



State of Wisconsin
2019 - 2020 LEGISLATURE

LRB-0241/2
EAW:amn&cjs

2019 BILL

1 **AN ACT** *to renumber* subchapter XX of chapter 48 [precedes 48.98]; *to*
2 *renumber and amend* 54.56, 54.57, 808.075 (4) (f) 3. and 814.66 (1) (m); *to*
3 *amend* 48.09 (5), 48.14 (2) (b), 48.14 (11), 48.15, 48.235 (1) (c), 48.255 (1)
4 (intro.), 48.293 (2), 48.299 (4) (a), 48.299 (4) (b), 48.299 (6) (intro.), 48.299 (6) (d),
5 48.299 (7), 48.368 (1), 48.465 (3), 48.62 (2), 48.831 (1), 48.831 (1m) (e), 48.977
6 (8), 48.978 (7), 51.30 (4) (b) 18. a., 51.30 (4) (b) 18. c., 54.01 (10), 54.10 (1), 54.15
7 (6), 54.25 (2) (d) 1., 54.25 (2) (d) 2. o., 54.52 (1), 55.03 (1), 115.76 (12) (b) 2.,
8 118.125 (2) (L), 146.82 (2) (a) 9. a., 146.82 (2) (a) 9. c., 757.69 (1) (g) 5., 808.075
9 (4) (a) 11., 809.30 (1) (a), 809.30 (1) (b) 2., 809.30 (2) (a) and 938.345 (1) (e); and
10 *to create* subchapter XX (title) of chapter 48 [precedes 48.978], 48.9795, 48.981
11 (7) (a) 11v., 808.075 (4) (a) 9m. and 808.075 (4) (a) 13. of the statutes; **relating**
12 **to:** guardianships of children.

Analysis by the Legislative Reference Bureau

This bill is explained in the NOTES provided by the Joint Legislative Council in the bill.

BILL

For further information see the *state and local* fiscal estimate, which will be printed as an appendix to this bill.

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

JOINT LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL PREFATORY NOTE: This bill was prepared for the Joint Legislative Council's Study Committee on Minor Guardianships. Generally, the bill creates a new process and standards for appointment of a guardian of a minor's person. A description of current law and a summary of the bill's key provisions are provided below.

Introduction

Chapter 54, Stats., currently governs guardianships of the person, estate, or both of minors, as well as incompetent or spendthrift adults. Unlike certain, specialized minor guardianships under ch. 48, Stats., minor guardianships under ch. 54, Stats., do not require involvement by the child welfare system and therefore are informally referred to as "private" guardianships.

Under current law, a guardian of a minor's person has the authority to exercise care, custody, and control over the minor. The court may appoint either a temporary guardian, for a duration up to 60 days and one additional 60-day period, or a permanent guardian, with the appointment terminating only upon certain events specified by statute and case law.

Chapter 54, Stats., focuses primarily on incompetent and spendthrift adults, rendering many of the chapter's provisions inapplicable to minors. Current statutory law does not address certain issues relevant to minor guardianships, such as emergency situations and parental visitation.

Jurisdiction

The bill removes guardianships of a minor's person from ch. 54, Stats., and creates a new statute governing guardianships of a child's person in a new subchapter under ch. 48, Stats. This change transfers jurisdiction over private guardianships from the probate court under ch. 54, Stats., to the children's court under ch. 48, Stats. Under the bill, guardianships of a child's estate remain governed by ch. 54, Stats., but may be consolidated with actions under the new procedure.

The bill does not change the process or standard for appointment of a guardian in the specialized circumstances under ch. 48, Stats. The bill also specifies that a petition filed under the new statute may not seek to change preexisting orders entered in certain actions under chs. 48 and 938, Stats. If any such actions are pending, the bill requires the court to stay any subsequent proceedings under the new statute until the pending action is resolved, subject to certain exceptions. In addition, the bill prohibits a dispositional order under the new statute from changing the placement of a child under the supervision of a court in certain types of actions.

Types of Guardianship

The bill creates four types of guardianships of a child's person: full; limited; temporary; and emergency. The bill clarifies that a parent retains all rights and duties that are not assigned to the guardian or otherwise limited by statute or court order. For each type of guardian, the bill provides the following standards for and duties upon appointment:

A full guardianship requires a finding that the child's parents are unfit, unwilling, or unable to provide for the care, custody, and control of the child or other compelling facts and circumstances demonstrate that a full guardianship is necessary. Once appointed, the bill grants a full guardian the duties and authority granted to other guardians under ch. 48, Stats., as well as the following: the authority, subject to a court order, to determine

BILL

reasonable visitation with the child; the right to change the child's residence from this state to another state; and the duty to report to the court immediately regarding any address changes and annually regarding the child's condition.

A limited guardianship requires a finding that the child's parents need assistance in providing for the care, custody, and control of the child. The court must specify the limited guardian's duties and authority, and may limit such authority to allow a parent to retain certain decision-making powers. If in the child's best interest, the court may also allow shared physical custody among the limited guardian and the parent.

A temporary guardianship requires a finding that the child's particular situation, including the inability of the child's parents to provide for the care, custody, and control of the child for a temporary period of time, requires the appointment of a temporary guardian. A temporary guardian may be appointed for a period not to exceed 180 days, though the court may grant one additional 180-day period for good cause shown. In its order, the court must limit the temporary guardian's authority to those acts that are reasonably related to the reasons for the appointment.

An emergency guardianship requires a finding that the child's welfare requires the immediate appointment of an emergency guardian. The court may appoint an emergency guardian for a period not to exceed 60 days and must limit the emergency guardian's authority to those acts reasonably related to the reasons for the appointment.

Procedure for Full, Limited and Temporary Guardianships

Under the bill, any person, including a child 12 years of age or older, may petition for the appointment of a guardian for a child. The petition must contain certain information including the type of guardianship sought, the facts and circumstances establishing that a guardianship is needed, the name and address of a proposed guardian, and other information as specified in the bill. A parent or a child 12 years or older may also nominate a guardian under the bill. Under the bill, the court must appoint the person nominated as the guardian by the parent, unless the court finds that appointment of the person nominated is not in the child's best interest.

The bill requires that an initial hearing be held within 45 days after a petition is filed. At least 96 hours before the initial hearing, the proposed guardian must submit a report to the court as to his or her existing parental, guardianship, or custodial responsibilities and financial situation, and as to whether he or she is charged with or has been convicted of a crime or child abuse or neglect. Any interested person, as defined in the bill, may become a party to the hearing.

At the initial hearing, the court must first determine whether any party wishes to contest the petition. If the petition is not contested, the court must immediately proceed to a fact-finding and dispositional hearing, unless an adjournment is requested. If the petition is contested and all parties consent, the court may proceed immediately to a fact-finding and dispositional hearing. If any party does not consent or if an adjournment is requested, the court must set a date for a fact-finding and dispositional hearing that allows reasonable time for the parties to prepare but is not more than 30 days after the initial hearing.

At the fact-finding and dispositional hearing, any party may present evidence, including expert testimony, and argument relating to the allegations in the petition. The court must determine whether the petitioner has proven the allegations in the petition by clear and convincing evidence and must immediately proceed to determine the appropriate disposition.

The bill requires the court to consider all of the following factors in determining the appropriate disposition: 1) any nomination of a guardian made by a parent or the child, if 12 years of age or older, and the opinions of the parents and child as to what is in the child's best interests; 2) whether the proposed guardian would be fit, willing, and able to serve as the child's guardian; 3) if the child is an Indian child, the order of placement preference required for an Indian child in an Indian child custody proceeding, unless the

BILL

court finds good cause for departing from that order; and 4) whether appointment of the proposed guardian is in the child's best interests.

Procedure for Emergency Guardianships

Under the bill, any person may petition for the appointment of an emergency guardian for a child. The petition must contain the same information required for a full, limited, or temporary guardianship, and must specify the reasons for the appointment of and the powers requested for an emergency guardian.

The bill requires the court to hold a hearing on an emergency petition as soon as possible after the filing of the petition or, for good cause shown, the court may issue a temporary order appointing an emergency guardian without a hearing, which remains in effect until a hearing is held. Any person who receives notice of the emergency guardianship petition under the bill has a right to a hearing for reconsideration or modification of an emergency guardianship.

Role of the Guardian ad Litem

Generally, the bill requires appointment of a guardian ad litem (GAL) in proceedings to appoint a guardian or terminate a guardianship, as well as in proceedings to modify a guardianship, if a hearing will be held.

The GAL represents the best interests of the child throughout the proceedings but must apply in all court proceedings the applicable standard specified in the bill. In addition to certain specific duties and responsibilities required of a GAL under the Children's Code, the GAL must conduct a diligent investigation sufficient to represent the best interests of the child in court. As appropriate to the circumstances, this investigation may include, personally or through a trained designee, meeting with or observing the child, meeting with any proposed guardian, meeting with interested persons, and visiting the homes of the child and the proposed guardian.

The GAL is required to attend all court proceedings relating to the guardianship, present evidence concerning the best interest of the child, if necessary, and make clear and specific recommendations to the court at every stage of the proceedings. Further, the bill requires the GAL to inspect certain reports and records relating to the child and, upon presentation of necessary releases, the child's family and the proposed guardian. The court must order custodians of the specified reports or records to permit inspection and copying of such reports or records by the GAL.

Post-Appointment Matters

The bill allows a court, on its own motion or upon the petition of any interested person, to appoint a successor guardian after a guardian has died, been removed, or resigned, or as a part of the original appointment or any time after, even while the current guardianship is still in place.

