

ALIMONY AMENDMENTS

2011 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

Chief Sponsor: Lyle W. Hillyard

House Sponsor: _____

LONG TITLE

General Description:

This bill creates a new section regarding alimony.

Highlighted Provisions:

This bill:

- ▶ defines fault and cohabitate;
- ▶ requires that a court ordering alimony in excess of \$1,000 per month for longer than 60 months require a plan for self-sufficiency from the recipient;
- ▶ provides for a systematic decrease in alimony after a specific period of time;
- ▶ lists factors the court is to take into consideration when ordering alimony with a systematic decrease provision;
- ▶ creates a rebuttable presumption of cohabitation if two non-related persons reside in the same location; and
- ▶ makes technical corrections.

Money Appropriated in this Bill:

None

Other Special Clauses:

None

Utah Code Sections Affected:

AMENDS:

30-2-5, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2008, Chapter 3



28 **30-3-5**, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2010, Chapter 285

29 ENACTS:

30 **30-3-5.3**, Utah Code Annotated 1953



32 *Be it enacted by the Legislature of the state of Utah:*

33 Section 1. Section **30-2-5** is amended to read:

34 **30-2-5. Separate debts.**

35 (1) Neither spouse is personally liable for the separate debts, obligations, or liabilities
36 of the other:

37 (a) contracted or incurred before marriage;

38 (b) contracted or incurred during marriage, except family expenses as provided in
39 Section 30-2-9;

40 (c) contracted or incurred after divorce or an order for separate maintenance under this
41 title, except the spouse is personally liable for that portion of the expenses incurred on behalf
42 of a minor child for reasonable and necessary medical and dental expenses, and other similar
43 necessities as provided in a court order under Section 30-3-5, 30-4-3, or 78B-12-212, or an
44 administrative order under Section 62A-11-326; or

45 (d) ordered by the court to be paid by the other spouse under Section 30-3-5, 30-3-5.3,
46 or 30-4-3 and not in conflict with Section 15-4-6.5 or 15-4-6.7.

47 (2) The wages, earnings, property, rents, or other income of one spouse may not be
48 reached by a creditor of the other spouse to satisfy a debt, obligation, or liability of the other
49 spouse, as described under Subsection (1).

50 Section 2. Section **30-3-5** is amended to read:

51 **30-3-5. Disposition of property -- Maintenance and health care of parties and**
52 **children -- Division of debts -- Court to have continuing jurisdiction -- Custody and**
53 **parent-time -- Nonmeritorious petition for modification.**

54 (1) When a decree of divorce is rendered, the court may include in it equitable orders
55 relating to the children, property, debts or obligations, and parties. The court shall include the
56 following in every decree of divorce:

57 (a) an order assigning responsibility for the payment of reasonable and necessary
58 medical and dental expenses of the dependent children including responsibility for health

59 insurance out-of-pocket expenses such as co-payments, co-insurance, and deductibles;
60 (b) (i) if coverage is or becomes available at a reasonable cost, an order requiring the
61 purchase and maintenance of appropriate health, hospital, and dental care insurance for the
62 dependent children; and
63 (ii) a designation of which health, hospital, or dental insurance plan is primary and
64 which health, hospital, or dental insurance plan is secondary in accordance with the provisions
65 of Section 30-3-5.4 which will take effect if at any time a dependent child is covered by both
66 parents' health, hospital, or dental insurance plans;
67 (c) pursuant to Section 15-4-6.5:
68 (i) an order specifying which party is responsible for the payment of joint debts,
69 obligations, or liabilities of the parties contracted or incurred during marriage;
70 (ii) an order requiring the parties to notify respective creditors or obligees, regarding
71 the court's division of debts, obligations, or liabilities and regarding the parties' separate,
72 current addresses; and
73 (iii) provisions for the enforcement of these orders; and
74 (d) provisions for income withholding in accordance with Title 62A, Chapter 11,
75 Recovery Services.
76 (2) The court may include, in an order determining child support, an order assigning
77 financial responsibility for all or a portion of child care expenses incurred on behalf of the
78 dependent children, necessitated by the employment or training of the custodial parent. If the
79 court determines that the circumstances are appropriate and that the dependent children would
80 be adequately cared for, it may include an order allowing the noncustodial parent to provide
81 child care for the dependent children, necessitated by the employment or training of the
82 custodial parent.
83 (3) The court has continuing jurisdiction to make subsequent changes or new orders for
84 the custody of the children and their support, maintenance, health, and dental care, and for
85 distribution of the property and obligations for debts as is reasonable and necessary.
86 (4) Child support, custody, visitation, and other matters related to children born to the
87 mother and father after entry of the decree of divorce may be added to the decree by
88 modification.
89 (5) (a) In determining parent-time rights of parents and visitation rights of grandparents

