

**Subject** Cooperative divorce program; Bureau of Mediation Services

**Authors** Lesch and others

**Analyst** Mary Mullen

**Date** March 5, 2019

## Overview

This bill establishes a cooperative divorce program in the Bureau of Mediation Services. The program allows participants to file paperwork through the Bureau of Mediation Services and be granted a certificate of marital dissolution from the commissioner.

**Parenting education required and notice of dissolution.** The bill requires parties to a divorce with children to complete a parent education program and for the commissioner to post limited public information providing public notice the parties have been granted a dissolution.

**Agreements on parenting time.** Agreements related to child custody, parenting time, and financial support are enforceable as contracts in the same way agreements between parents for parenting plans are enforceable under the child custody laws in Minnesota. Issues not addressed in the agreement are considered reserved and may be part of future agreements by the parties or available for determination in a court.

**Court actions.** Either party to the cooperative divorce program can file a divorce action in court at any time which puts the cooperative divorce on hold. Parties can also enforce, modify, or vacate a cooperative divorce agreement through the courts or seek a dissolution in courts in Minnesota.

**Notice to participants.** The bill requires notices and information to be provided to the parties using the cooperative divorce program.

**The Bureau of Mediation Services.** The Bureau of Mediation services had to provide information to participants to help evaluate if the participants are participating freely in the program. Information shared during the cooperative divorce program participation is not admissible in court. The Bureau of Mediation Services has to do an evaluation of the program and is provided with funding to operate the program.

**Conforming changes.** This bill also makes conforming changes to other statutes including allowing participants in the program to be granted a summary real estate disposition and qualified domestic relations order after a dissolution.



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