

SENATE SUBSTITUTE
FOR
SENATE COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE
FOR
SENATE BILL NO. 160

AN ACT

To amend chapter 210, RSMo, by adding thereto one new section relating to the foster care bill of rights.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF MISSOURI,
AS FOLLOWS:

1 Section A. Chapter 210, RSMo, is amended by adding thereto
2 one new section, to be known as section 210.564, to read as
3 follows:

4 210.564. 1. This section shall be known and may be cited
5 as the "Foster Care Bill of Rights".

6 2. The children's division shall provide every school-aged
7 foster child and his or her foster parent with an age-appropriate
8 orientation and explanation of the foster care bill of rights.

9 Any children's division office, residential care facility, child
10 placing agency, or other agency involved in the care and
11 placement of foster children shall post the foster care bill of
12 rights in the office, facility, or agency. The children's
13 division shall also make the foster care bill of rights readily
14 available and easily accessible online.

15 3. The foster care bill of rights shall be as follows:

16 (1) In all circumstances, the best interests of the child
17 shall be the first priority of the children's division;

1 (2) Recognizing the importance of familial stability in
2 foster care and adoption placement, it shall be the practice of
3 the children's division to support the reunification of the child
4 with the child's parents or legal guardian when the children's
5 division determines that doing so is in the best interests of the
6 child;

7 (3) When restoration of care and custody is not appropriate
8 or possible, the children's division shall attempt to place the
9 child with suitable relatives in accordance with section 210.565;

10 (4) The children's division shall further support familial
11 stability by ensuring continuity of foster placement, except in
12 instances where cause for a change in a child's placement is
13 reasonably found;

14 (5) The children's division shall work with each child in
15 state custody to develop both a permanency plan and a case plan.
16 These plans shall be developed within twelve months of a child's
17 entrance into state custody. The permanency plan shall include
18 the child's immediate and long-term placement goals, while the
19 case plan shall address a child's specific medical and emotional
20 needs;

21 (6) Recognizing the value of familial relationships in
22 foster care and adoption settings, it shall be the practice of
23 the children's division to place siblings in the same foster
24 care, kinship, guardianship, or adoptive placement, unless doing
25 so would be contrary to the safety or well-being of any of the
26 siblings. If siblings are not placed together, it shall be the
27 practice of the children's division to support regular visitation
28 and communication between siblings in state custody, and between

1 children in state custody and their parents and relatives, where
2 not otherwise prohibited or against a child's best interests; and

3 (7) The children's division shall support all children
4 twelve years of age or older in state custody to attend any
5 hearings pertaining to the child's placement, custody, or care,
6 provided that the child is willing and able to attend such
7 hearings, and that attending such hearings is in the best
8 interests of the child.