Under the bill, if the guardian abuses or neglects the child or knowingly permits others to do so, fails to disclose information that would have prevented his or her appointment as guardian, fails to follow or comply with the court's order, or otherwise fails to perform any of his or her duties as guardian, the court may exercise its continuing jurisdiction to impose certain remedies, including removal of the guardian and appointment of a successor guardian, modification of the duties and authority of the guardian, or entry of an order that may be necessary or appropriate to compel the guardian to carry out the guardian's duties. The court may also require the guardian to pay any costs of the proceeding if the guardian's conduct was egregious. The bill requires the court to hold a hearing on a petition for the review of the conduct of a guardian within 30 days of the filing of the petition.

The bill authorizes a court to modify a guardianship order, if the court finds that there has been a substantial change in circumstances since the last order affecting the guardianship was entered and that the proposed modification is in the child's best interests.

Under the bill, a guardianship continues until the child attains the age of 18 years unless 1) the guardianship is for a lesser period of time and that time has expired; 2) the

BILL

child marries; 3) the child dies; 4) the child's residence changes from this state to another state and a guardian is appointed in the new state of residence; 5) the guardian dies, or resigns and the resignation is approved by the court, and a successor guardian is not appointed; 6) the guardian is removed for cause and a successor guardian is not appointed; 7) the guardianship is terminated on the request of a parent or the child; or 8) the court terminates the guardianship upon the adoption of the child.

The bill also allows a parent or child to petition for termination of a guardianship. Specifically, the court must terminate the guardianship if it finds that the petitioner has shown by a preponderance of the evidence that a substantial change in circumstances since the last order affecting the guardianship was entered, that the parent is fit, willing, and able to carry out the duties of a guardian or that no compelling facts or circumstances exist demonstrating that a guardianship is necessary, and that termination of the guardianship would be in the best interests of the child.

1 **SECTION 1.** 48.09 (5) of the statutes is amended to read:

2 48.09 (5) By the district attorney or, if designated by the county board of
3 supervisors, by the corporation counsel, in any matter arising under s. 48.13, 48.133,
4 or 48.977 or, if applicable, s. 48.9795. If the county board transfers this authority to
5 or from the district attorney on or after May 11, 1990, the board may do so only if the
6 action is effective on September 1 of an odd-numbered year and the board notifies
7 the department of administration of that change by January 1 of that odd-numbered
8 year.

9 **SECTION 2.** 48.14 (2) (b) of the statutes is amended to read:

10 48.14 (2) (b) The appointment and removal of a guardian of the person for a
11 child under ss. 48.427, 48.43, 48.831, 48.832, 48.839 (4) (a), 48.977, and 48.978, and
12 ~~ch. 54~~ 48.9795 and for a child found to be in need of protection or services under s.
13 48.13 because the child is without parent or guardian.

14 **SECTION 3.** 48.14 (11) of the statutes is amended to read:

15 48.14 (11) Granting visitation privileges under s. ~~54.56~~ 48.9795 (12).

16 **SECTION 4.** 48.15 of the statutes is amended to read:

17 **48.15 Jurisdiction of other courts to determine legal custody.** Except
18 as provided in ~~s.~~ ss. 48.028 (3) and 48.9795 (2) (b) 2., nothing in this chapter deprives
19 another court of the right to determine the legal custody of a child by habeas corpus

BILL**SECTION 4**

1 or to determine the legal custody or guardianship of a child if the legal custody or
2 guardianship is incidental to the determination of an action pending in that court.
3 Except as provided in s. 48.028 (3), the jurisdiction of the court assigned to exercise
4 jurisdiction under this chapter and ch. 938 is paramount in all cases involving
5 children alleged to come within the provisions of ss. 48.13 and 48.14 and unborn
6 children and their expectant mothers alleged to come within the provisions of ss.
7 48.133 and 48.14 (5).

8 **SECTION 5.** 48.235 (1) (c) of the statutes is amended to read:

9 48.235 (1) (c) The court shall appoint a guardian ad litem for any child who is
10 the subject of a proceeding to terminate parental rights, whether voluntary or
11 involuntary, for a child who is the subject of a contested adoption proceeding, and for
12 a child who is the subject of a proceeding under s. 48.977 ~~or~~, 48.978, or 48.9795.

13 **SECTION 6.** 48.255 (1) (intro.) of the statutes is amended to read:

14 48.255 (1) (intro.) A petition initiating proceedings under this chapter, other
15 than a petition under s. 48.133 or 48.9795, shall be entitled, "In the interest of (child's
16 name), a person under the age of 18" and shall set forth with specificity:

17 **SECTION 7.** 48.293 (2) of the statutes is amended to read:

18 48.293 (2) All records relating to a child, or to an unborn child and the unborn
19 child's expectant mother, that are relevant to the subject matter of a proceeding
20 under this chapter shall be open to inspection by a guardian ad litem or counsel for
21 any party and to inspection by the court-appointed special advocate for the child,
22 upon demand and upon presentation of releases when necessary, at least 48 hours
23 before the proceeding. Persons entitled to inspect the records may obtain copies of
24 the records with the permission of the custodian of the records or with permission
25 of the court. The court may instruct counsel, a guardian ad litem, or a

BILL

1 court-appointed special advocate not to disclose specified items in the materials to
2 the child or the parent, or to the expectant mother, if the court reasonably believes
3 that the disclosure would be harmful to the interests of the child or the unborn child.

4 This subsection does not apply to a guardianship proceeding under s. 48.9795.

5 **SECTION 8.** 48.299 (4) (a) of the statutes is amended to read:

6 48.299 (4) (a) Chapters 901 to 911 shall govern the presentation of evidence at
7 the fact-finding hearings under ss. 48.31, 48.42, 48.977 (4) (d) ~~and~~, 48.978 (2) (e) and
8 (3) (f) 2., and 48.9795.

9 **SECTION 9.** 48.299 (4) (b) of the statutes is amended to read:

10 48.299 (4) (b) Except as provided in s. 901.05, neither common law nor
11 statutory rules of evidence are binding at a hearing for a child held in custody under
12 s. 48.21, a hearing for an adult expectant mother held in custody under s. 48.213, a
13 runaway home hearing under s. 48.227 (4), a dispositional hearing, or a hearing
14 about changes in placement, trial reunifications, revision of dispositional orders,
15 extension of dispositional orders, or termination of guardianship orders entered
16 under s. 48.977 (4) (h) 2. or (6) ~~or~~, 48.978 (2) (j) 2. or (3) (g), or 48.9795. At those
17 hearings, the court shall admit all testimony having reasonable probative value, but
18 shall exclude immaterial, irrelevant, or unduly repetitious testimony or evidence
19 that is inadmissible under s. 901.05. Hearsay evidence may be admitted if it has
20 demonstrable circumstantial guarantees of trustworthiness. The court shall give
21 effect to the rules of privilege recognized by law. The court shall apply the basic
22 principles of relevancy, materiality, and probative value to proof of all questions of
23 fact. Objections to evidentiary offers and offers of proof of evidence not admitted may
24 be made and shall be noted in the record.

25 **SECTION 10.** 48.299 (6) (intro.) of the statutes is amended to read:

BILL

1 48.299 (6) (intro.) If a man who has been given notice under s. 48.27 (3) (b) 1.,
2 48.977 (4) (c) 1., 48.978 (2) (c) 1., or 48.9795 (4) (c) 1. appears at any hearing for which
3 he received the notice, alleges that he is the father of the child, and states that he
4 wishes to establish the paternity of the child, all of the following apply:

5 **SECTION 11.** 48.299 (6) (d) of the statutes is amended to read:

6 48.299 (6) (d) The court may stay the proceedings under this chapter pending
7 the outcome of the paternity proceedings under subch. IX of ch. 767 if the court
8 determines that the paternity proceedings will not unduly delay the proceedings
9 under this chapter and the determination of paternity is necessary to the court's
10 disposition of the child ~~if the child is found to be in need of protection or services~~
11 proceedings or if the court determines or has reason to know that the paternity
12 proceedings may result in a finding that the child is an Indian child and in a petition
13 by the child's parent, Indian custodian, or tribe for transfer of the ~~proceeding~~
14 proceedings to the jurisdiction of the tribe.

15 **SECTION 12.** 48.299 (7) of the statutes is amended to read:

16 48.299 (7) If a man who has been given notice under s. 48.27 (3) (b) 1., 48.977
17 (4) (c) 1., 48.978 (2) (c) 1., or 48.9795 (4) (c) 1. appears at any hearing for which he
18 received the notice but does not allege that he is the father of the child and state that
19 he wishes to establish the paternity of the child or if no man to whom such notice was
20 given appears at a hearing, the court may refer the matter to the state or to the
21 attorney responsible for support enforcement under s. 59.53 (6) (a) for a
22 determination, under s. 767.80, of whether an action should be brought for the
23 purpose of determining the paternity of the child.

24 **SECTION 13.** 48.368 (1) of the statutes is amended to read:

BILL

1 48.368 (1) If a petition for termination of parental rights is filed under s. 48.41
2 or 48.415 or an appeal from a judgment terminating or denying termination of
3 parental rights is filed during the year in which a dispositional order under s. 48.355,
4 an extension order under s. 48.365, a voluntary agreement for placement of the child
5 under s. 48.63, or a guardianship order under ch. 54, 2017 stats., or ch. 880, 2003
6 stats., or s. 48.977 or ~~ch. 54~~ 48.9795 is in effect, the dispositional or extension order,
7 voluntary agreement, or guardianship order shall remain in effect until all
8 proceedings related to the filing of the petition or an appeal are concluded.

