, delay, cost, access, service availability and unintended effects. This broader child-and-family-impact evaluation supplements the first twelve-month independent operational audit and quarterly reports required by section 14-A; it does not postpone them. The evaluation shall include whether the Act increased unnecessary interviews, costs, retaliatory litigation, burdens on children, unsafe contact or barriers to counsel. It shall identify the limits of causal attribution and the data actually available. Findings must be entered into the corrective-action register with an owner, a decision and a verification date. Administrative pilots may be ended or revised; the Act's substantive protections do not sunset merely because a pilot ends.

Sec. 18. Severability and inseparable safeguards.

If a provision or application of this Act is held invalid, the remaining provisions and valid applications remain effective to the extent they can operate independently. A liability, sanction or restriction provision may not survive stripped of the notice, burden of proof, safety or review safeguard integral to it. The whole-history duty, no-fee implementation review, safe access and record-protection provisions must be preserved independently where legally possible. Nothing in this section expands jurisdiction or reduces constitutional protection.

Sec. 19. Effective date; operative date; pending proceedings.

1. Effective date.

This Act takes effect as provided by the Constitution of Maine. Administrative planning duties begin on that date.

2. Operative date.

Except for the administrative duties expressly commencing earlier, the substantive duties and procedures in sections 0 through 16 and 17-A and 17-B become operative one hundred eighty days after the effective date. Sections 1-B, 14, 14-A, 17, 17-C and 18 take effect with the Act. The thirty-, ninety-, one-hundred-twenty- and one-hundred-eighty-day administrative milestones and the first twelve-month audit in section 14-A run from that effective date, not from the later operative date. Training and systems development shall proceed during the transition; their incompleteness does not create an indefinite exemption from duties once operative.

3. Pending cases and existing orders.

The Act applies to covered determinations made on or after the operative date, including in then-pending cases, after notice and a fair opportunity to address its requirements. A pending order with continuing material implementation issues may be set for review on a party's short no-fee request or the court's own motion. The Act does not automatically reopen a final judgment, change an existing order, enlarge an expired deadline or adjudicate a prior allegation. Historical evidence may be considered for its lawful relevance to a current issue without retroactively imposing a new liability.

4. Prospective professional liability.

Sections 4 and 13 apply their newly created remedies only to conduct occurring on or after the operative date. They do not revive claims already barred before that date. Existing causes of action, disciplinary authority and criminal laws retain their own commencement and limitations rules.

5. Transition notices.

The Judicial Branch shall publish the actual effective and operative dates and provide notices identifying the available forms, governing procedure, funding route and any unresolved rule coordination.

Appendix A. Harm-prevention review

Review conclusion and limits

The rev08a baseline, supplied whole-child amendment and two successive rev9 bill PDFs were reviewed and coordinated with the accessible R6 archive and outreach packet. The principal failure mechanisms below remain the review framework. This is a drafting assessment, not proof that the proposal eliminates every harmful outcome or establishes a private allegation. Final statutory placement, fiscal capacity, rules and public-release approvals remain open. New CPI protections and residual risks follow A15. [S1–S6]

A1. Historical fragmentation and a manufactured status quo

Revision: section 1 requires material chronological and cumulative review, separate assessment of each parent, a usable source index, specific evidence rulings and written findings. Sections 6 and 7 preserve the history and elapsed time through a handoff or appeal. Section 6-A also addresses safe sibling and extended-family connections, school, treatment, travel and relocation effects. The safeguard runs both ways: old allegations are not automatically true, changed conduct matters, and a historical wrong does not justify a presently harmful remedy. Maine already includes relationship, continuity, cooperation and abuse factors; the added review method and findings duty are proposed additions. [L1, L2]

A2. A reform that blocks the courthouse door

Revision: sections 2, 7 and 11 replace the rev08a screening/report gates and numerical hearing ceiling with parallel investigation, urgency screening, targeted hearings and recorded extensions. Serious emotional, educational, medical and relationship harm is not excluded merely because immediate physical injury is absent. Service and a fair opportunity to respond remain necessary. A missed institutional deadline cannot itself transfer custody, erase protection or prove an allegation. These deadlines are draft policy choices, not a statement of present Maine procedure. [S1; R1, R2]

