



**State of Wisconsin  
1999 - 2000 LEGISLATURE**

LRB-1866/1  
GMM:jlg:jf

# **1999 SENATE BILL 15**

**January 26, 1999 – Introduced by Senators WIRCH, ROESSLER, FARROW, FITZGERALD and HUELSMAN, cosponsored by Representatives FOTI, LADWIG, BOCK, DUFF, LA FAVE, HANDRICK, J. LEHMAN, M. LEHMAN, SINICKI, HOVEN, STONE, SUDER, VRAKAS, WARD, STASKUNAS and CULLEN. Referred to Committee on Judiciary and Consumer Affairs.**

1 AN ACT ***to renumber and amend*** 786.36 and 786.37; and ***to create*** 786.36 (2)  
2 (b), 786.36 (2) (c) and 786.37 (2) of the statutes; **relating to:** changing the name  
3 of a minor.

## *Analysis by the Legislative Reference Bureau*

Under current law, a resident of this state, in order to change his or her name, must petition the circuit court for an order changing his or her name. Currently, if the person whose name is to be changed is a minor under 14 years of age, both parents of the minor, if living, must file the petition. Currently, before applying to the court for a name change, the petitioner must publish a legal notice of the application once each week for three consecutive weeks in a newspaper that is likely to give notice to persons affected by the name change.

This bill permits one parent to petition for the name change of a minor under 14 years of age who has two living parents if the petitioning parent, in addition to filing proof of publication of the notice as required under current law, also files proof that the petitioning parent served a copy of the notice and petition on the nonpetitioning parent or, if with reasonable diligence the nonpetitioning parent cannot be served, mailed a copy of the notice and petition to the last-known address of the nonpetitioning parent, if that address can be obtained with reasonable diligence, and files an affidavit showing that the petitioning parent has made a reasonable attempt to provide notice to the nonpetitioning parent, but with reasonable diligence the nonpetitioning parent cannot be found or provided with notice. The court may order the name change if the nonpetitioning parent does not

**SENATE BILL 15**

appear at the hearing or otherwise answer the petition. If the nonpetitioning parent does appear at the hearing or answer the petition and shows that he or she has not abandoned the minor or failed to assume parental responsibility for the minor, the court may order the name change only on the consent of the nonpetitioning parent.

---

***The people of the state of Wisconsin, represented in senate and assembly, do enact as follows:***

1       **SECTION 1.** 786.36 of the statutes is renumbered 786.36 (1) and amended to  
2 read:

3       786.36 (1) Any resident of this state, whether a minor or adult, may upon  
4 petition to the circuit court of the county where he or she resides and upon filing a  
5 copy of the notice, with proof of publication, as required by s. 786.37 (1), if no  
6 sufficient cause is shown to the contrary, have his or her name changed or established  
7 by order of the court. If

8       (2) (a) Subject to par. (b), if the person whose name is to be changed is a minor  
9 under the age of 14 years, the petition may be made by: both parents, if living, or the  
10 survivor of them; the guardian or person having legal custody of the minor, if both  
11 parents are dead or if the parental rights of both parents have been terminated by  
12 judicial proceedings; or the mother, if the minor is a nonmarital child who is not  
13 adopted or whose parents do not subsequently intermarry under s. 767.60, except  
14 that, if the paternity of the minor has been established, the father must also make  
15 the petition unless his parental rights have been legally terminated.

16       (3) The order shall be entered at length upon the records of the court and a  
17 certified copy of the record shall be recorded in the office of the register of deeds of  
18 the county, who shall make an entry in a book to be kept by the register. The fee for  
19 recording a certified copy is the fee specified under s. 59.43 (2) (ag). If the person  
20 whose name is changed or established was born or married in this state, the clerk

**SENATE BILL 15**

1 of the court shall send to the state registrar of vital statistics, on a form designed by  
2 the state registrar of vital statistics, an abstract of the record, duly certified,  
3 accompanied by the fee prescribed in s. 69.22, which fee the clerk of court shall charge  
4 to and collect from the petitioner. The state registrar of vital statistics shall then  
5 correct the birth record, marriage record or both, and direct the register of deeds and  
6 local registrar to make similar corrections on their records.