9 **SECTION 14.** 48.465 (3) of the statutes is amended to read:

10 48.465 (3) EXCEPTIONS. This section does not apply to a termination of parental
11 rights case under s. 48.43 ~~or~~, to a parental consent to abortion case under s. 48.375
12 (7), or to a guardianship proceeding under s. 48.9795.

13 **SECTION 15.** 48.62 (2) of the statutes is amended to read:

14 48.62 (2) A relative, a guardian of a child, or a person delegated care and
15 custody of a child under s. 48.979 who provides care and maintenance for the child
16 is not required to obtain the license specified in this section. The department, county
17 department, or licensed child welfare agency as provided in s. 48.75 may issue a
18 license to operate a foster home to a relative who has no duty of support under s. 49.90
19 (1) (a) and who requests a license to operate a foster home for a specific child who is
20 either placed by court order or who is the subject of a voluntary placement agreement
21 under s. 48.63. The department, a county department, or a licensed child welfare
22 agency may, at the request of a guardian appointed under s. 48.977 ~~or~~, 48.978, or
23 48.9795 or ch. 54, 2017 stats., or ch. 880, 2003 stats., license the guardian's home as
24 a foster home for the guardian's minor ward who is living in the home and who is
25 placed in the home by court order. Relatives with no duty of support and guardians

BILL

1 appointed under s. 48.977 ~~or~~, 48.978, or 48.9795 or ch. 54, 2017 stats., or ch. 880, 2003
2 stats., who are licensed to operate foster homes are subject to the department's
3 licensing rules.

4 **SECTION 16.** 48.831 (1) of the statutes is amended to read:

5 48.831 (1) TYPE OF GUARDIANSHIP. This section may be used for the appointment
6 of a guardian of a child who does not have a living parent if a finding as to the
7 adoptability of a child is sought. Except as provided in ss. 48.977 and 48.978, ~~ch. 54~~
8 s. 48.9795 applies to the appointment of a guardian for a child who does not have a
9 living parent for all other purposes. An appointment of a guardian of the estate of
10 a child who does not have a living parent shall be conducted in accordance with the
11 procedures specified in ch. 54.

12 **SECTION 17.** 48.831 (1m) (e) of the statutes is amended to read:

13 48.831 (1m) (e) A guardian appointed under s. 48.9795 or ch. 54, 2017 stats.,
14 or ch. 880, 2003 stats., whose resignation as guardian has been accepted by a court
15 under s. 48.9795 (11) or s. 54.54 (1), 2017 stats., or s. 880.17 (1), 2003 stats.

16 **SECTION 18.** 48.977 (8) of the statutes is amended to read:

17 48.977 (8) ~~RELATIONSHIP TO CH. 54 AND CH. 880, 2003 STATS~~ OTHER GUARDIANSHIP
18 PROCEDURES. (a) This section does not abridge the duties or authority of a guardian
19 appointed under s. 48.9795 or ch. 54, 2017 stats., or ch. 880, 2003 stats.

20 (b) Nothing in this section prohibits an individual from petitioning a court
21 under ~~ch. 54 s. 48.9795~~ for appointment of a guardian.

22 **SECTION 19.** Subchapter XX (title) of chapter 48 [precedes 48.978] of the
23 statutes is created to read:

24 OTHER GUARDIANSHIPS AND DELEGATION

25 OF POWER BY PARENT

BILL

1 **SECTION 20.** 48.978 (7) of the statutes is amended to read:

2 48.978 (7) ~~RELATIONSHIP TO CH. 54~~ OTHER GUARDIANSHIP PROCEDURES. (a) Except
3 when a different right, remedy, or procedure is provided under this section, the
4 rights, remedies, and procedures provided in s. 48.9795 or ch. 54, whichever is
5 applicable, shall govern a standby guardianship created under this section.

6 (b) This section does not abridge the duties or authority of a guardian appointed
7 under s. 48.9795, ch. 880, 2003 stats., or ch. 54.

8 (c) Nothing in this section prohibits an individual from petitioning a court for
9 the appointment of a guardian of the person under s. 48.9795 or a guardian of the
10 estate under ch. 54.

11 **SECTION 21.** 48.9795 of the statutes is created to read:

12 **48.9795 Appointment of guardian of the person for a child. (1)**

13 DEFINITIONS. In this section:

14 (a) “Interested person” means any of the following:

15 1. For purposes of a petition for guardianship of a child, any of the following:

16 a. The child, if he or she has attained 12 years of age, and the child’s guardian
17 ad litem and counsel, if any.

18 b. The child’s parent, guardian, legal custodian, and physical custodian.

19 c. Any person who has filed a declaration of paternal interest under s. 48.025,
20 who is alleged to the court to be the father of the child, or who may, based on the
21 statements of the mother or other information presented to the court, be the father
22 of the child.

23 d. Any individual who is nominated as guardian or as a successor guardian.

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1 e. If the child has no living parent, any individual nominated to act as fiduciary
2 for the child in a will or other written instrument that was executed by a parent of
3 the child.

4 f. If the child is receiving or in need of any public services or benefits, the county
5 department or, in a county having a population of 750,000 or more, the department
6 that is providing the services or benefits, through district attorney, corporation
7 counsel, or other officials designated under s. 48.09.

8 g. If the child is an Indian child, the Indian child's Indian custodian and Indian
9 tribe.

10 h. Any other person that the court may require.

11 2. For purposes of proceedings subsequent to an order for guardianship of a
12 child, any of the following:

13 a. The child, if the child has attained 12 years of age, the child's guardian ad
14 litem, and the child's counsel.

15 b. The child's parent and guardian.

16 c. The county of venue, through the district attorney, corporation counsel, or
17 other official designated under s. 48.09, if the county has an interest in the
18 guardianship.

19 d. If the child is an Indian child, the Indian child's tribe.

20 e. Any other person that the court may require.

21 (b) "Party" means the person petitioning for the appointment of a guardian for
22 a child or any interested person other than a person who is alleged to the court to be
23 the father of the child or who may, based on the statements of the mother or other
24 information presented to the court, be the father of the child.

BILL

1 **(2) APPOINTMENT; VENUE; NOMINATION; DUTY AND AUTHORITY.** (a) *Venue.* Except
2 as provided under par. (b) 2., venue for guardianship under this section shall be in
3 the child's county of residence or in the county in which the child is physically
4 present, or, if the child is a nonresident, the county in which the petitioner proposes
5 that the child resides. The court may, upon a motion and for good cause shown,
6 transfer the case, along with all appropriate records, to the county in which a
7 dispositional order has been issued under this chapter.

8 (b) *Appointment.* 1. This section may be used for the appointment of a guardian
9 of the person for a child. An appointment of a guardian of the estate of a child shall
10 be conducted under the procedures specified in ch. 54. If the court assigned to
11 exercise jurisdiction under this chapter has jurisdiction over a proceeding for the
12 appointment of a guardian of the person for a child or continuing jurisdiction over
13 such a guardianship and the court assigned to exercise probate jurisdiction has
14 jurisdiction over a proceeding for the appointment of a guardian of the estate of the
15 child or continuing jurisdiction over such a guardianship, the court assigned to
16 exercise jurisdiction under this chapter may order those proceedings or
17 guardianships to be consolidated under the jurisdiction of the court assigned to
18 exercise jurisdiction under this chapter. Upon such consolidation, the court assigned
19 to exercise jurisdiction under this chapter shall order all records relating to the
20 guardianship of the estate of the child to be transferred to the court assigned to
21 exercise jurisdiction under this chapter and that court shall retain those records as
22 required under SCR chapter 72. This section does not prohibit a person from
23 petitioning a court under s. 48.831, 48.977, or 48.978 for the appointment of a
24 guardian of the person for a child.

BILL

1 2. If the child is the subject of an action pending under s. 48.13, 48.133, or 48.14
2 or ch. 938, any subsequent petition filed under this section shall be heard by the court
3 authorized to exercise jurisdiction over the pending action. The court shall stay a
4 guardianship proceeding for the appointment of a full, limited, or temporary
5 guardian of the person for a child under par. (d) 1., 2., or 3. until the action pending
6 under s. 48.13, 48.133, or 48.14 or ch. 938 is resolved. The court may appoint an
7 emergency guardian under sub. (6) while an action is pending under s. 48.13, 48.133,
8 or 48.14 or ch. 938 if the court finds that the best interests of the child require the
9 immediate appointment of a guardian.

10 3. A petition filed under this section may not seek to change an order under s.
11 48.13, 48.133, or 48.14 or ch. 938.

12 4. The court may appoint coguardians of the person for a child under this
13 section, subject to any conditions that the court imposes. Unless the court orders
14 otherwise, any decision concerning the child must be concurred in by all coguardians
15 or is void.

16 (c) *Nomination by parent or child.* 1. A parent may nominate a guardian and
17 successor guardian for any of his or her children who is in need of guardianship,
18 including a nomination by will. Subject to the rights of a surviving parent, the court
19 shall appoint the person nominated as guardian or successor guardian, unless the
20 court finds that appointment of the person nominated is not in the child's best
21 interests.

22 2. A child who has attained 12 years of age may nominate his or her own
23 guardian, but if the child is outside of the state or if other good reason exists, the court
24 may dispense with the child's right of nomination. If neither parent of a child who

BILL

1 has attained 12 years of age is fit, willing, and able to carry out the duties of a
2 guardian, the court may appoint the nominee of the child.