A3. Orders that exist only on paper

Revision: section 6-A requires an actor, action, deadline, practical backup and review where needed. Section 17-A moves ordinary implementation review to within 30 days, adds a 14-day checkpoint (subject to the earlier section 12-A review) for specified high-impact orders and permits an earlier failure notice. An order prohibiting contact is not excluded merely because it requires no affirmative act. Silent nonresponse does not establish successful implementation. Clarification cannot disguise a substantive change requiring notice and a hearing. [S1]

A4. Decisions delayed after the hearing; a new judge starting over

Revision: sections 6 and 7 require assignment coverage, preservation of pending requests and prompt decisions after authorized submissions close. Five court days for a supported urgent interim decision and 30 days for other covered contested decisions are proposed targets with reasoned exceptions and interim safeguards. A transfer, recusal or temporary extension cannot erase cumulative elapsed time. An appeal requires identification of retained authority or a route for seeking leave, not an unsupported claim of unlimited trial-court power. [R2]

A5. The child carrying adult responsibility

Revision: section 8 protects meaningful child participation without making the child enforce transportation, decide parental blame, act as a messenger or withstand unnecessary repeated interviews. It permits independent child counsel where necessary rather than barring all lawyer-child communication. A child's reluctance is neither automatic proof of manipulation nor automatic proof that the adult did everything required. The proposal does not authorize force, humiliation or isolation-based treatment to secure contact. [L1, L5; R5]

A6. Therapy or parenting education becoming another barrier

Revision: section 9 separates the child's individual care, relationship work, forensic assessment and parenting education. Courses must address the demonstrated problem and have a feasible provider, cost, scope and completion standard. Equal scrutiny of parents is not a requirement to place an abuse survivor in joint counseling. Treatment providers recommend; courts decide legal restrictions. Neither future blanket obedience to a provider nor unavailable services should become an indefinite condition of parenting. Existing Maine law specifically addresses abuse-related expertise and bars compelled victim-abuser joint counseling. [L1]

A7. Punishing protection because a report was not substantiated

Revision: sections 10, 12 and 12-A distinguish knowingly false material claims from a report that is dismissed, unproven, withdrawn or not prosecuted. A genuine report does not need a preexisting expert or documentary packet to avoid punishment. Deliberate obstruction remains actionable, but misconduct requires evidence and causation. Custody is not a penalty. Maine's present protection-process-misuse factor already contains clear-and-convincing requirements and rejects voluntary dismissal alone as proof. [L1, L6]

A8. Financial exhaustion and loss of representation

Revision: sections 3-A, 4 and 6-C replace the prior court-permission fee ceiling with a \$15,000 budgeting and review trigger, retain remedies for knowing financial exploitation, and require attention to actual financial capacity. This is a material policy change: the revised trigger does not cap total fees. The aim is to avoid making necessary representation inaccessible while still exposing and contesting costs. Support and contact remain separate obligations; the text does not cancel arrears or authorize unilateral nonpayment. [S1; L9, L10; R1, R4]

A9. Records access that disregards the child's confidentiality

Revision: sections 6-B and 17-B require practical lawful access and a reasoned response to barriers, not password sharing or unrestricted access to every clinical note. Minor-consented care, protected locations, privileges and age-based education-record rights remain protected. A parent's information rights do not automatically include presence in a confidential appointment. Provider audit information may be requested and preserved only within lawful authority; a malfunctioning portal is not proof of parental interference. [L1, L7; F1, F2]

A10. An appeal without a usable record

Revision: section 17-B creates a proposed entitlement to an adequate record at state expense for an indigent party meeting its conditions, including a necessary certified transcript when alternatives are inadequate. This is broader than current Civil Rule 91(f)(2), which treats paper-transcript funding differently in ordinary proceedings outside its specified categories. The draft also requires decisions on funding/substitute requests, a production schedule and an adequacy determination. A pending request does not itself stop an appeal deadline. [R1, R2]

