

HOUSE BILL 503

**57TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2025**

INTRODUCED BY

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AN ACT

RELATING TO DOMESTIC RELATIONS; PROVIDING THAT PARENTS PARTICIPATING IN A DOMESTIC RELATIONS MEDIATION PROGRAM SHALL HAVE THE RIGHT TO BE REPRESENTED BY COUNSEL AND HAVE COUNSEL PRESENT AT ADVISORY CONSULTATIONS, PRIORITY CONSULTATIONS, EVALUATIONS OR MEDIATION; MAKING CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO:

SECTION 1. Section 40-12-5 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 1987, Chapter 153, Section 5) is amended to read:

"40-12-5. DOMESTIC RELATIONS MEDIATION PROGRAM.--

A. A judicial district may establish a domestic relations mediation program by court rule approved by the supreme court. The district court may employ or contract with a counselor to provide consultations, evaluations and mediation in domestic relations cases involving children.

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B. Parents participating in a domestic relations mediation program shall have the right to be represented by counsel and have counsel present at advisory consultations, priority consultations, evaluations or mediation.

~~[B.]~~ C. Parents may request of the court the services of the domestic relations mediation program for consultations, ~~[evaluation]~~ evaluations or mediation. Parents shall enter the program when ordered to do so by the court.

~~[C.]~~ D. Parents shall pay the cost of the domestic relations mediation program pursuant to a sliding fee scale approved by the supreme court. The sliding fee scale shall be based on ability to pay for the specific service rendered by the counselor. The fees shall be paid to the district court to be credited to the fund."