3 3. In determining who is appointed as guardian, the court shall consider the
4 nominations of the parents and child and the opinions of the parents and child as to
5 what is in the best interests of the child, but the best interests of the child as
6 determined by the court shall control in making the determination when those
7 nominations and opinions are in conflict with those best interests.

8 (d) *Duties and authority of guardian.* 1. 'Full guardianship.' Subject to subds.
9 2. and 5., a guardian appointed under sub. (4) (h) 2. has all of the following duties and
10 authority:

11 a. All of the duties and authority specified in s. 48.023.

12 b. Subject to an order of a court of competent jurisdiction, the authority to
13 determine reasonable visitation with the child.

14 c. The right to change the residence of the child from this state to another state.

15 d. The duty to immediately notify the court that appointed the guardian of any
16 change in the address of the guardian or child and to make an annual report to that
17 court on the condition of the child. The report shall include the location of the child,
18 the health condition of the child, and any recommendations regarding the child.

19 2. 'Limited guardianship.' The court may order that the duties and authority
20 of a guardian appointed under sub. (4) (h) 2. be limited. The duties and authority of
21 a limited guardian shall be as specified by the order of appointment under sub. (4)
22 (h) 2. The duties and authority of a full guardian shall apply to a limited guardian
23 to the extent relevant to the duties or authority of the limited guardian, except as
24 limited by the order of appointment. The court may limit the authority of a guardian
25 with respect to any power to allow the parent to retain such power to make decisions

BILL

1 as is within the parent's ability to exercise effectively and may limit the physical
2 custody of a guardian to allow shared physical custody with the parent if shared
3 physical custody is in the best interests of the child. The court shall set an expiration
4 date for a limited guardianship order, which may be extended for good cause shown.

5 3. 'Temporary guardianship.' If it is demonstrated to the court that a child's
6 particular situation, including the inability of the child's parent to provide for the
7 care, custody, and control of the child for a temporary period of time, requires the
8 appointment of a temporary guardian, the court may appoint a temporary guardian
9 as provided under sub. (5).

10 4. 'Emergency guardianship.' If it is demonstrated to the court that the welfare
11 of a child requires the immediate appointment of an emergency guardian, the court
12 may appoint an emergency guardian as provided under sub. (6).

13 5. 'Powers of guardian.' The parent retains all rights and duties accruing to the
14 parent as a result of the parent-child relationship that are not assigned to the
15 guardian or otherwise limited by statute or court order. A guardian acting on behalf
16 of a child may exercise only those powers that the guardian is authorized to exercise
17 by statute or court order. The court may authorize a guardian to exercise only those
18 powers that are necessary to provide for the care, custody, and control of the child and
19 to exercise those powers in a manner that is appropriate to the child.

20 **(3) GUARDIAN AD LITEM.** (a) The court shall appoint a guardian ad litem when
21 a petition is filed for appointment of a guardian or termination of a guardianship
22 under this section. Except as provided under sub. (6) (b) 3., the court shall appoint
23 the guardian ad litem as soon as possible and before the initial hearing. The court
24 shall appoint a guardian ad litem when it determines that a hearing for modification

BILL

1 is to be held under sub. (9) (b). In a case that is contested, the guardian ad litem may
2 file a motion pursuant to s. 48.235 (8) (b).

3 (b) The guardian ad litem has the duties and responsibilities required under
4 s. 48.235 (3) (a). The guardian ad litem represents the best interests of the child
5 throughout the proceedings but must apply in all court proceedings the applicable
6 standard under sub. (4) (b) 4. to 7. The guardian ad litem shall conduct a diligent
7 investigation sufficient to represent the best interests of the child in court. As
8 appropriate to the circumstances, the investigation may include, personally or
9 through a trained designee, meeting with or observing the child, meeting with the
10 proposed guardian, meeting with interested persons, and visiting the homes of the
11 child and the proposed guardian. The guardian ad litem shall attend all court
12 proceedings relating to the guardianship, present evidence concerning the best
13 interests of the child, if necessary, and make clear and specific recommendations to
14 the court at every stage of the proceedings.

15 (c) To the extent necessary to fulfill the duties and responsibilities required of
16 the guardian ad litem in the proceedings, the guardian ad litem shall inspect reports
17 and records relating to the child and, upon presentation of necessary releases, the
18 child's family, and the proposed guardian, including law enforcement reports and
19 records under ss. 48.396 (1) and 938.396 (1) (a), court records under ss. 48.396 (2) (a)
20 and 938.396 (2), social welfare agency records under ss. 48.78 (2) (a) and 938.78 (2)
21 (a), abuse and neglect reports and records under s. 48.981 (7) (a) 11v., pupil records
22 under s. 118.125 (2) (L), mental health records under s. 51.30 (4) (b) 4., and health
23 care records under s. 146.82 (2) (a) 4. The court shall include in the order appointing
24 the guardian ad litem an order requiring the custodian of any report or record

BILL

1 specified in this subdivision to permit the guardian ad litem to inspect and copy the
2 report or record on presentation by the guardian ad litem of a copy of the order.

3 (4) PROCEDURES. (a) *Petition; who may file.* 1. Except as provided in subd. 2.,
4 any person, including a child 12 years of age or over on his or her own behalf, may
5 petition for the appointment of a guardian for a child.

6 2. If there is an action pending under s. 48.13, 48.133, or 48.14 or ch. 938, a
7 petition under this subsection may be filed by any party to the pending action or any
8 person approved by the court if the petition is consistent with the child's permanency
9 plan and does not seek to change the requirements of any preexisting court order
10 issued under s. 48.13, 48.133, or 48.14 or ch. 938.

11 (b) *Petition; form and content.* A petition for guardianship may include an
12 application for protective placement or protective services or both under ch. 55. The
13 petition shall be entitled "In the interest of (child's name), a person under the age
14 of 18" and shall state all of the following, if known to the petitioner:

15 1. The name, date of birth, and address of the child.

16 2. The names and addresses of the petitioner, the child's parents, current
17 guardian, and legal custodian, if any, the proposed guardian, any proposed successor
18 guardians, and all other interested persons.

19 3. Whether the petitioner is requesting a full guardianship, a limited
20 guardianship, a temporary guardianship, or an emergency guardianship.

21 4. If the petitioner is requesting a full guardianship, the facts and
22 circumstances establishing that the child's parents are unfit, unwilling, or unable to
23 provide for the care, custody, and control of the child or other compelling facts and
24 circumstances demonstrating that a full guardianship is necessary.

BILL

1 5. If the petitioner is requesting a limited guardianship, the facts and
2 circumstances establishing that the child's parents need assistance in providing for
3 the care, custody, and control of the child and a statement of the specific duties and
4 authority under sub. (2) (d) sought by the petitioner for the proposed guardian and
5 the specific parental rights and duties that the petitioner seeks to have transferred.

6 6. If the petitioner is requesting a temporary guardianship, the facts and
7 circumstances establishing that the child's particular situation, including the
8 inability of the child's parents to provide for the care, custody, and control of the child
9 for a temporary period of time, requires the appointment of a temporary guardian;
10 the reasons for the appointment of a temporary guardian; and the powers requested
11 for the temporary guardian.

12 7. If the petitioner is requesting an emergency guardianship, the facts and
13 circumstances establishing that the welfare of the child requires the immediate
14 appointment of an emergency guardian.

15 8. The facts and circumstances establishing that the proposed guardian is fit,
16 willing, and able to serve as the child's guardian.

17 9. The information required under s. 822.29 (1).

18 10. Whether the child may be subject to s. 48.028 or the federal Indian Child
19 Welfare Act, 25 USC 1901 to 1963, and, if the child may be subject to s. 48.028 or that
20 act, the names and addresses of the child's Indian custodian, if any, and Indian tribe,
21 if known.

22 11. If the petitioner knows or has reason to know that the child is an Indian
23 child, reliable and credible information showing that continued custody of the child
24 by the child's parent or Indian custodian is likely to result in serious emotional or
25 physical damage to the child under s. 48.028 (4) (d) 1. and that active efforts under

BILL

1 s. 48.028 (4) (d) 2. have been made to prevent the breakup of the Indian child's family
2 and that those efforts have proved unsuccessful and, if the proposed guardianship
3 would change the placement of the child from the home of his or her parent or Indian
4 custodian to a placement outside that home, a statement as to whether the new
5 placement is in compliance with the order of placement preference under s. 48.028
6 (7) (b) or, if applicable, s. 48.028 (7) (c) and, if the new placement is not in compliance
7 with that order, specific information showing good cause, as described in s. 48.028
8 (7) (e), for departing from that order.

9 12. Whether the petitioner is aware of any guardianship or other related
10 proceeding involving the child that is pending in another court and, if so, the details
11 of the guardianship, termination of parental rights, or related proceeding.

12 13. Whether there is an action pending or the child is subject to a court order
13 under s. 48.13, 48.133, or 48.14 or ch. 938.

14 (c) *Service of petition and notice.* 1. Except as provided in subd. 3. and sub. (6)
15 (b) 2., the petitioner shall cause the petition and notice of the time and place of the
16 hearing under par. (e) to be served at least 7 days before the time of the hearing upon
17 all interested persons. Failure of the petitioner to provide notice to all interested
18 persons shall deprive the court of jurisdiction unless notice is specifically waived by
19 an interested person or by the court for good cause shown.