A11. Public accountability turning into new litigation harm

Revision: sections 12 and 13-A do not retain rev08a's new broadly framed alienation and attorney-facilitation crimes. Existing criminal and disciplinary routes remain available on their own elements. Section 13 instead defines a narrower civil claim for an attorney's knowing, intentional, causally harmful participation. That claim is still a significant expansion with unresolved privilege, limitations and litigation-abuse risks. It must not be treated as approved merely because it appears in this review draft. [S1; R4]

A12. No way to raise a genuinely new child-safety event

Revision: section 5 requires findings and narrow scope for future-filing restrictions and preserves judicial screening for materially new safety or implementation concerns. It does not create a right to repeat a conclusively decided issue without a new basis. Sections 2 and 14 require correction events and automated notices to be distinguished from independent demands for relief. This addresses the risk of using raw filing counts as a substitute for examining why filings occurred. [R1, R3]

A13. Metrics, technology and oversight causing their own harm

Revision: sections 14, 15 and 17-B protect against identifying children through small data groups, rewarding case closure without implementation, outcome-based compensation, automated credibility scoring and unauthorized reuse of confidential records. Essential family-access funding is not automatically cut because an institution missed a target. Oversight can identify operational failures but cannot secretly decide a case or replace appeals and professional discipline. [L3, L4; F3] Sections 1-B and 14-A now require continuous improvement, independent verification, supplier accountability and a documented correction route; the metrics in section 14 explicitly preserve original elapsed time and limit collection.

A14. Scope boundaries that still need attention

The draft protects continuity within covered Title 19-A proceedings and coordinates related orders. It is not a comprehensive rewrite of child protection, Probate Court guardianship, adoption, parentage, juvenile justice, interstate enforcement, tribal jurisdiction or support collection. Those systems can also affect a child's life. A subsequent jurisdiction-by-jurisdiction review is necessary before expanding coverage; copying family-docket deadlines into every forum could itself cause harm. Section 0 preserves those boundaries rather than pretending the proposed Act has resolved them.

A15. Disproportionate power from an untested allegation

Section 12-A now requires separate decisions on facts, protective necessity and deliberate misuse. Severe temporary parenting restrictions receive automatic recorded review, with issue-specific reasons for continuation. A targeted misuse hearing examines specific evidence of knowing fabrication, intentional distortion or procurement rather than treating reporting outcomes as proof. Unsupported restrictions can be corrected without proving bad faith; justified protection remains available. See C8 for proposed deadlines and coordination risks. [L1, L6, L14, L15]

A16. Modernization that documents failure without correcting it

New sections 1-B and 14-A require named responsibility, short evidence-review cycles, dated correction and verification. Owners cannot erase age by transferring work or calling the same incident a new ticket. A critical access failure is escalated immediately, and recurring failure has a root-cause and corrective-plan schedule. This is stronger than reporting alone, but implementation still requires staff, authority and funded operating capacity.

A17. More data becoming more intrusion

Section 14 confines collection to necessary, lawfully available information, protects privileged and minor-consented care, prohibits blanket family monitoring and guards against small-cell reidentification. The statute does not promise that every desirable outcome measure can be collected. A missing measure must be disclosed, not filled with a presumption of parental fault.

A18. Procurement success being confused with public benefit

Section 14-A separates funding authority, commitments and actual payments; requires evidence-based acceptance and a public variance explanation; and requires independent testing. It respects existing contracts and fiscal law. The attached project materials do not establish that a specified sum was stolen or wasted. A verified finding must follow the controlling financial and performance records, not precede them.

A19. Speed, testing and statistics distorting justice

Short cycles are for administrative learning, not experiments that withdraw hearings or protection. No metric may reward a custody outcome or a particular rate of abuse findings. Independent review must examine data quality and balancing measures. The program cannot turn a ticket into evidence or an administrator into an appellate court.

A20. Overengineering and paperwork creating fresh delay

The draft allows equivalent existing systems and safe manual controls rather than demanding a new enterprise purchase. Routine work must be linked and deduplicated, and the costed plan must count new review and reporting workload. A pilot that increases burden or causes an access failure must be revised or stopped. A legal duty continues even when the first technical solution fails.