90 and other members of the immediate family, the court shall consider the best interest of the
91 child.

92 (b) Upon a specific finding by the court of the need for peace officer enforcement, the
93 court may include in an order establishing a parent-time or visitation schedule a provision,
94 among other things, authorizing any peace officer to enforce a court-ordered parent-time or
95 visitation schedule entered under this chapter.

96 (6) If a petition for modification of child custody or parent-time provisions of a court
97 order is made and denied, the court shall order the petitioner to pay the reasonable attorneys'
98 fees expended by the prevailing party in that action, if the court determines that the petition
99 was without merit and not asserted or defended against in good faith.

100 (7) If a petition alleges noncompliance with a parent-time order by a parent, or a
101 visitation order by a grandparent or other member of the immediate family where a visitation or
102 parent-time right has been previously granted by the court, the court may award to the
103 prevailing party costs, including actual attorney fees and court costs incurred by the prevailing
104 party because of the other party's failure to provide or exercise court-ordered visitation or
105 parent-time.

106 ~~[(8) (a) The court shall consider at least the following factors in determining alimony:]~~

107 ~~[(i) the financial condition and needs of the recipient spouse;]~~

108 ~~[(ii) the recipient's earning capacity or ability to produce income;]~~

109 ~~[(iii) the ability of the payor spouse to provide support;]~~

110 ~~[(iv) the length of the marriage;]~~

111 ~~[(v) whether the recipient spouse has custody of minor children requiring support;]~~

112 ~~[(vi) whether the recipient spouse worked in a business owned or operated by the payor
113 spouse; and]~~

114 ~~[(vii) whether the recipient spouse directly contributed to any increase in the payor
115 spouse's skill by paying for education received by the payor spouse or allowing the payor
116 spouse to attend school during the marriage.]~~

117 ~~[(b) The court may consider the fault of the parties in determining alimony.]~~

118 ~~[(c) As a general rule, the court should look to the standard of living, existing at the
119 time of separation, in determining alimony in accordance with Subsection (8)(a). However, the
120 court shall consider all relevant facts and equitable principles and may, in its discretion, base~~

121 alimony on the standard of living that existed at the time of trial. In marriages of short
122 duration, when no children have been conceived or born during the marriage, the court may
123 consider the standard of living that existed at the time of the marriage.]

124 [~~(d) The court may, under appropriate circumstances, attempt to equalize the parties'~~
125 ~~respective standards of living.~~]

126 [~~(e) When a marriage of long duration dissolves on the threshold of a major change in~~
127 ~~the income of one of the spouses due to the collective efforts of both, that change shall be~~
128 ~~considered in dividing the marital property and in determining the amount of alimony. If one~~
129 ~~spouse's earning capacity has been greatly enhanced through the efforts of both spouses during~~
130 ~~the marriage, the court may make a compensating adjustment in dividing the marital property~~
131 ~~and awarding alimony.~~]

132 [~~(f) In determining alimony when a marriage of short duration dissolves, and no~~
133 ~~children have been conceived or born during the marriage, the court may consider restoring~~
134 ~~each party to the condition which existed at the time of the marriage.~~]

