

# PARENTS' BILL OF RIGHTS

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **1. Why introduce a Parents' Bill of Rights?**

Until 2000, it was widely accepted that parents had the fundamental right to direct their children's upbringing and education. However, a divided Supreme Court ruling created uncertainty, allowing individual judges and states to interpret parental rights through the lens of the "best interests of the child." This led to inconsistent policies and shifting legal standards, leaving families vulnerable to uncertainty and government overreach. Minnesota families have been experiencing this for decades.

### **2. Does this bill impose new requirements on schools?**

No, the bill does not create new obligations for schools. It does not mandate a specific curriculum but reaffirms that parents have the final authority over their children's education.

### **3. If parents want authority over their children's education, shouldn't they homeschool or use private schools?**

The bill affirms the right to homeschool or choose private education. However, not all families can afford these options, making it essential for public schools to remain neutral and accepting of all family types.

### **4. Is there funding allocated for the bill's implementation?**

No additional funding is necessary. The bill merely affirms fundamental rights and provides policy guidance without requiring new expenditures.

### **5. Does the bill only apply to Child Protective Services (CPS) cases?**

No. House Research clarified that the bill applies broadly to all families, not just CPS cases.

### **6. Why is the bill placed in this specific section of the statutes?**

The bill's placement was not chosen by the families supporting it but may be due to its relevance to parental rights. The final placement is at the legislature's discretion.

### **7. Will the bill prevent schools from teaching non-academic topics like kindness or calling 911?**

No, the bill does not restrict teaching. It simply affirms the rights of parents to choose their children's education.

### **8. Does the term "parents" in the bill affect custody laws or decision-making authority?**

No. Minnesota law already defines custody and decision-making roles, and this bill does not alter those laws. Instead, it recognizes that a child may have more than one parent. Lines 3.12–14 address the court's role. While we do not believe this impacts existing custody laws, we are open to amendments to the language that specify "custodial parents" for clarity.

### **9. What is a "compelling state interest"?**

Attorney William Wagner explains that "compelling state interest" is a legal standard used by courts to determine when government intervention is justified, such as in cases of abuse.

### **10. Could this bill allow one parent to block investigations into abuse?**

No, the bill explicitly addresses this concern in lines 3.7-11.

### **11. Does the bill grant parental rights both ways?**

Yes, parents have the right to accept or decline medical and educational decisions for their children. However, the accessibility of certain medical procedures remains subject to other laws and regulations.

### **12. How does this bill impact newborn screenings?**

Minnesota law requires that newborn screenings be *offered*, but the decision is the parents'. The bill does not change this; it simply affirms parents' rights to make medical decisions for their children.

### **13. Should there be a distinction between teenagers and younger children in decision-making?**

While teenagers should participate in decision-making, parents should also retain the right to make final choices. Parents are responsible for their children's well-being and should be informed about medical interventions.

### **14. Will this bill remove children's rights or sexual education from schools?**

No, the bill does not restrict children's personal rights or remove any curriculum. It simply ensures that parents can review and opt-out of teachings that conflict with their culture or values.

### **15. Who are the stakeholders in this bill?**

Stakeholders should include parents, families, and children—not just organizations or lobbyists. The bill aims to protect parental rights without affecting custody laws or shielding abuse.

### **16. Are parental rights currently under threat?**

Yes. Recent testimony, legislation efforts and organizational actions demonstrate ongoing challenges to parental authority, including, but not limited to:

- Rep. Sencer-Mura testified in the last hearing on February 12, 2025, that “they “ are currently looking at making changes to current “opt out laws”.
- Changes to CPS definitions and ‘children in need of services’ laws, which now include children being denied medical gender altering services.
- The removal last year of the right to exemptions for daycare children.
- Bills introduced between 2019-2022 seeking to eliminate exemptions for all children.
- Prior legislation requiring doctors to sign off on conscientious (non-medical) exemptions.
- COVID-era mask and vaccine mandates affecting access to education, sports, disability services, and healthcare.
- Healthcare policies that lock parents out of medical decisions for their children starting at age 12, or even younger in some cases.

### **17. Does this bill intersect with the PRO Act?**

The bill does not take a stance on abortion but affirms parents' rights to be involved in their children's medical decisions.

### **18. Does this bill intersect with gender services?**

This bill does not take a position on gender services but affirms parents' rights to be involved in their children's medical decisions.

### **19. What is the broader significance of this bill?**

This bill seeks to safeguard children from discrimination, exploitation, and abuse they may not yet recognize, while reinforcing parents' fundamental role in making decisions about their well-being and education.