20 2. A notice shall be in writing. A copy of the petition and any other required
21 document shall be attached to the notice. Except as provided in subd. 3. and sub. (6)
22 (b) 2., notice shall be delivered in person or by certified mail. Notice is considered to
23 be given by proof of personal delivery, by proof that the notice was sent by certified
24 mail to the last-known address of the recipient, or, if the recipient is an adult, by the
25 written admission of service of the person served.

BILL

1 3. If the petitioner knows or has reason to know that the child is an Indian child,
2 notice to the Indian child's parent, Indian custodian, and Indian tribe shall be
3 provided in the manner specified in s. 48.028 (4) (a). No hearing may be held under
4 par. (e) or (f) until at least 10 days after receipt of the notice by the Indian child's
5 parent, Indian custodian, and Indian tribe or, if the identity or location of the Indian
6 child's parent, Indian custodian, or tribe cannot be determined, until at least 15 days
7 after receipt of the notice by the U.S. secretary of the interior. On request of the
8 Indian child's parent, Indian custodian, or Indian tribe, the court shall grant a
9 continuance of up to 20 additional days to enable the requester to prepare for the
10 hearing.

11 (d) *Statement by proposed guardian.* At least 96 hours before the hearing under
12 par. (e), the proposed guardian shall submit to the court a sworn and notarized
13 statement as to the number of persons for whom the proposed guardian is
14 responsible, whether as a parent, guardian, or legal custodian, as to the proposed
15 guardian's income, assets, debts, and living expenses, and as to whether the
16 proposed guardian is currently charged with or has been convicted of a crime or has
17 been determined under s. 48.981 (3) (c) to have abused or neglected a child. If the
18 proposed guardian is currently charged with or has been convicted of a crime or has
19 been determined under s. 48.981 (3) (c) to have abused or neglected a child, he or she
20 shall include in the sworn and notarized statement a description of the
21 circumstances surrounding the charge, conviction, or determination.

22 (e) *Initial hearing.* 1. The initial hearing on a petition for guardianship, other
23 than a petition for emergency guardianship under sub. (6), shall be heard within 45
24 days after the filing of the petition. At the hearing, the court shall first determine
25 whether any party wishes to contest the petition. If the petition is not contested, the

BILL

1 court shall immediately proceed to a fact-finding and dispositional hearing, unless
2 an adjournment is requested. If the petition is contested and all parties consent, the
3 court may proceed immediately to a fact-finding and dispositional hearing. If any
4 party does not consent or if an adjournment is requested, the court shall set a date
5 for a fact-finding and dispositional hearing that allows reasonable time for the
6 parties to prepare but is not more than 30 days after the initial hearing.

7 2. The proposed guardian and any proposed successor guardian shall be
8 physically present at all hearings unless the court excuses the attendance of either
9 or, for good cause shown, permits attendance by telephone. The child is not required
10 to attend any hearings, but if the child has nominated the proposed guardian, the
11 child shall provide to the guardian ad litem sufficient information for the guardian
12 ad litem to advise the court on whether the nomination is in the best interests of the
13 child.

14 3. If a man who has been given notice under par. (c) 1. appears at the initial
15 hearing, alleges that he is the father of the child, and states that he wishes to
16 establish the paternity of the child, s. 48.299 (6) applies. The court may order a
17 temporary guardianship under sub. (5) pending the outcome of the paternity
18 proceedings.

19 (f) *Fact-finding and dispositional hearing.* The court shall hold the
20 fact-finding and dispositional hearing at the time specified or set by the court under
21 this paragraph, at which any party may present evidence, including expert
22 testimony, and argument relating to the allegations in the petition. The court shall
23 determine whether the petitioner has proven the allegations in the petition under
24 par. (b) by clear and convincing evidence and shall immediately proceed to determine
25 the appropriate disposition under par. (h), considering the factors under par. (g).

BILL

1 (g) *Dispositional factors.* In determining the appropriate disposition under par.
2 (h), the court shall consider all of the following:

3 1. Any nominations made under sub. (2) (c) 1. or 2. and the opinions of the
4 parents and child as to what is in the best interests of the child, but the best interests
5 of the child as determined by the court shall control in making the determination
6 when those nominations and opinions are in conflict with those best interests.

7 2. Whether the proposed guardian would be fit, willing, and able to serve as the
8 guardian of the child.

9 3. If the child is an Indian child, the order of placement preference under s.
10 48.028 (7) (b) or, if applicable, s. 48.028 (7) (c), unless the court finds good cause, as
11 described in s. 48.028 (7) (e), for departing from that order.

12 4. Whether appointment of the proposed guardian as the child's guardian is in
13 the best interests of the child.

14 (h) *Disposition.* At the conclusion of the hearing under par. (f), the court shall
15 grant one of the following dispositions, unless the court adjourns the hearing under
16 par. (i):

17 1. A disposition dismissing the petition if the court finds that the petitioner has
18 not proved the allegations in the petition by clear and convincing evidence or
19 determines that appointment of the proposed guardian as the child's guardian is not
20 in the best interests of the child. Dismissal of a petition under this subdivision does
21 not preclude the court from referring the child to the intake worker for an intake
22 inquiry under s. 48.24 or from acting as an intake worker at the court's discretion
23 under s. 48.10.

24 2. A disposition ordering the guardianship and issuing letters of guardianship
25 if the court finds that the petitioner has proved the allegations in the petition by clear

BILL

1 and convincing evidence and determines that such an appointment is in the best
2 interests of the child. A dispositional order for a full, limited, or temporary
3 guardianship under this subsection may not change the placement of a child under
4 the supervision of a court pursuant to s. 48.13, 48.133, or 48.14 or ch. 938. The
5 disposition shall include all of the following:

6 a. Whether the appointment is for a full, limited, or temporary guardianship,
7 and, if limited or temporary, the limitations and expiration date of the guardianship.

8 b. If applicable, the amount of support to be paid by the child's parents.

9 c. If applicable, and subject to sub. (13), reasonable rules of parental visitation.

10 Subject to a court order under this subdivision or sub. (9) or (13), the guardian's
11 decision regarding visitation is presumed to be in the best interest of the child and,
12 if the court reviews the decision, the petitioner has the burden of proving by clear and
13 convincing evidence that the decision of the guardian is not in the best interest of the
14 child.

15 (i) *Adjournment; proposed guardian unfit or not in best interests.* If at the
16 conclusion of the hearing under par. (f) the court finds that the petitioner has proved
17 the allegations in the petition, other than the allegation specified in par. (b) 8., by
18 clear and convincing evidence, but that the proposed guardian is not fit, willing, and
19 able to serve as the guardian of the child, or if the court finds that the petitioner has
20 so proved all of the allegations in the petition, but that appointment of the proposed
21 guardian as the child's guardian is not in the best interests of the child, the court may,
22 in lieu of granting a disposition dismissing the petition under par. (h) 1., adjourn the
23 hearing for not more than 30 days, request the petitioner or any other party to
24 nominate a new proposed guardian, and order the guardian ad litem to report to the

BILL

1 court concerning whether the new proposed guardian is fit, willing, and able to serve
2 as the guardian of the child.

3 (5) TEMPORARY GUARDIANSHIPS. (a) *Duration and extent of authority.* The court
4 may appoint a temporary guardian for a child for a period not to exceed 180 days,
5 except that the court may extend this period for good cause shown for one additional
6 180-day period. The court's determination and order appointing the temporary
7 guardian shall specify the authority of the temporary guardian, which shall be
8 limited to those acts that are reasonably related to the reasons for the appointment
9 that are specified in the petition for temporary guardianship. The authority of the
10 temporary guardian is limited to the performance of those acts stated in the order
11 of appointment.

12 (b) *Procedures for appointment.* A petition for the appointment of a temporary
13 guardian shall be heard in the same manner and is subject to the same requirements
14 as provided in this section for the appointment of a full or limited guardian.

15 (c) *Cessation of powers.* The duties and powers of the temporary guardian cease
16 upon the expiration of the period specified in par. (a), or the termination as
17 determined by the court of the situation of the child that was the cause of the
18 temporary guardianship. Upon cessation of a temporary guardianship, the
19 temporary guardian shall file with the court any report that the court requires.

20 (6) EMERGENCY GUARDIANSHIPS. (a) *Duration and extent of authority.* The court
21 may appoint an emergency guardian for a child for a period not to exceed 60 days.
22 The court's determination and order appointing the emergency guardian shall
23 specify the authority of the emergency guardian and shall be limited to those acts
24 that are reasonably related to the reasons for the appointment that are specified in

BILL

1 the petition for emergency guardianship. The authority of the emergency guardian
2 is limited to the performance of those acts stated in the order of appointment.

3 (b) *Procedures for appointment.* All of the following procedures apply to the
4 appointment of an emergency guardian:

5 1. Any person may petition for the appointment of an emergency guardian for
6 a child. The petition shall contain the information required under sub. (4) (b) and
7 shall specify the reasons for the appointment of an emergency guardian and the
8 powers requested for the emergency guardian.

9 2. The petitioner shall give notice of the petition and of the time and place of
10 the hearing under subd. 4. to the child, if 12 years of age or over, the child's guardian
11 ad litem, and the child's counsel, if any; the child's parents, guardian, and legal
12 custodian; and the person nominated as emergency guardian. The notice and a copy
13 of the petition shall be served as soon after the filing of the petition as possible, shall
14 be served by the most practical means possible, including personal service or service
15 by electronic mail or telephone, and shall include notice of the right to petition for
16 reconsideration or modification of the emergency guardianship under subd. 5. If the
17 petitioner serves notice of the hearing after the hearing is conducted and the court
18 has entered an order, the petitioner shall include the court's order with the notice of
19 the hearing.