Appendix B. Complete section-change map

All 26 rev08a sections remain accounted for. This table identifies substantive changes, not merely formatting. The rev9-CPI additions do not restore the earlier filing gates, hearing ceiling or broad new criminal offenses.

rev08a	rev9 treatment	Retained purpose / change
0	0	Retained short title; defined coverage, separate jurisdictions and time rules.
1	1; 1-A; 1-B	Moved and refocused findings. Inserted the complete whole-history duty first, with evidence rulings, automatic findings and correction. A separate institutional-improvement duty now follows the findings.
2	2; 6	Replaced filing/report prerequisites. Preserved Family Division structure; added urgency routing, cure protection and accessible filing.
3	3; 3-A	Retained a neutral service function within existing structures. Replaced the fee-cap model with a \$15,000 budget/review trigger.
4	4; 13-A	Replaced the proposed billing crime with civil financial remedies and independent existing-law referrals.
5	5	Preserved equal access; added accommodations, conduct-based assessment and narrow filing-restriction safeguards. Removed language that could obscure counsel's other duties.
6	6	Preserved District Court jurisdiction; added handoffs, related-order coordination and actual appellate-authority review.
7	7	Removed the two-hearing limit and physical-danger-only exception. Added urgency categories, cumulative clocks, decision deadlines and administrative escalation.
8	8	Replaced blanket attorney-child communication ban. Added child voice, role-defined representation, interview safeguards, privacy and protection from coercion.
9	9	Replaced mandatory equal therapist meetings with safe, role-specific treatment and reasoned parenting-education requirements.
10	10; 12-A	Preserved protective processes without making an unproven report proof of abuse. Treatment does not displace a necessary protection.
11	11	Replaced automatic guardians and advocacy stays with scoped appointments, cost controls, report access and judicial responsibility.
11-A	11-A; 17-C; 19	Replaced screening-based phasing with training and capacity requirements that do not suspend core rights after the operative date.

rev08a	rev9 treatment	Retained purpose / change
12	12	Replaced the proposed alienation crime with conduct-specific civil correction; retained independent contempt and modification standards.
12-A	12-A	Separates factual proof, continuing necessity and deliberate misuse; adds bounded evidence review, 7-day checkpoints and recurring 21-day review, with heightened misuse and PFA safeguards.
13	13	Retained a civil professional-participation claim; specified knowledge, intentional assistance, causation, privilege boundaries, child representation and parent injury claims.
13-A	13-A	Replaced the new attorney-facilitation crime with referral under existing law and independent criminal/disciplinary safeguards.
14	14; 14-A	Expands reporting into defined child-centered measures and a permanent improvement program: POLC, short tests, PSA-equivalent capabilities, procurement controls, independent verification and correction.
15	15	Used the existing advisory commission; added complaint routing, nonretaliation and protection against cutting essential family-access services.
16	16	Expanded non-waiver into informed agreements, temporary-order limits, protection from coercion and lawful confidentiality.
17	17	Specified substantive duties, rule coordination, existing-law boundaries and the limited scope of new civil remedies. Necessary implementation rules and administrative duties are now mandatory within constitutional authority.
17-A	17-A	Strengthened implementation review: ordinary review within 30 days, specified 14-day checkpoints, earlier failure notices and no silence-based cancellation.
17-B	17-B	Expanded forms into hearing-record preservation, proposed indigent record access, production decisions and safeguards against automated adjudication. Available recording delivery is now “shall,” retaining the reasoned exception.
17-C	17-C	Retained staged administration and evaluation; added a costed plan, proposed access fund and express fiscal limits. The 18-month impact review is preserved alongside an earlier 12-month independent audit.
18	18	Retained severability but kept integral safety and due-process safeguards attached to liability and sanctions.
19	19	Replaced fixed January 1, 2027 date with constitutional effective date, a proposed 180-day transition and prospective liability. New administrative milestones start on effectiveness, not 180 days later.
New	6-A	Operational orders, bounded discretion, transport, progression, safe family continuity and third-party limits.

rev08a	rev9 treatment	Retained purpose / change
New	6-B	Independent lawful education, health and insurance access, practical notice, provider response and confidentiality.
New	6-C	Actual financial capacity, service access, separate support/contact duties, and coercive-contempt safeguards.
New	1-B; 14-A	Continuing institutional duty and proposed 4 M.R.S. §17(19). New detailed operational requirements are drafted additions, not existing law.

