

PARENTAL KIDNAPPING AMENDMENTS

2023 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

Chief Sponsor: Jon Hawkins

Senate Sponsor: Stephanie Pitcher

LONG TITLE

General Description:

This bill enacts provisions relating to parental kidnapping.

Highlighted Provisions:

This bill:

- ▶ defines terms; and
- ▶ makes it a crime for a parent without visitation or custody rights to interfere with custody of a child.

Money Appropriated in this Bill:

None

Other Special Clauses:

None

Utah Code Sections Affected:

ENACTS:

76-5-301.2, Utah Code Annotated 1953

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

Section 1. Section **76-5-301.2** is enacted to read:

76-5-301.2. Parental kidnapping.

(1) (a) As used in this section:

(i) "Child" means an individual under 18 years old.

(ii) "Custody" means court-ordered physical custody of a child entered by a court.

29 (iii) "Parent" means an individual:
30 (A) recognized as a biological parent or adoptive parent; or
31 (B) that has established a parent-child relationship under Section [78B-15-201](#).
32 (iv) "Parent-time" means court-ordered parent-time or visitation entered by a court.
33 (b) Terms defined in Section [76-1-101.5](#) apply to this section.
34 (2) A parent commits parental kidnapping of the parent's child if the parent:
35 (a) takes, entices, conceals, detains, or withholds the child from an individual entitled
36 to custody of the child;
37 (b) intends to interfere with the custody of the child; and
38 (c) (i) has never had a right to physical custody of the child;
39 (ii) has never been granted parent-time with the child;
40 (iii) has had all rights to physical custody of the child terminated by a court; or
41 (iv) at the time of the parent's action under Subsection (2)(a), had parent-time with the
42 child terminated or suspended by a court.
43 (3) (a) A violation of Subsection (2) is a third degree felony.
44 (b) Notwithstanding Subsection (3)(a), a violation of Subsection (2) is a second degree
45 felony if, during the course of parental kidnapping, the parent removes, causes the removal, or
46 directs the removal of the child from the state.
47 (4) In addition to the affirmative defenses described in Section [76-5-305](#), it is an
48 affirmative defense to the crime of parental kidnapping that:
49 (a) the parent acted under a reasonable belief that the action described in Subsection
50 (2)(a) was:
51 (i) necessary to protect the child from imminent serious bodily injury, or death;
52 (ii) authorized by law; or
53 (iii) taken with the consent of:
54 (A) the individual entitled to custody of the child; or
55 (B) a custodian, guardian, caretaker, or other individual lawfully acting in place of the

56 individual entitled to custody of the child; or
57 (b) (i) the parent acted under a reasonable belief that the action described in Subsection
58 (2)(a) was necessary to protect the child from abuse, including sexual abuse; and
59 (ii) before taking the action described in Subsection (2)(a), the parent reports to law
60 enforcement the parent's intention to engage in the action and the basis for the parent's belief
61 described in Subsection (4)(b)(i).