135 [~~(g) (i) The court has continuing jurisdiction to make substantive changes and new~~
136 ~~orders regarding alimony based on a substantial material change in circumstances not~~
137 ~~foreseeable at the time of the divorce.~~]

138 [~~(ii) The court may not modify alimony or issue a new order for alimony to address~~
139 ~~needs of the recipient that did not exist at the time the decree was entered, unless the court~~
140 ~~finds extenuating circumstances that justify that action.~~]

141 [~~(iii) In determining alimony, the income of any subsequent spouse of the payor may~~
142 ~~not be considered, except as provided in this Subsection (8).~~]

143 [~~(A) The court may consider the subsequent spouse's financial ability to share living~~
144 ~~expenses.~~]

145 [~~(B) The court may consider the income of a subsequent spouse if the court finds that~~
146 ~~the payor's improper conduct justifies that consideration.~~]

147 [~~(h) Alimony may not be ordered for a duration longer than the number of years that~~
148 ~~the marriage existed unless, at any time prior to termination of alimony, the court finds~~
149 ~~extenuating circumstances that justify the payment of alimony for a longer period of time.~~]

150 [~~(9) Unless a decree of divorce specifically provides otherwise, any order of the court~~
151 ~~that a party pay alimony to a former spouse automatically terminates upon the remarriage or~~

152 ~~death of that former spouse. However, if the remarriage is annulled and found to be void ab~~
153 ~~initio, payment of alimony shall resume if the party paying alimony is made a party to the~~
154 ~~action of annulment and his rights are determined.]~~

155 ~~[(10) Any order of the court that a party pay alimony to a former spouse terminates~~
156 ~~upon establishment by the party paying alimony that the former spouse is cohabitating with~~
157 ~~another person.]~~

158 Section 3. Section **30-3-5.3** is enacted to read:

159 **30-3-5.3. Alimony.**

160 (1) As used in this section:

161 (a) "Cohabitate" means two non-related persons living together and engaging in sexual
162 relations.

163 (b) "Fault" means any action that affects the mental, physical, or emotional condition
164 of a party being awarded alimony that reduces that party's ability to earn income at the party's
165 full capability.

166 (2) In any final decree of divorce, the court may order a party to pay alimony to the
167 other party, taking into consideration the following factors:

168 (a) the financial condition and needs of the recipient party;

169 (b) the recipient's earning capacity or ability to produce income;

170 (c) the ability of the payor party to provide support;

171 (d) the length of the marriage;

172 (e) whether the recipient has custody of minor children requiring support;

173 (f) whether the recipient worked in a business owned or operated by the payor; and

174 (g) whether the recipient directly contributed to any increase in the payor's skill by
175 paying for education received by the payor or allowing the payor to attend school during the
176 marriage.

177 (3) The court may consider any fault of the parties in determining alimony.

178 (4) As a general rule, the court should look to the standard of living existing at the time
179 of separation in determining alimony.

180 (a) The court shall consider all relevant facts and equitable principles and may, in its
181 discretion, base alimony on the standard of living that existed at the time of trial.

182 (b) In marriages of short duration, when no children have been conceived or born

183 during the marriage, the court may consider the standard of living that existed at the time of the
184 marriage.

185 (c) The court may, under appropriate circumstances, attempt to equalize the parties'
186 respective standards of living.

187 (5) When a marriage of long duration dissolves on the threshold of a major change in
188 the income of one of the spouses due to the collective efforts of both, that change shall be
189 considered in dividing the marital property and in determining the amount of alimony. If one
190 party's earning capacity has been greatly enhanced through the efforts of both parties during the
191 marriage, the court may make a compensating adjustment in dividing the marital property and
192 awarding alimony.

193 (6) (a) The court has continuing jurisdiction to make substantive changes and new
194 orders regarding alimony based on a substantial material change in circumstances not
195 foreseeable at the time of the divorce.