Changes within the supplied 49-page rev9 edition

Added sections 1-B and 14-A; replaced the former five-part section 14 with six measurement and safeguard provisions.

Conformed findings, training, advisory oversight, complaints, mandatory rule implementation, deadline hierarchy, record production, implementation costs, evaluation and effective dates.

Preserved every other operative source paragraph. Section 12-A's separate proof / protection / misuse determinations, heightened findings and ban on automatic sanctions from reporting outcomes remain intact.

Corrected the stale statement that the website ZIP was unavailable. Identified the supplied archive and kept website reconciliation distinct from an actual website update.

Appendix C. Decisions still requiring approval and specialist review

C1. Approve the substantive policy departures

The \$15,000 hard-cap model is replaced by disclosure and review, and the new alienation, allegation-process and attorney-facilitation crimes are replaced by civil remedies and existing-law referrals. These are not copy edits. Section 13 also expands the former child-only proposal to a directly injured parent's own claim. They require the proponent's express review before a website replacement. [S1]

C2. Resolve the civil claim's boundaries and long limitations period

Section 13 retains the prior proposal's 20-year period after majority for a child's claim and specifies a six-year discovery period when later. It also adds a six-year discovery period for a parent's own injury. This can produce exposure far beyond the underlying parenting case and has no fixed outer repose date. Review accrual, tolling, unavailable witnesses, record retention, insurance, stale evidence, claim screening and the risk of retaliatory suits. The narrow common-law litigation-privilege displacement needs Maine appellate and constitutional analysis. This review does not establish that the clause will survive challenge or that existing privilege law already permits the claim. [S1; R4]

C3. Complete the statutory placement, not just the numbering

Rev08a attempted to enact a new Title 19-A chapter 5, but that chapter already contains the Family Law Advisory Commission. It also reused 4 M.R.S. §807-A, which currently concerns representation by specified agency employees. Its replacement language for 4 M.R.S. §183 risked displacing the existing Family Division framework. This edition avoids those replacements and proposes express §1653(3-A) and 4 M.R.S. §17(19) insertions; other substantive sections remain unallocated provisions of the Act pending Revisor review. All internal references must be converted accurately if later codified. This is a bill-form review draft, not a certified Revisor-ready instrument. [L1, L3, L4, L11] The cross-references from permanent statutory text to this unallocated Act must be converted to final codified identifiers or a precise public-law reference. Proposed subsection 19 was checked against the current §17 list, which ends with subsection 18. [M1]

C4. Coordinate judicial authority, evidence and appellate procedure

Automatic findings, receipt-date protection, future-filing screening, decision deadlines and state-funded record access interact with judicial rulemaking. The current rules do not already supply every new entitlement. Rule 52, Rule 66, Rule 91, the electronic-filing rules, appellate Rules 3 and 5, evidence rules and guardian rules require a coordinated conforming schedule. Statutory commands cannot be assumed to resolve every separation-of-powers question. Finality, proper service, notice and a fair response must remain effective. [L8; R1–R5] Section 17 now commands necessary implementing rules within constitutional authority, not legislative control of adjudication. The §8 general-rule waiting period and its separate amendment provision require particular attention; publication of a conflict does not resolve it.

C5. Fund enforceable access rather than an unfunded promise

The proposed fund has no invented appropriation figure. A fiscal note and lawful funding decision are still needed for judicial coverage, clerks, interpreters, records, independent child counsel and necessary services. The 90-day implementation plan and 180-day operative date are draft choices; test whether the staffing and rule changes can support them. Insufficient funding must not silently become a private fee or an indefinite restriction. The present draft identifies this risk but does not prove that the State can meet the schedule. [L3, L8] The proposed 30/90/120/180-day program milestones, thirty-day cycle reviews and first twelve-month audit must also be costed. A reviewer must be operationally independent without displacing the Chief Justice's management authority or inventing OPEGA jurisdiction.

