

AN ACT

relating to authorizing a petitioner for a protective order to separate the petitioner's wireless telephone number from the respondent's wireless telephone service account.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Subchapter B, Chapter 85, Family Code, is amended by adding Section 85.0225 to read as follows:

Sec. 85.0225. SEPARATION OF WIRELESS TELEPHONE SERVICE ACCOUNT. (a) A petitioner who is the primary user of a wireless telephone number associated with the respondent's wireless telephone service account may submit to the court that renders a protective order for the petitioner under this chapter a request for the court to order:

(1) the separation of that wireless telephone number from the respondent's wireless telephone service account; and

(2) if applicable, the separation of each wireless telephone number primarily used by a child in the petitioner's care or custody.

(b) The request must include each wireless telephone number for which the petitioner requests separation.

(c) If the petitioner shows by a preponderance of the evidence that for each wireless telephone number listed in the request the petitioner or, if applicable, a child in the petitioner's care or custody is the primary user, the court shall

1 render a separate order directing the wireless telephone service
2 provider to transfer the billing responsibilities and rights to
3 each listed wireless telephone number to the petitioner.

4 (d) An order rendered under Subsection (c) must include:

5 (1) the name and billing wireless telephone number of
6 the wireless telephone service account holder;

7 (2) each wireless telephone number to be transferred;
8 and

9 (3) a statement requiring the wireless telephone
10 service provider to transfer to the petitioner all financial
11 responsibility for and the right to use each wireless telephone
12 number transferred.

13 (e) For purposes of Subsection (d)(3), financial
14 responsibility includes the monthly service costs associated with
15 any mobile device associated with the wireless telephone number.

16 (f) The court shall serve a copy of the order described by
17 Subsection (c) on the registered agent for the wireless telephone
18 service provider designated under Chapter 5, Business
19 Organizations Code.

20 (g) The court shall ensure that the contact information of
21 the petitioner is not provided to the respondent as the wireless
22 telephone service account holder in a proceeding under this
23 section.

24 SECTION 2. Title 12, Business & Commerce Code, is amended by
25 adding Chapter 608 to read as follows:

26 CHAPTER 608. SEPARATION OF WIRELESS TELEPHONE SERVICE ACCOUNTS

27 Sec. 608.001. SEPARATION BY COURT ORDER. (a) On receipt of

1 a court order issued under Section 85.0225, Family Code, a wireless
2 telephone service provider shall transfer to the petitioner named
3 in the order the use of each wireless telephone number listed in the
4 order.

5 (b) A wireless telephone service provider is not required to
6 complete the transfer described by Subsection (a) if, as soon as
7 practicable but not later than the fifth business day after the date
8 the provider receives the court order, the provider notifies the
9 petitioner that:

10 (1) the wireless telephone service account holder
11 named in the order has terminated the account;

12 (2) a difference in network technology would prevent
13 or impair the functionality of a device on a network if the transfer
14 occurs;

15 (3) the transfer would cause a geographic or other
16 limitation on the network or service provision to the petitioner;
17 or

18 (4) another technological or operational issue would
19 prevent or impair the use of the wireless telephone number if the
20 transfer occurs.

21 (c) A wireless telephone service provider may charge the
22 petitioner routine and customary fees and impose routine and
23 customary requirements for establishing a wireless telephone
24 service account, including requiring the petitioner to provide
25 proof of identification, financial information, and customer
26 references.

27 (d) In imposing and collecting fees under Subsection (c),

1 the wireless telephone service provider may not:

2 (1) impose a penalty for early termination of a
3 contract in connection with separating a wireless telephone service
4 account under this section;

5 (2) hold the petitioner responsible for any
6 outstanding balance of the respondent's wireless telephone service
7 account or require payment of the outstanding balance as a
8 condition of separating a wireless telephone service account under
9 this section; or

10 (3) charge a fee for transferring the wireless
11 telephone number in addition to the usual and customary fees for
12 establishing a wireless telephone service account.

13 (e) If further action is required by the petitioner to
14 complete the transfer process, the wireless telephone service
15 provider shall make a description of the necessary procedures
16 available in writing.

17 (f) A wireless telephone service provider or an officer,
18 employee, or agent of the provider is not subject to civil liability
19 for actions taken under this section as required by a court order
20 rendered under Section 85.0225, Family Code.

21 SECTION 3. The change in law made by this Act applies only
22 to a petition for a protective order filed on or after the effective
23 date of this Act.

24 SECTION 4. This Act takes effect September 1, 2021.

President of the Senate

Speaker of the House

I certify that H.B. No. 1372 was passed by the House on April 9, 2021, by the following vote: Yeas 144, Nays 0, 2 present, not voting.

Chief Clerk of the House

I certify that H.B. No. 1372 was passed by the Senate on May 19, 2021, by the following vote: Yeas 31, Nays 0.

Secretary of the Senate

APPROVED: _____

Date

Governor