

HB 2118 -- Appointment of Parenting Coordinators

Sponsor: Yaeger

This bill authorizes the court to appoint a parenting coordinator as a neutral third party to assist in the resolution of disputes between parents regarding the implementation of court-ordered parenting plans. Either party to a dissolution may object to the appointment of the parenting coordinator unless the court makes specific findings that the dissolution is a high-conflict case and the appointment is in the best interest of the child. The parenting coordinator will serve for a specified period of time but not more than two years and have binding authority to resolve disputes between the parents regarding the implementation or clarification of existing orders concerning the minor or dependent children including, but not limited to, disputes concerning parenting time and specific parental decisions. The bill also prohibits the parenting coordinator from making any modification to any order, judgment, or decree of the court. The court may order fees to be paid by the parties, but will not appoint a coordinator if it finds the parties do not have the means to pay the fees. Parenting coordinators will be immune from civil or criminal liability in any claim that arises out of an act or omission of the coordinator during the performance of his or her duties unless the act or omission causing injury was willful or wanton.

Any parenting coordinator appointed by a court must be a licensed mental health professional or a licensed attorney and be qualified under the Missouri Supreme Court rules governing family mediation.