7       **(4)** No person engaged in the practice of any profession for which a license is  
8 required by the state may change his or her given name or his or her surname to any  
9 other given name or any other surname than that under which the person was  
10 originally licensed in the profession in this or any other state, in any instance in  
11 which the state board or commission for the particular profession, after a hearing,  
12 finds that practicing under the changed name operates to unfairly compete with  
13 another practitioner or misleads the public as to identity or otherwise results in  
14 detriment to the profession or the public. This prohibition against a change of name  
15 by a person engaged in the practice of any profession does not apply to any person  
16 legally qualified to teach in the public schools in this state, nor to a change of name  
17 resulting from marriage or divorce, nor to members of any profession for which there  
18 exists no state board or commission authorized to issue licenses or pass upon the  
19 qualifications of applicants or hear complaints respecting the conduct of members of  
20 the profession.

21       **(5)** Any change of name other than as authorized by law is void.

22       **SECTION 2.** 786.36 (2) (b) of the statutes is created to read:

23       **786.36 (2) (b)** Notwithstanding par. (a), the name of a minor under 14 years of  
24 age who has 2 living parents may be changed on the petition of one parent if, in  
25 addition to filing a copy of the notice, with proof of publication, as required by s.

1       786.37 (1), the petitioning parent files proof of personal service, substituted service  
2       or mailing, as required by s. 786.37 (2), and an affidavit showing that the petitioning  
3       parent has made a reasonable attempt to provide notice to the nonpetitioning parent,  
4       but with reasonable diligence the nonpetitioning parent cannot be found or provided  
5       with notice, and if the nonpetitioning parent does not appear at the hearing on the  
6       petition or otherwise answer the petition.

7           **SECTION 3.** 786.36 (2) (c) of the statutes is created to read:

8       786.36 (2) (c) If the nonpetitioning parent appears at the hearing on the  
9       petition or otherwise answers the petition and shows that he or she has not  
10       abandoned the minor, as described in s. 48.415 (1) (a) 3., (b) and (c) or failed to assume  
11       parental responsibility for the minor, as described in s. 48.415 (6), the court shall  
12       require the consent of the nonpetitioning parent before changing the name of the  
13       minor.

14           **SECTION 4.** 786.37 of the statutes is renumbered 786.37 (1) and amended to

15       read:

16       786.37 (1) Before applying to petitioning the court for changing or establishing  
17       to change or establish a name, the applicant petitioner shall publish a class 3 notice  
18       under ch. 985 stating the nature of the application petition and when and where the  
19       application petition will be made heard.

20           (3) This section does not apply to the name change of a minor if the parental  
21       rights to the minor of both parents have been terminated and, guardianship and  
22       legal custody of the minor have been transferred under subch. VIII of ch. 48, and the  
23       minor has been placed in a permanent foster home or a permanent treatment foster  
24       home, where and the guardian and legal custodian of the minor have petitioned to

# SENATE BILL 15

- 1 change the minor's name to the name or names of the minor's foster parents or
- 2 treatment foster parents.

**SECTION 5.** 786.37 (2) of the statutes is created to read:

4           **786.37 (2)** If the petition is for the change of name of a minor under 14 years  
5       of age who has 2 living parents and if the petition is being made by one parent of the  
6       minor, the petitioner shall, in addition to publishing the notice under sub. (1), serve  
7       a copy of the notice and petition on the nonpetitioning parent in the same manner  
8       as a summons is served under s. 801.11 (1) (a) or (b) or, if with reasonable diligence  
9       the nonpetitioning parent cannot be served in that manner, mail a copy of the notice  
10      and petition to the last-known address of the nonpetitioning parent at or  
11      immediately prior to the time of the first publication under sub. (1), if that address  
12      can be ascertained with reasonable diligence.

## 13 SECTION 6. Initial applicability.

14               (1) This act first applies to petitions for name changes that are filed on the  
15 effective date of this subsection.

16 (END)