20 3. The court shall appoint a guardian ad litem for the child as soon as possible
21 after the filing of the petition. The court shall attempt to appoint the guardian ad
22 litem before the hearing on the petition, but may appoint the guardian ad litem after
23 the hearing if the court finds that exigent circumstances require the immediate
24 appointment of an emergency guardian. The guardian ad litem shall conduct a
25 diligent investigation sufficient to represent the best interests of the child in court.

BILL

1 If the court appoints a guardian ad litem after entry of the order granting the
2 emergency guardianship, the guardian ad litem may petition for reconsideration or
3 modification of the emergency guardianship under subd. 5. If the court dismisses the
4 petition for emergency guardianship prior to appointing a guardian ad litem, the
5 court need not appoint a guardian ad litem unless the petition is refiled.

6 4. The court shall hold a hearing on the emergency guardianship petition as
7 soon as possible after the filing of the petition or, for good cause shown, may issue a
8 temporary order appointing an emergency guardian without a hearing that shall
9 remain in effect until a hearing is held on the emergency guardianship petition. If
10 appointed prior to the hearing, the guardian ad litem shall attend the hearing in
11 person or by telephone.

12 5. If the court appoints an emergency guardian, any person specified in subd.
13 2. may petition for reconsideration or modification of the emergency guardianship
14 and the court shall hold a rehearing on the issue of appointment of the emergency
15 guardian within 30 calendar days after the filing of the petition.

16 6. If the court determines that the welfare of the child does not require the
17 immediate appointment of an emergency guardian, the court may dismiss the
18 petition. Dismissal of a petition under this subdivision does not preclude the court
19 from referring the child to the intake worker for an intake inquiry under s. 48.24 or
20 from acting as an intake worker at the judge's discretion under s. 48.10.

21 (c) *Immunity.* An emergency guardian of a child is immune from civil liability
22 for his or her acts or omissions in performing the duties of emergency guardianship
23 if he or she performs the duties in good faith, in the best interests of the child, and
24 with the degree of diligence and prudence that an ordinarily prudent person
25 exercises in his or her own affairs.

BILL

1 (d) *Cessation of powers.* The duties and powers of the emergency guardian
2 cease upon the expiration of the period specified in par. (a), or the termination as
3 determined by the court of the situation of the child that was the cause of the
4 emergency guardianship. Upon cessation of an emergency guardianship, the
5 emergency guardian shall file with the court any report that the court requires.

6 (7) **STANDBY GUARDIANSHIP.** A petition for the appointment of a standby
7 guardian of the person for a child to assume the duty and authority of guardianship
8 on the incapacity, death, or debilitation and consent, of the child's parent shall be
9 brought under s. 48.978.

10 (8) **SUCCESSOR GUARDIAN.** (a) *Appointment; initial petition or during*
11 *guardianship.* 1. As part of a petition for the initial appointment of a guardian of
12 a child or at any time after that appointment, a person may petition for the
13 appointment of one or more successor guardians of the child to assume the duty and
14 authority of full, limited, or temporary guardianship in the event of an occurrence
15 specified in subd. 2. Except as provided in par. (b), if the petition for the appointment
16 of a successor guardian is brought after the initial appointment of a guardian, the
17 petition shall be heard in the same manner and subject to the same requirements as
18 provided under this section for an initial appointment of a guardian.

19 2. After hearing, the court may designate one or more successor guardians
20 whose appointment shall become effective immediately upon the death,
21 unwillingness or inability to act, resignation, or removal by the court of the initially
22 appointed guardian or during a period, as determined by the initially appointed
23 guardian, when the initially appointed guardian is temporarily unable to fulfill his
24 or her duties, including during an extended vacation or illness. The powers and
25 duties of the successor guardian shall be the same as those of the initially appointed

BILL

1 guardian. The successor guardian shall receive a copy of the court order establishing
2 or modifying the initial guardianship and of the order designating the successor
3 guardian. Upon the occurrence of an event specified in this subdivision, the
4 successor guardian shall so notify the court and request the court to issue new letters
5 of guardianship. Upon notification, the court shall issue new letters of guardianship
6 that specify that the successor guardianship is permanent or that specify the period
7 for a temporary successor guardianship.

8 (b) *Appointment; when no guardian.* 1. If a guardian dies, is removed by order
9 of the court, or resigns and the resignation is accepted by the court, the court, on its
10 own motion or upon petition of any interested person, may appoint a person who is
11 fit, willing, and able to serve as successor guardian. The court may, upon request of
12 any interested person or on its own motion, direct that the petition or motion for the
13 appointment of a successor guardian be heard in the same manner and subject to the
14 same requirements as provided under this section for an initial appointment of a
15 guardian.

16 2. If the appointment under subd. 1. is made without hearing, the successor
17 guardian shall provide notice to all interested persons of the appointment and the
18 right to petition for reconsideration of the appointment of the successor guardian.
19 The notice shall be served personally or by mail not later than 7 days after the
20 appointment.

21 **(9) MODIFICATION OF GUARDIANSHIP ORDER.** (a) Any interested person or other
22 person approved by the court may request a modification of a guardianship order
23 entered under this subsection or sub. (4) (h) 2. or the court may, on its own motion,
24 propose such a modification. The request or motion shall set forth in detail the
25 nature of the proposed modification, shall allege facts sufficient to show that there

BILL

1 has been a substantial change in circumstances since the last order affecting the
2 guardianship was entered and that the proposed modification would be in the best
3 interests of the child, and shall allege any other information that affects the
4 advisability of the court's disposition.

5 (b) The court shall hold a hearing on the matter prior to any modification of the
6 guardianship order if the request or motion indicates that new information is
7 available that affects the advisability of the court's guardianship order, unless
8 written waivers of objections to the modification are signed by all interested persons
9 other than the child and the court approves the waivers.

10 (c) If a hearing is to be held, the person requesting or proposing the modification
11 shall notify all interested persons at least 7 days prior to the hearing of the date,
12 place, and purpose of the hearing. A copy of the request or proposal shall be attached
13 to the notice. The court may order a modification if, at the hearing, the court finds
14 that the person proposing the modification has proved by clear and convincing
15 evidence that there has been a substantial change in circumstances and determines
16 that a modification would be in the best interests of the child. An order for
17 modification under this subsection may not change the placement of a child under
18 the supervision of a court pursuant to s. 48.13, 48.133, or 48.14 or ch. 938, other than
19 to modify a guardianship order entered under this section.

20 **(10) REVIEW OF CONDUCT OF GUARDIAN.** (a) *Continuing jurisdiction of court.* The
21 court that appointed the guardian of a child has continuing jurisdiction over the
22 guardian.

23 (b) *Cause for court action against a guardian.* The court may impose a remedy
24 under par. (d) if a guardian of a child does any of the following:

- 25 1. Abuses or neglects the child or knowingly permits others to do so.

BILL

1 2. Fails to disclose information specified in sub. (4) (d) that would have
2 prevented appointment of the person as guardian.

3 3. Fails to follow or comply with the court's order.

4 4. Otherwise fails to perform any of his or her duties as a guardian under s.
5 48.023.

6 (c) *Procedure.* Any interested person or other person approved by the court may
7 file a petition requesting a review of the conduct of a guardian, or the court, on its
8 own motion, may propose such a review. The request or motion shall allege facts
9 sufficient to show cause under par. (b) for the court to impose a remedy under par.
10 (d). The court shall hold a hearing on the request or motion not more than 30 days
11 after the filing of the request or proposal. Not less than 7 days before the date of the
12 hearing, the person requesting or proposing the review shall provide notice of the
13 hearing to the child, his or her parents, the guardian, and any other persons required
14 by the court. A copy of the request or motion shall be attached to the notice.

15 (d) *Remedies of the court.* If after hearing the court finds by clear and
16 convincing evidence cause as specified in par. (b) to order a remedy under this
17 paragraph, the court may do any of the following:

18 1. Remove the guardian.

19 2. Remove the guardian and appoint a successor guardian.

20 3. Enter any other order that may be necessary or appropriate to compel the
21 guardian to carry out the guardian's duties, including an order setting reasonable
22 rules of visitation with the child.

23 4. Modify the duties and authority of the guardian.

BILL

1 5. Require the guardian to pay any costs of the proceeding, including costs of
2 service and attorney fees, if the court finds that the guardian's conduct was
3 egregious.

4 **(11) TERMINATION OF GUARDIANSHIP.** (a) *Term of guardianship.* A guardianship
5 under this section shall continue until the child attains the age of 18 years unless any
6 of the following occurs:

7 1. The guardianship is for a lesser period of time and that time has expired.

8 2. The child marries.

9 3. The child dies.

10 4. The child's residence changes from this state to another state and a guardian
11 is appointed in the new state of residence.

12 5. The guardian dies, or resigns and the resignation is accepted by the court,
13 and a successor guardian is not appointed.

14 6. The guardian is removed for cause under sub. (10) (d) 1. and a successor
15 guardian is not appointed.

16 7. The court terminates the guardianship on the request of a parent of the child
17 or the child under par. (b).

18 8. The court terminates the guardianship upon the adoption of the child.

19 (b) *Termination on request of parent or child.* 1. A parent of the child or the
20 child may file a petition requesting that a guardianship order entered under sub. (4)
21 (h) 2., (5), (6), (8), or (9) be terminated. The petition shall allege facts sufficient to
22 show that there has been a substantial change in circumstances since the last order
23 affecting the guardianship was entered, that the parent is fit, willing, and able to
24 carry out the duties of a guardian or that no compelling facts or circumstances exist

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1 demonstrating that a guardianship is necessary, and that termination of the
2 guardianship would be in the best interests of the child.

