

Committee on Health Regulation

HB 1247 — Parental Notice of Abortion

by Rep. Stargel and others (SB 1770 by Senators Hays and Oelrich)

This bill amends s. 390.01114, F.S., relating to parental notification of an abortion to be performed on a minor. This bill amends the law as it relates to parental notification of an abortion by:

- Redefining “constructive notice” to include notice by writing that must be mailed to a minor’s parent or legal guardian prior to the abortion by first-class mail and by certified mail, return receipt requested, with restricted delivery to the parent or legal guardian.
- Requiring notice that is given by telephone to a parent or legal guardian to be confirmed in writing, signed by the physician, and mailed to the parent or legal guardian of the minor by first-class mail and by certified mail, return receipt requested, with restricted delivery to the parent or legal guardian.
- Requiring a physician to make reasonable attempts to contact the parent or legal guardian, whenever possible, during a medical emergency that renders the abortion medically necessary, without endangering the minor.
- Requiring the physician to provide notice directly to a parent or legal guardian of the medical emergency requiring an abortion and any additional risks to the minor and if no notice is directly provided, then notice is required in writing to the parent or legal guardian, which must be mailed by first-class and certified mail.
- Providing that a parent or guardian’s legal right to be noticed can only be waived if the written waiver is notarized, dated not more than 30 days before the abortion, and contains a specific waiver of the parent or legal guardian’s right to notice of the minor’s abortion.
- Reducing the number of courts in which a minor is able to file a petition for waiver of parental notice.
- Extending the time within which a court must rule on a minor’s petition for a waiver of parental notice from 48 hours to 3 business days.
- Removing the automatic grant of a petition when a court fails to rule within a certain time.
- Providing that a minor may have her petition heard by a chief judge of the circuit within 48 hours of filing the petition when a circuit court has not ruled within 3 business days.
- Providing the minor with the right to appeal a court decision that does not grant judicial waiver of parental notice, providing the timeline within which the appellate court must rule, and providing the standard of review the appellate court must use.
- Requiring the court to consider specific factors when determining whether the minor is sufficiently mature to decide whether to terminate her pregnancy.
- Changing the standard upon which a court must find that the notification of a parent or guardian of the abortion is not in the best interest of the minor, from preponderance of the evidence to clear and convincing evidence.
- Providing that when the court considers what is in the best-interest of the minor, the court is not to consider financial implications for the minor or the minor’s family.

- Requiring the final written order by the court to include its factual findings determining the maturity of the minor.
- Requiring the Office of State Courts Administrator to include in its annual report to the Governor and Legislature the number of petitions filed for a waiver of parental notice and the reason for each waiver of notice granted.

The bill also includes a severability clause, which severs any provision of the bill that is held invalid and saves the remaining provisions.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect October 1, 2011, or upon the adoption of rules and forms by the Supreme Court, whichever occurs earlier.

Vote: Senate 26-12; House 82-35