New child-custody law lets Kentucky children win with shared parenting

By Matt Hale

Monday, Gov. Matt Bevin signed a revised law affecting temporary child-custody orders — the starting point for divorces. Kentucky’s House and Senate unanimously approved the law, which creates a presumption of joint custody and equal parenting time.

The new law, House Bill 492, answers many Kentucky children’s prayers. The Easter bunny is bringing children a better chance to see both parents after a divorce.

Children in married families enjoy both their parents. Before the new law, children in divorced families enjoyed whichever parent the court picked (primary custody). These children may be allowed a short visit with the other parent.

However, the new law encourages a better arrangement called shared parenting. In shared parenting, children get to see both parents equally. Instead of a single parent winning, the children do.

Studies show that shared parenting children really are winners. Shared parenting children are more likely to be involved in football or music contests than sole custody children. Children who see both parents are also less likely to do drugs or have premarital sex.

The funny thing is that both parents win, too. Neither is denied his or her half of parenting time. Neither parent is forced to work all day long and then be a single parent all night long every day. They have half their evenings and weekends to focus on their careers, tend to one of their own parents or start a new relationship.

Now, fewer divorcing Kentucky parents will be fighting tooth and nail to “win” their children. Thanks to Bevin and bill sponsors David Osborne, R-Prospect, Jason Petrie, R-Elkton, and Robby Milles, R-Henderson, joint custody is the temporary order law in Kentucky.

Surrounding states are rapidly passing permanent custody shared parenting laws. Illinois started shared parenting last year and Missouri just started it a few months ago. Let’s hope Bevin and the bill sponsors improve Kentucky’s permanent custody order law, also.

It’s so easy to point out our government’s flaws. But today we celebrate our legislators making things better. The entire Kentucky House and Senate have helped children see both parents after divorce. And they should because our kids deserve both parents.

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