C6. Test the proposal against difficult cases before release

Use a mixed review group and realistic scenarios: a genuine abuse report with little documentation; a deliberately fabricated allegation; a teenager with an independently damaged relationship; a parent unable to buy supervision; an urgent motion during appeal; a former guardian whose report is partly outdated; a provider confidentiality limit; an abusive filing pattern containing one genuinely new safety event; and a case spanning tribal or interstate jurisdiction. Test cost, safety, access and procedural fairness for each party and the child. No test should assume that a "loving parent" label establishes every disputed fact.

C7. Reconcile publication materials against the supplied archive

The R6 website ZIP is accessible and contains downloads/initiative-rev08a-public-review-full-text.txt. That source has been extracted and identified. Before publication, reconcile the complete proposed Act with the archive's overview, FAQ, red-team register, changelog and downloads; this targeted revision does not certify that broader reconciliation. No website change has been made. The proponent's personal purpose statement is staged separately from statutory text, with the constitutional quotation first. [S1–S4]

C8. Review the new allegation-integrity and restriction safeguards

Section 12-A now separates factual support, protective necessity and deliberate misuse. It provides a bounded source index, targeted evidence preservation, a defined evidentiary gateway for misuse claims, circumstantial proof of knowledge and purpose, a duty to correct known falsehoods, and individual findings. It covers intentional material distortion as well as fabrication. None of these duties creates a presumption that an unsuccessful report was dishonest.

The new 7-calendar-day status and evidentiary reviews, recurring 21-calendar-day temporary-restriction reviews, and limited emergency continuance provisions are proposed additions, not existing statutory deadlines. Maine's current PFA motion and full-hearing procedures remain distinct. Rule coordination, service, judicial staffing, interpreters, records and access funding must be tested before enactment. No automatic expiration or self-help is authorized. [L6, L8, L14]

The existing heightened misuse findings, independent custody determination and limits on fees against a PFA plaintiff are preserved. A failure to prove bad faith does not establish a basis for continuing a challenged restriction. Review the expanded distortion language for fair notice and the risk of retaliatory collateral litigation; test the specific-proffer requirement without making it a barrier to safety or ordinary modification relief. [L1, L14, L15]

C9. Require a usable operating model before claiming feasibility

Test the mandatory program with real task maps: an urgent motion returned for a curable defect; a record awaiting funding; an unassigned matter; a vendor outage; a disputed implementation report; a small rural data cell; and a repeat complaint wrongly closed as a duplicate. Verify that the extra fields do not create another filing prerequisite. Prototype lawful access, event deduplication, data export, role-based permissions, retention and rollback. Test audit independence, procurement remedies and the ability to meet the schedule without an unfunded new charge on families. [M1–M7]

C10. Keep fraud allegations separate from financial verification

The supplied site's public-money tracker identifies different categories of financing and reported expenditure and lists outstanding contract and performance records. It is not an independent audit or a finding of theft. Before publishing a quantified loss claim, obtain and reconcile the appropriation or financing source, executed contract and amendments, payments, deliverables, acceptance tests, credits and causal basis for loss. This edition strengthens the audit obligation without converting disputed assertions into legislative facts. [S4]

Appendix D. Source and authority notes

Original source notes are retained as the prior review's authority map. New M-series references identify the administrative foundation and borrowed improvement methods checked in this pass. These materials support source attribution and drafting analysis; they do not make new proposed duties current law. No external body is represented as endorsing the initiative.

S1 | JTforME — rev08a full-text reader Published baseline, labeled May 2026 rev08a. All 26 original sections are accounted for in Appendix B. The live page was rechecked October 13, 2026.

S2 | JTforME — initiative and red-team register Project context and public review concerns; not independent evidence of facts in a private case.

S3 | Whole-child lead amendment — October 13, 2026 Supplied file: Whole_Child_History_Lead_Amendment_2026-10-13.txt, with companion DOCX. Its operative A–L provisions supply the proposed section 1.

