

FIRST REGULAR SESSION  
[TRULY AGREED TO AND FINALLY PASSED]

# SENATE BILL NO. 63

92ND GENERAL ASSEMBLY

2003

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## AN ACT

To repeal section 211.477, RSMo, relating to parental rights, and to enact in lieu thereof one new section relating to the same subject.

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*Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Missouri, as follows:*

Section A. Section 211.477, RSMo, is repealed and one new section enacted in lieu thereof, to be known as section 211.477, to read as follows:

211.477. 1. If, after the dispositional hearing, the court finds that one or more of the grounds set out in section 211.447 exists or that the parent has consented to the termination pursuant to section 211.444 and that it is in the best interests of the child, the court may terminate the rights of the parent in and to the child. After ordering termination and after consideration of the social study and report, the court shall transfer legal custody to:

- (1) The division of family services;
- (2) A private child-placing agency;
- (3) A foster parent, relative or other person participating in the proceedings pursuant to section 211.464; or

- (4) Any other person or agency the court deems suitable to care for the child.

2. If only one parent consents or if the conditions specified in section 211.447 are found to exist as to only one parent, the rights of only that parent with reference to the child may be terminated and the rights of the other parent shall not be affected.

3. The court may order termination whether or not the child is in adoptive placement or an adoptive placement is available for the child.

4. If, after the dispositional hearing, the court finds that one or more of the grounds set out in section 211.447 exists, but that termination is not in the best interests of the child because the court finds that the child would benefit from the continued parent-child relationship or because the child is fourteen or more years of age and objects to the termination, the court may:

- (1) Dismiss the petition and order that the child be returned to the custody of the parent;

(2) Retain jurisdiction of the case and order that the child be placed in the legal custody of the parent, the division, a private child-caring or placing agency, a foster parent, relative or other suitable person who is able to provide long-term care for the child. Any order of the court under this subdivision shall designate the period of time it shall remain in effect, with mandatory review by the court no later than six months thereafter. The court shall also specify what residual rights and responsibilities remain with the parent. Any individual granted legal custody shall exercise the rights and responsibilities personally unless otherwise authorized by the court; or

(3) Appoint a guardian under the provisions of chapter 475, RSMo.

5. Orders of the court issued pursuant to sections 211.442 to 211.487 shall recite the jurisdictional facts, factual findings on the existence of grounds for termination and that the best interests of the child are served by the disposition stated in the order.

**6. The granting or denial of a petition for termination of parental rights shall be deemed a final judgment for purposes of appeal.**

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