



## 104TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

### State of Illinois

2025 and 2026

SB2711

Introduced 10/14/2025, by Sen. Michael E. Hastings

#### SYNOPSIS AS INTRODUCED:

750 ILCS 5/506.1 new

Amends the Illinois Marriage and Dissolution of Marriage Act. Requires the Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts, in consultation with the Department of Human Services and the Department of Children and Family Services, to conduct a comprehensive study on the use, cost, and accessibility of guardian ad litem services in family law proceedings. Provides that the purpose of the study shall be to evaluate the impact of guardian ad litem appointments on litigants, with particular focus on low-income families, and to identify whether current practices promote fairness, access to justice, and the best interests of children. Requires that the Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts submit a final report to the General Assembly and the Governor no later than December 31, 2026. Requires that the report shall include findings, analysis, and recommendations, including potential statutory language to update Illinois law governing guardian ad litem appointments, costs, and funding structures. Repeals the new provisions on January 1, 2028.

LRB104 15672 JRC 28844 b

1 AN ACT concerning civil law.

2 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,**  
3 **represented in the General Assembly:**

4 Section 5. The Illinois Marriage and Dissolution of  
5 Marriage Act is amended by adding Section 506.1 as follows:

6 (750 ILCS 5/506.1 new)

7 Sec. 506.1. Study of guardian ad litem costs and effects  
8 in family law proceedings.

9 (a) The Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts, in  
10 consultation with the Department of Human Services and the  
11 Department of Children and Family Services, shall conduct a  
12 comprehensive study on the use, cost, and accessibility of  
13 guardian ad litem services in family law proceedings.

14 (b) The purpose of the study shall be to evaluate the  
15 impact of guardian ad litem appointments on litigants, with  
16 particular focus on low-income families, and to identify  
17 whether current practices promote fairness, access to justice,  
18 and the best interests of children.

19 (c) The study shall include, but not be limited to, the  
20 following:

21 (1) A review of the average costs of guardian ad litem  
22 services across Illinois counties and an assessment of the  
23 financial burden placed on low-income litigants.

1           (2) An examination of whether the cost of guardian ad  
2           litem services creates barriers to participation in family  
3           law proceedings or results in inequitable treatment of  
4           parties with differing financial means.

5           (3) An evaluation of the role and benefits of guardian  
6           ad litem appointments in ensuring that the voice and best  
7           interests of the child are effectively represented.

8           (4) Identification of potential shortcomings,  
9           including concerns of affordability, lack of transparency  
10           in billing practices, and whether guardian ad litem  
11           recommendations disproportionately affect litigants based  
12           on income status.

13           (5) An analysis of the structure, funding, and  
14           regulation of other states' guardian ad litem programs,  
15           with particular attention to cost allocation models that  
16           reduce burdens on low-income parties.

17           (6) An assessment of whether establishing a State  
18           subsidized guardian ad litem fund in Illinois would assist  
19           in improving family law cases involving low-income  
20           litigants, improve access to justice, and promote more  
21           equitable outcomes.

22           (7) Recommendations regarding potential statutory or  
23           administrative reforms to balance the benefits of guardian  
24           ad litem representation with equitable cost structures  
25           that ensure no child is disadvantaged because of a  
26           parent's financial circumstances.

1       (d) The study shall incorporate input from litigants with  
2       experience in the matters covered in the study, judges, family  
3       law practitioners, guardians ad litem, parent advocacy groups,  
4       and child welfare experts.

5       (e) The Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts shall  
6       submit a final report to the General Assembly and the Governor  
7       no later than December 31, 2026. The report shall include  
8       findings, analyses, and recommendations, including potential  
9       statutory language, to update Illinois law governing guardian  
10      ad litem appointments, costs, and funding structures in family  
11      law proceedings.

12      (f) This Section is repealed on January 1, 2028.