L1 | 19-A M.R.S. §1653 — Parental rights and responsibilities Best interests, child safety, records access, misuse findings, protective allocations, joint-counseling limits and qualified abuse-related assessment. The proposed subsection 3-A is new language.

L2 | 19-A M.R.S. §1657 — Modification or termination Existing modification framework. Material history is not a license for unrestricted relitigation.

L3 | 4 M.R.S. §183 — Family Division Existing Division, magistrate authority and administration; not replaced wholesale in this edition.

L4 | Title 19-A, chapter 5 — Family Law Advisory Commission Confirms the chapter is occupied. The proposed Office is not enacted by overwriting it.

L5 | 19-A M.R.S. §1507 — Guardians ad litem Appointments, role, child wishes, reports, fees and existing immunity. Historical status alone does not establish admissibility or present competence.

L6 | 19-A M.R.S. §4109 — Hearings Protection-from-abuse hearing rules, burden and continuance authority remain distinct.

L7 | 22 M.R.S. §1505 — Confidentiality; notification Confidentiality for minor-consented care and applicable notification limits.

L8 | 4 M.R.S. §8 — Rules of civil procedure Supreme Judicial Court civil rulemaking and substantive-rights limit. Final constitutional and rule coordination remains necessary.

L9 | 19-A M.R.S. §2001 — Child-support definitions Income and related support concepts; the Act does not replace the support calculation system.

L10 | 19-A M.R.S. §2009 — Modification of support orders Existing support-modification procedures and effective-date rules remain applicable.

L11 | 4 M.R.S. §807-A — Representation by agency employees Confirms this identifier is occupied and must not be reused for a different equal-standing section.

L12 | 19-A M.R.S. §251 — Mediation Existing mediation requirements and waiver provisions; optional Office services do not erase that framework.

L13 | 4 M.R.S. §18-B — Court Alternative Dispute Resolution Service Existing administrative structure relevant to the proposed Office.

R1 | Maine Rules of Civil Procedure — June 1, 2026 text Especially Rules 52, 66, 91 and family-matter procedure. Current Rule 91(f)(2) is not the same as the new necessary-transcript entitlement proposed in section 17-B.

R2 | Maine Rules of Appellate Procedure — official text Especially Rule 3(c)–(d) and Rule 5. Retained trial authority, leave and adequate records must be addressed rather than assumed.

R3 | Maine Rules of Electronic Court Systems — official text Current filing, service, correction and outage rules. Section 2's seven-court-day cure is a proposed change, not the current resubmission period.

R4 | Maine Rules of Professional Conduct — official text Fees, competence, loyalty, candor, fairness and other professional duties. These rules do not by themselves establish the new civil claim proposed in section 13.

R5 | Maine Rules for Guardians ad Litem — official text Role, qualifications, reports, complaints and procedural protections require conforming review.

R6 | Maine Judicial Branch — current rules and amendment index Read operative evidence rules with adopted amendments, including relevance, proof, privilege, qualifications and authentication. Recheck effective dates before publication; an adopted future amendment is not necessarily in force.

F1 | U.S. HHS — parents and access to a minor's medical records Official HIPAA guidance on personal representatives and exceptions. It does not authorize blanket access contrary to state law, confidential treatment or safety exceptions.

F2 | U.S. Department of Education — FERPA and divorced parents Official parental education-record guidance. Governing court orders and transfer of rights to an eligible student must also be considered.

F3 | U.S. DOJ and HHS — protecting the rights of parents with disabilities Official guidance on individualized assessment and access; cited as guidance, not as a new statutory enactment.

L14 | 19-A M.R.S. §4108 — Temporary orders Official statutory text. Existing emergency authority, affidavit-based challenges, the plaintiff's burden on challenged findings, and continuances. Section 12-A adds proposed review duties; the current statute does not already require the new 7-day checkpoint.

L15 | 19-A M.R.S. §4110 — Relief Official statutory text. Subsection 3(l) addresses separate parental-rights actions; subsection 3(R) limits fees against a PFA plaintiff. These provisions remain distinct from the new conduct-based remedies. Primary sources L1, L6, L14 and L15 were rechecked October 13, 2026.