3 2. The court shall hold a hearing on the petition unless written waivers of
4 objections to termination of the guardianship are signed by all interested persons
5 and the court approves the waivers.

6 3. If a hearing is to be held, by no less than 7 days before the date of the hearing,
7 the parent or child requesting the termination shall provide notice of the hearing to
8 the child, the child's parents, the guardian, and any other persons required by the
9 court. A copy of the petition shall be attached to the notice. The court shall terminate
10 the guardianship if the court finds that the petitioner has proven the allegations in
11 the petition under subd. 1. by a preponderance of the evidence.

12 **SECTION 22.** Subchapter XX of chapter 48 [precedes 48.98] of the statutes is
13 renumbered subchapter XXI of chapter 48 [precedes 48.98].

14 **SECTION 23.** 48.981 (7) (a) 11v. of the statutes is created to read:

15 48.981 (7) (a) 11v. A guardian ad litem for a child who is the subject of a
16 guardianship proceeding under s. 48.9795 to the extent necessary to fulfill the duties
17 and responsibilities required of the guardian ad litem under s. 48.9795 (3).

18 **SECTION 24.** 51.30 (4) (b) 18. a. of the statutes is amended to read:

19 51.30 (4) (b) 18. a. In this subdivision, "abuse" has the meaning given in s. 51.62
20 (1) (ag); "neglect" has the meaning given in s. 51.62 (1) (br); and "parent" has the
21 meaning given in s. 48.02 (13), except that "parent" does not include the parent of a
22 minor whose custody is transferred to a legal custodian, as defined in s. 48.02 (11),
23 or for whom a guardian is appointed under, ~~or~~ s. 48.9795 or 54.10 or s. 880.33, 2003
24 stats.

25 **SECTION 25.** 51.30 (4) (b) 18. c. of the statutes is amended to read:

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1 51.30 (4) (b) 18. c. If the patient, regardless of age, has a guardian appointed
2 under s. 48.9795 or 54.10 or s. 880.33, 2003 stats., or if the patient is a minor with
3 developmental disability who has a parent or has a guardian appointed under s.
4 48.831 and does not have a guardian appointed under s. 48.9795 or 54.10 or s. 880.33,
5 2003 stats., information concerning the patient that is obtainable by staff members
6 of the agency or nonprofit corporation with which the agency has contracted is
7 limited, except as provided in subd. 18. e., to the nature of an alleged rights violation,
8 if any; the name, birth date and county of residence of the patient; information
9 regarding whether the patient was voluntarily admitted, involuntarily committed
10 or protectively placed and the date and place of admission, placement or
11 commitment; and the name, address and telephone number of the guardian of the
12 patient and the date and place of the guardian's appointment or, if the patient is a
13 minor with developmental disability who has a parent or has a guardian appointed
14 under s. 48.831 and does not have a guardian appointed under s. 48.9795 or 54.10
15 or s. 880.33, 2003 stats., the name, address and telephone number of the parent or
16 guardian appointed under s. 48.831 of the patient.

17 **SECTION 26.** 54.01 (10) of the statutes is amended to read:

18 54.01 (10) "Guardian" means a person appointed by a court under s. 54.10 to
19 manage the income and assets, ~~which may include, by court order, digital property,~~
20 ~~as defined in s. 711.03 (10),~~ and provide for the essential requirements for health and
21 safety and the personal needs of ~~a minor,~~ an individual found incompetent, or a
22 spendthrift or to manage the income and assets of a minor. A person's assets may
23 include, by court order, digital property, as defined in s. 711.03 (10).

24 **SECTION 27.** 54.10 (1) of the statutes is amended to read:

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1 54.10 (1) A court may appoint a ~~guardian of the person or~~ a guardian of the
2 estate, ~~or both~~, for an individual if the court determines that the individual is a
3 minor. Except as provided in ss. 48.427, 48.831, 48.977, and 48.978, an appointment
4 of a guardian of the person of a minor shall be conducted under the procedures
5 specified in s. 48.9795.

6 **SECTION 28.** 54.15 (6) of the statutes is amended to read:

7 54.15 (6) TESTAMENTARY NOMINATION BY PROPOSED WARD'S PARENTS. Subject to the
8 rights of a surviving parent, a parent may by will nominate a guardian and successor
9 guardian of the ~~person or~~ estate for any of his or her minor children who is in need
10 of guardianship, unless the court finds that appointment of the guardian or successor
11 guardian is not in the minor's best interests. For an individual who is aged 18 or older
12 and is found to be in need of guardianship by reason of a developmental disability
13 or serious and persistent mental illness, a parent may by will nominate a
14 testamentary guardian. The parent may waive the requirement of a bond for such
15 an estate that is derived through a will.

16 **SECTION 29.** 54.25 (2) (d) 1. of the statutes is amended to read:

17 54.25 (2) (d) 1. A court may authorize a guardian of the person to exercise all
18 or part of any of the powers specified in subd. 2. only if it finds, by clear and
19 convincing evidence, that the individual lacks evaluative capacity to exercise the
20 power. The court shall authorize the guardian of the person to exercise only those
21 powers that are necessary to provide for the individual's personal needs, safety, and
22 rights and to exercise the powers in a manner that is appropriate to the individual
23 and that constitutes the least restrictive form of intervention. The court may limit
24 the authority of the guardian of the person with respect to any power to allow the
25 individual to retain power to make decisions about which the individual is able

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1 effectively to receive and evaluate information and communicate decisions. ~~When~~
2 ~~a court appoints a guardian for a minor, the guardian shall be granted care, custody,~~
3 ~~and control of the person of the minor.~~

4 **SECTION 30.** 54.25 (2) (d) 2. o. of the statutes is amended to read:

5 54.25 (2) (d) 2. o. The power to have custody of the ward, if an adult, ~~and the~~
6 ~~power to have care, custody, and control of the ward, if a minor.~~

7 **SECTION 31.** 54.52 (1) of the statutes is amended to read:

8 54.52 (1) A person may at any time bring a petition for the appointment of a
9 standby guardian of the person or estate of an individual who is determined under
10 s. 54.10 to be incompetent, ~~a minor, or a spendthrift~~ or for the appointment of a
11 standby guardian of the estate of a minor, except that, as specified in s. 48.978 a
12 petition for the appointment of a standby guardian of the person or ~~property~~ estate,
13 or both, of a minor to assume the duty and authority of guardianship on the
14 incapacity, death, or debilitation and consent, of the minor's parent ~~may~~ shall be
15 brought under s. 48.978.

16 **SECTION 32.** 54.56 of the statutes is renumbered 48.9795 (12) and amended to
17 read:

18 48.9795 (12) VISITATION BY A MINOR'S CHILD'S GRANDPARENTS AND STEPPARENTS. (a)
19 In this ~~section~~ subsection, "stepparent" means the surviving spouse of a deceased
20 parent of a ~~minor~~ child, whether or not the surviving spouse has remarried.

21 (b) If one or both parents of a ~~minor~~ child are deceased and the ~~minor~~ child is
22 in the custody of the surviving parent or any other person, a grandparent or
23 stepparent of the ~~minor~~ child may petition for visitation privileges with respect to the
24 ~~minor~~ child, whether or not the person with custody is married. The grandparent
25 or stepparent may file the petition in a guardianship or temporary guardianship

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1 proceeding under this ~~chapter~~ section that affects the ~~minor~~ child or may file the
2 petition to commence an independent action under this ~~chapter~~ subsection. Except
3 as provided in ~~sub. (3m)~~ par. (cm), the court may grant reasonable visitation
4 privileges to the grandparent or stepparent if the surviving parent or other person
5 who has custody of the ~~minor~~ child has notice of the hearing and if the court
6 determines that visitation is in the best interest of the ~~minor~~ child.

7 (c) Whenever possible, in making a determination under ~~sub. (2)~~ par. (b), the
8 court shall consider the wishes of the ~~minor~~ child.

9 (cm) 1. Except as provided in ~~par. (b)~~ subd. 2., the court may not grant visitation
10 privileges to a grandparent or stepparent under this ~~section~~ subsection if the
11 grandparent or stepparent has been convicted under s. 940.01 of the first-degree
12 intentional homicide, or under s. 940.05 of the 2nd-degree intentional homicide, of
13 a parent of the ~~minor~~ child, and the conviction has not been reversed, set aside, or
14 vacated.

15 2. Paragraph ~~(a)~~ Subdivision 1. does not apply if the court determines by clear
16 and convincing evidence that the visitation would be in the best interests of the ~~minor~~
17 child. The court shall consider the wishes of the ~~minor~~ child in making the
18 determination.

19 (d) The court may issue any necessary order to enforce a visitation order that
20 is granted under this ~~section~~ subsection, and may from time to time modify the
21 visitation privileges or enforcement order for good cause shown.

22 (dm) 1. If a grandparent or stepparent granted visitation privileges with
23 respect to a ~~minor~~ child under this ~~section~~ subsection is convicted under s. 940.01 of
24 the first-degree intentional homicide, or under s. 940.05 of the 2nd-degree
25 intentional homicide, of a parent of the ~~minor~~ child, and the conviction has not been

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1 reversed, set aside, or vacated, the court shall modify the visitation order by denying
2 visitation with the ~~minor~~ child upon petition, motion, or order to show cause by a
3 person having custody of the ~~minor~~ child, or upon the court's own motion, and upon
4 notice to the grandparent or stepparent granted visitation privileges.