196 (b) The court may not modify alimony or issue a new order for alimony to address
197 needs of the recipient that did not exist at the time the decree was entered, unless the court
198 finds extenuating circumstances that justify that action.

199 (c) In determining alimony, the income of any subsequent spouse of the payor may not
200 be considered, except as provided in this Subsection (6)(c).

201 (i) The court may consider the subsequent spouse's financial ability to share living
202 expenses.

203 (ii) The court may consider the income of a subsequent spouse if the court finds that
204 the payor's improper conduct justifies that consideration.

205 (7) Alimony may not be ordered for a duration longer than the number of years that the
206 marriage existed unless, at any time prior to termination of alimony, the court finds extenuating
207 circumstances that justify the payment of alimony for a longer period of time.

208 (8) If a party requests, or the court orders, alimony in an amount in excess of \$1,000
209 per month for more than 60 months, the court shall require the requesting or recipient party to
210 present to the court, within 60 days after the order, a plan detailing a course of action the
211 recipient will undertake in order to become self-sufficient. The court may waive this
212 requirement if it makes specific findings that the recipient is not able to become self-sufficient.
213 Unless the court orders otherwise, alimony shall be terminated if a plan is not submitted.

214 (9) If the court determines that the recipient party has the ability to become
215 self-sufficient, it may order that the amount of alimony be decreased by a certain amount over a
216 specified time period to allow the recipient time to pursue training or education necessary to
217 become self-sufficient. The court shall take a number of factors into consideration when
218 determining how long it may take a recipient to become self-sufficient. The factors shall
219 include:

- 220 (a) the age of the recipient;
- 221 (b) the educational background of the recipient;
- 222 (c) whether there are minor children still in the recipient's household; and
- 223 (d) any difficulty the recipient might face in obtaining training or education necessary
224 to become self-sufficient.

225 (10) Unless a decree of divorce specifically provides otherwise, any order of the court
226 that a party pay alimony to the other party automatically terminates upon the remarriage of the
227 recipient or the death of either party. If the remarriage is annulled or found to be void ab initio,
228 payment of alimony shall resume if the payor is made a party to the action of annulment and
229 the payor's rights are determined.

230 (11) (a) Any order of the court that a party pay alimony to a former spouse may be
231 modified or terminated by the court if the party paying alimony establishes that the recipient is
232 cohabitating with another person.

233 (b) There is a rebuttable presumption that, if a person spends three or more nights in a
234 seven-day period at the residence of a non-related person, the two persons are cohabiting.

Legislative Review Note
as of 11-12-10 12:17 PM

Office of Legislative Research and General Counsel

FISCAL NOTE

S.B. 96, 2011 General Session

SHORT TITLE: **Alimony Amendments**

SPONSOR: **Hillyard, L.**

STATE OF UTAH

STATE GOVERNMENT (UCA 36-12-13(2)(b))

Enactment of this bill will increase certain costs in some alimony cases for the Courts. Beginning in FY 2012, ongoing Courts costs for these cases will be \$51,700 of General Fund.

STATE BUDGET DETAIL TABLE

	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013
Revenue	\$0	\$0	\$0
Expenditure:			
General Fund	\$0	\$51,700	\$51,700
Total Expenditure	\$0	\$51,700	\$51,700
Net Impact, All Funds (Rev.-Exp.)	\$0	(\$51,700)	(\$51,700)
Net Impact, General/Education Funds	\$0	(\$51,700)	(\$51,700)

LOCAL GOVERNMENTS (UCA 36-12-13(2)(c))

Enactment of this bill likely will not result in direct, measurable costs and/or benefits for local governments.

DIRECT EXPENDITURES BY UTAH RESIDENTS AND BUSINESSES (UCA 36-12-13(2)(d))

Enactment of this bill likely will not result in direct, measurable expenditures by Utah residents or businesses.