S4 | Supplied R6 website archive JTforME_AUTHOR_SERIES_R6_BOOK_FOUR_FULL_Cloudflare.zip; identified baseline: downloads/initiative-rev08a-public-review-full-text.txt. Archive identification is not a certification that all publication pages match this revised Act.

S5 | Supplied bill PDFs

The 45-page rev09-R1 draft and 49-page rev9 Integrity and Protection Review are successive baselines. The later is the operative source for this coordinated edition.

S6 | Supplied roadmap

JTforME_Initiative_2028_Roadmap_and_Outreach_Packet_UPDATED.pdf, 38 pages. Its volunteer-only model, 2028/2030 planning assumptions, eleven letters and forty-eight references are the source organization preserved in the companion update.

M1 | 4 M.R.S. §17 — Duties of State Court Administrator

Existing continuous operational study, docket analysis, statistics, business methods, fiscal control and reporting duties. The proposed subsection 19 is additional language; its detailed clocks and program are not current law.

M2 | 3 M.R.S. §991 — OPEGA

Existing evaluation authority and institutional limits; not a grant of authority to decide the merits of a judicial case.

M3 | 3 M.R.S. §994 — Government Oversight Committee

Existing committee functions. The draft preserves, rather than assumes an expansion of, these oversight jurisdictions.

M4 | U.S. GAO — Agile Assessment Guide, GAO-24-105506

Primary implementation and assessment guidance for incremental software delivery, evaluation and accountability. It informs the design; it does not govern Maine courts by its own force.

M5 | Institute for Healthcare Improvement — Testing Changes

Primary explanation of small, repeated plan-do-study-act tests and learning from results. Applied here as an administrative design method, not evidence that a court reform produces a particular clinical outcome.

M6 | OpenStax — Introduction to Business, §6.1

Source for the integrated planning, organizing, leading and controlling framework. The bill's duties and wording are independently drafted; no textbook table or instrument is reproduced.

M7 | National Center for State Courts — CourTools

Primary court-administration measurement framework. The bill adds child-specific continuity, implementation and safety controls; no commercial or institutional endorsement is claimed.

M8 | Maine Constitution, Article I, §19 — text

Source for the short cover quotation. This is a secondary reproduction of constitutional text; it does not establish a new seven-day or other deadline. Article III and judicial rulemaking must also be addressed in final legal review.

Appendix E. Implementation and verification register

Design review aids—not additional statutory commands. Section 14-A controls where the summary and operative text differ.

CONTROL	EVIDENCE THAT THE DUTY WAS MET
Known work	Unique identifier, authorized record link, initial receipt, action required, present owner and backup.
Cumulative clock	Original age, each handoff, any legal adjustment and stated reason; preserved reopening and previous closure.
An improvement cycle	Problem and baseline, bounded test, safety/access measures, observed result, next decision and responsible owner.
Corrective action	Root-cause status, interim protection, due date, actual work, verification and reopened defect history.
A paid deliverable	Executed requirement, applicable payment condition, test or delivery record, authorized acceptance, invoice, actual payment and unresolved defects.
An independent review	Reviewer conflicts, lawful evidence access, reproducible samples, findings, limitations, management response and public report.
A public metric	Defined unit and denominator; data source and quality; missing fields; open work; percentiles where meaningful; privacy-safe output.
A rights safeguard	No substantive outcome quota, adverse presumption from a report's disposition, compulsory surveillance, secret evidence or withdrawal of protection to test a process.

Three different clocks must remain separate

First, individual court and protective deadlines govern immediate case action. Second, operational response and corrective-action clocks govern service failure. Third, program milestones and periodic reports govern implementation of the institution-wide program. Completing one does not discharge the others. No clock in this Act automatically tolls an appeal or authorizes self-help.

Release record

Draft date: October 13, 2026. Revision: rev9, CPI coordinated review. This edition does not publish a website change, circulate an official petition or send correspondence. The personal website statement remains separate from the Act. The Haughty Legalise Edition adds advocacy only; its operative text is identical to this edition.

Operative-text integrity reference: b33ceb1c21a5c1f02d3821d00600d8efa71d588dbec487098de16278759e764b