5 2. ~~Paragraph (a)~~ Subdivision 1. does not apply if the court determines by clear
6 and convincing evidence that the visitation would be in the best interests of the ~~minor~~
7 child. The court shall consider the wishes of the ~~minor~~ child in making the
8 determination.

9 (e) This section subsection applies to every ~~minor~~ child in this state whose
10 parent or parents are deceased, regardless of the date of death of the parent or
11 parents.

12 **SECTION 33.** 54.57 of the statutes is renumbered 48.9795 (13) and amended to
13 read:

14 48.9795 (13) PROHIBITING VISITATION OR PHYSICAL PLACEMENT IF ~~A~~ PARENT KILLS
15 OTHER PARENT. (a) Except as provided in sub. (2), in an action under this chapter that
16 affects a ~~minor~~ par. (b), a court may not grant to a parent of the ~~minor~~ a child who
17 is the subject of a proceeding under this section visitation or physical placement
18 rights with the ~~minor~~ child if the parent has been convicted under s. 940.01 of the
19 first-degree intentional homicide, or under s. 940.05 of the 2nd-degree intentional
20 homicide, of the ~~minor's~~ child's other parent, and the conviction has not been
21 reversed, set aside, or vacated.

22 (b) ~~Subsection (1)~~ Paragraph (a) does not apply if the court determines by clear
23 and convincing evidence that visitation or periods of physical placement would be in
24 the best interests of the ~~minor~~ child. The court shall consider the wishes of the ~~minor~~
25 child in making the determination.

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1 **SECTION 34.** 55.03 (1) of the statutes is amended to read:

2 55.03 (1) AGENCY AS BOTH GUARDIAN AND PROVIDER PROHIBITED. No agency acting
3 as a guardian appointed under s. 48.9795 or ch. 54, 2017 stats., or ch. 880, 2003 stats.,
4 ~~or ch. 54~~ may be a provider of protective services or protective placement for its ward
5 under this chapter.

6 **SECTION 35.** 115.76 (12) (b) 2. of the statutes is amended to read:

7 115.76 (12) (b) 2. The state, a county, or a child welfare agency, if a child was
8 made a ward of the state, county, or child welfare agency under ch. 54, 2017 stats.,
9 or ch. 880, 2003 stats., or if a child has been placed in the legal custody or
10 guardianship of the state, county, or child welfare agency under ch. 48 or ~~ch.~~ 767.

11 **SECTION 36.** 118.125 (2) (L) of the statutes is amended to read:

12 118.125 (2) (L) A school board shall disclose the pupil records of a pupil in
13 compliance with a court order under s. 48.236 (4) (a), 48.345 (12) (b), 48.9795 (3) (c),
14 938.34 (7d) (b), 938.396 (1) (d), or 938.78 (2) (b) 2. after making a reasonable effort
15 to notify the pupil's parent or legal guardian.

16 **SECTION 37.** 146.82 (2) (a) 9. a. of the statutes is amended to read:

17 146.82 (2) (a) 9. a. In this subdivision, "abuse" has the meaning given in s. 51.62
18 (1) (ag); "neglect" has the meaning given in s. 51.62 (1) (br); and "parent" has the
19 meaning given in s. 48.02 (13), except that "parent" does not include the parent of a
20 minor whose custody is transferred to a legal custodian, as defined in s. 48.02 (11),
21 or for whom a guardian is appointed under s. 48.9795 or 54.10 or s. 880.33, 2003 stats.

22 **SECTION 38.** 146.82 (2) (a) 9. c. of the statutes is amended to read:

23 146.82 (2) (a) 9. c. If the patient, regardless of age, has a guardian appointed
24 under s. 48.9795 or 54.10 or s. 880.33, 2003 stats., or if the patient is a minor with
25 developmental disability, as defined in s. 51.01 (5) (a), who has a parent or has a

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1 guardian appointed under s. 48.831 and does not have a guardian appointed under
2 s. 48.9795 or 54.10 or s. 880.33, 2003 stats., information concerning the patient that
3 is obtainable by staff members of the agency or nonprofit corporation with which the
4 agency has contracted is limited, except as provided in subd. 9. e., to the nature of
5 an alleged rights violation, if any; the name, birth date and county of residence of the
6 patient; information regarding whether the patient was voluntarily admitted,
7 involuntarily committed or protectively placed and the date and place of admission,
8 placement or commitment; and the name, address and telephone number of the
9 guardian of the patient and the date and place of the guardian's appointment or, if
10 the patient is a minor with developmental disability who has a parent or has a
11 guardian appointed under s. 48.831 and does not have a guardian appointed under
12 s. 48.9795 or 54.10 or s. 880.33, 2003 stats., the name, address and telephone number
13 of the parent or guardian appointed under s. 48.831 of the patient.

14 **SECTION 39.** 757.69 (1) (g) 5. of the statutes is amended to read:

15 757.69 (1) (g) 5. Conduct uncontested proceedings under s. 48.13, 48.133,
16 48.9795, 938.12, 938.13, or 938.18.

17 **SECTION 40.** 808.075 (4) (a) 9m. of the statutes is created to read:

18 808.075 (4) (a) 9m. Review of the conduct of a guardian under s. 48.9795 (10).

19 **SECTION 41.** 808.075 (4) (a) 11. of the statutes is amended to read:

20 808.075 (4) (a) 11. Termination of guardianship under s. 48.9795 (11) or 48.977
21 (7), including removal of a guardian.

22 **SECTION 42.** 808.075 (4) (a) 13. of the statutes is created to read:

23 808.075 (4) (a) 13. Appointment of a successor guardian under s. 48.9795 (8).

24 **SECTION 43.** 808.075 (4) (f) 3. of the statutes is renumbered 808.075 (4) (a) 14.

25 and amended to read:

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1 808.075 (4) (a) 14. Order for visitation under s. ~~54.56~~ 48.9795 (12).

2 **SECTION 44.** 809.30 (1) (a) of the statutes is amended to read:

3 809.30 (1) (a) “Final adjudication” means the entry of a final judgment or order
4 by the circuit court in a s. 971.17 proceeding, in a criminal case, or in a ch. 48, 51, 55,
5 938, or 980 case, other than a termination of parental rights case under s. 48.43, a
6 guardianship proceeding under s. 48.9795, or a parental consent to abortion case
7 under s. 48.375 (7).

8 **SECTION 45.** 809.30 (1) (b) 2. of the statutes is amended to read:

9 809.30 (1) (b) 2. A party, other than the state, seeking postdisposition relief in
10 a case under ch. 48, other than a termination of parental rights case under s. 48.43,
11 a guardianship proceeding under s. 48.9795, or a parental consent to abortion case
12 under s. 48.375 (7).

13 **SECTION 46.** 809.30 (2) (a) of the statutes is amended to read:

14 809.30 (2) (a) *Appeal procedure; counsel to continue.* A person seeking
15 postconviction relief in a criminal case; a person seeking postdisposition relief in a
16 case under ch. 48 other than a termination of parental rights case under s. 48.43, a
17 guardianship proceeding under s. 48.9795, or a parental consent to abortion case
18 under s. 48.375 (7); or a person seeking postdisposition relief in a s. 971.17 proceeding
19 or in a case under ch. 51, 55, 938, or 980 shall comply with this section. Counsel
20 representing the person at sentencing or at the time of the final adjudication shall
21 continue representation by filing a notice under par. (b) if the person desires to
22 pursue postconviction or postdisposition relief unless counsel is discharged by the
23 person or allowed to withdraw by the circuit court before the notice must be filed.

24 **SECTION 47.** 814.66 (1) (m) of the statutes is renumbered 814.61 (13m) and
25 amended to read:

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1 814.61 (**13m**) For filing a petition under s. ~~54.56~~ 48.9795 (12), whether in a
2 guardianship or temporary guardianship proceeding or to commence an
3 independent action, \$60.

4 **SECTION 48.** 938.345 (1) (e) of the statutes is amended to read:

5 938.345 (1) (e) Place any juvenile not found under ch. 880, 2003 stats., or ch.
6 46, 48, 49, 51, 54, or 115 to have a developmental disability or a mental illness or to
7 be a child with a disability, as defined in s. 115.76 (5), in a facility that exclusively
8 treats one or more of those categories of juveniles.

9 **SECTION 49. Nonstatutory provisions.**

10 (1) **TRANSITION.** All guardianships of the person of a minor under s. 54.10, 2017
11 stats., or ch. 880, 2003 stats., in effect on the effective date of this subsection remain
12 in effect and shall be considered guardianships under s. 48.9795 until terminated
13 under s. 48.9795 (11), all matters commenced under ch. 54, 2017 stats., with respect
14 to a guardianship of the person of a minor, that are pending on the effective date of
15 this subsection shall be completed under ch. 54, 2017 stats., and all orders appointing
16 a guardian of the person of a minor under ch. 54, 2017 stats., entered beginning on
17 the effective date of this subsection shall be considered guardianships under s.
18 48.9795.

19 (2) **MERGER AUTHORITY.** 2017 Wisconsin Act 185 and this act affect the same
20 statutory units without taking cognizance of each other. If the chief of the legislative
21 reference bureau finds there is no mutual inconsistency in the changes made by each
22 act, the chief shall incorporate the changes made by each act into the text of the
23 statutory units.

24 **SECTION 50. Initial applicability.**

