

ACT 161

S.B. NO. 110

A Bill for an Act Relating to Gender-Neutral Terminology.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Hawaii:

SECTION 1. Chapter 578, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended by adding a new section to be appropriately designated and to read as follows:

“§578- Interpretation of words to be gender-neutral. With regard to the rights, benefits, protections, and responsibilities of persons set forth in this chapter, all gender-specific terminology, such as “wife”, “husband”, “mother”, “father”, or similar terms, shall be construed in a gender-neutral manner. This rule of interpretation shall apply to all administrative rules adopted hereunder.”

SECTION 2. Chapter 580, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended by adding a new section to be appropriately designated and to read as follows:

“§580- Interpretation of words to be gender-neutral. With regard to the rights, benefits, protections, and responsibilities of persons set forth under this chapter, all gender-specific terminology, such as “wife”, “husband”, “mother”, “father”, “aunt”, “uncle”, “niece”, “nephew”, or similar terms, shall be construed in a gender-neutral manner. This rule of interpretation shall apply to all administrative rules adopted hereunder.”

SECTION 3. Section 578-1, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended to read as follows:

“§578-1 Who may adopt; jurisdiction; venue. Any ~~[proper]~~ unmarried adult person, ~~[not married, or]~~ any person married to the legal ~~[father or mother]~~ parent of a minor child, or a ~~[husband and wife]~~ married couple jointly~~;~~ may petition the family court of the circuit in which the person or persons reside or are in military service ~~[or the family court of the circuit]~~, in which the individual to be adopted resides or was born, or in which a child placing organization approved by the department of human services under the provisions of section 346-17 having legal custody (as defined in section 571-2) of the child is located~~;~~ for leave to adopt an individual toward whom the person or persons do not sustain the legal relationship of parent and child and for a change of the name of the individual. When adoption is the goal of a permanent plan recommended by the department of human services and ordered pursuant to section 587A-31, the department may petition for adoption on behalf of the proposed adoptive parents. The petition shall be in ~~[such]~~ a form and shall include ~~[such]~~ information and exhibits as may be prescribed by the family court.”

SECTION 4. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.¹

SECTION 5. This Act shall take effect on January 1, 2024.

(Approved June 29, 2023.)

Note

1. Edited pursuant to HRS §23G-16.5.