

# State of South Dakota

EIGHTY-SEVENTH SESSION  
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY, 2012

925T0542

## HOUSE BILL NO. 1251

Introduced by: Representative Kopp

1 FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to provide for the award of joint physical custody of  
2 children under certain circumstances.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA:

4 Section 1. That chapter 25-5 be amended by adding thereto a NEW SECTION to read as  
5 follows:

6 If joint legal custody is awarded, pursuant to § 25-5-7.1, there is a rebuttable presumption  
7 that both parents have joint physical custody of their children. Joint physical custody of the  
8 children is defined as equal time-sharing. The burden of overcoming the presumption rests on  
9 the parent challenging the presumption. The presumption may be overcome by demonstrating  
10 that joint physical custody would not be in the best interests of the children or by one parent  
11 waiving the presumption. The clear and convincing evidentiary standard shall be used in  
12 determining if the presumption has been overcome. Upon request by either parent, the court  
13 shall hold a hearing at which the parties may introduce evidence. The court shall issue findings  
14 of fact and conclusions of law upon request by either parent. The court shall require the parents  
15 to prepare and submit a parenting plan to the court reflecting parental preferences and agreement



1 on the matters of substance concerning the child's education, upbringing, religious training,  
2 medical, and dental care. The parents shall share decision-making authority and responsibility  
3 as to the important decisions affecting the child's welfare and if parents are unable to agree, and  
4 they shall submit to, and abide by, the decision of a preselected mediator.