



Fiscal Note
Legislative Council Staff
Nonpartisan Services for Colorado’s Legislature

SB 26-018: LEGAL PROTECTIONS FOR DIGNITY OF MINORS

Prime Sponsors:

Sen. Wallace; Kolker
Rep. Froelich; Garcia

Fiscal Analyst:

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Fiscal note status: The fiscal note reflects the introduced bill.

Summary Information

Overview. The bill requires a court to suppress name change petition records and requires a court to consider certain factors in custody proceedings.

Types of impacts. The bill is projected to affect the following areas on an ongoing basis starting in FY 2026-27:

- Minimal State Revenue
- Minimal State Workload

Appropriations. No appropriation is required.

Table 1
State Fiscal Impacts

Type of Impact	Budget Year FY 2026-27	Out Year FY 2027-28
State Revenue	\$0	\$0
State Expenditures	\$0	\$0
Transferred Funds	\$0	\$0
Change in TABOR Refunds	\$0	\$0
Change in State FTE	0.0 FTE	0.0 FTE

Summary of Legislation

The bill requires a court to suppress the court record for a name change petition if the petitioner is under 18 years old. The suppressed record may be used for administrative purposes by a court, but may not be published and can only be accessed by other persons with an affidavit of verbal consent from the petitioner. This process does not apply to name changes that are granted pursuant to an exception for a person adjudicated for a felony.

Additionally, the bill requires a court to consider whether a parent recognizes a child's identity as it relates to a protected class, subject to constitutional limitations. A court must consider this factor in the following proceedings:

- allocation of parental responsibilities;
- determination of parenting time; and
- allocation of decision-making responsibility.

Assumptions

The fiscal note assumes that the bill is prospective in nature and would not apply retroactively to past records of name change petitions. If the bill is meant to be retroactive, the fiscal impacts of the bill will be more significant than what is reflected in this fiscal note and require an appropriation.

State Revenue

Starting in FY 2026-27, state revenue may minimally decrease in the Department of Personnel and Administration (DPA). The Colorado State Archives (CSA) within the DPA is the official custodian of all state records, including civil court records related to name change petitions. The CSA provides copies of state records to members of the public for a fee.

If, in the future, members of the public request name change petition records that are suppressed by the bill, then under the bill these members of the public would be required to obtain a court order granting them access. The CSA estimates that most seekers of these records would not pursue a court order and thus would not proceed with paying a fee for a copy of the records. The fiscal note assumes that any decrease in state revenue will be minimal.

State Expenditures

Starting in FY 2026-27, the Judicial Department will have a minimal workload increase to update policies and procedures to ensure petitions are suppressed, which will include updating IT systems. Additionally, domestic relations cases may take longer. Overall, the workload increase does not require a change in appropriations.

Technical Note

The bill currently has two provisions that affect implementation of the bill. First, although the bill prohibits the publication of name change petitions, there are other Judicial Department publication requirements that are unchanged by the bill. Second, the safety clause in the bill results in an effective date that will make timely implementation difficult for the department and may result in noncompliance with certain provisions of the bill; a January 1, 2027, effective date would allow the department to train staff and make documentation updates.

Effective Date

The bill takes effect upon signature of the Governor, or upon becoming law without his signature.

State and Local Government Contacts

Counties

Judicial

Human Services