
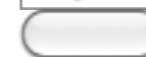


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VIEW

BC's ancient Family Law legislation is getting overhauled.

CKNW News Talk 980

Sean Leslie | Email news tips to Sean
11/14/2011

The Provincial Government has introduced legislation overhauling BC's family law act for the first time since it was introduced in 1978.

The changes have been in the works for five years now.

Nancy Carter with the Attorney General's ministry says families look very different from what they looked like back in 1978.

The changes will ensure that the best interest of the child is the only consideration to be used in deciding access and any other matters relating to kids after a divorce.

New tools will encourage mediation through family law centres instead of the courts.

50-50 property division rules will also be extended to common law relationships for the first time.

There will be tougher penalties for violations of access orders.

And the new law will clarify parental status in the case of assisted reproduction.

Tracy Porteous with the Ending Violence Association says the changes will make women and children safer in trying to leave high-risk relationships.

Porteous says the legislation has the potential to save lives "the fact that we're looking at safety across the board in the definition and in the best interests of the child, the fact that we're giving the judiciary and the family court justice councillors information about domestic violence lethality that none of these people had before."

Porteous says police will now take protection orders more seriously since they will carry criminal code penalties.

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