
By Mr. Atkins, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 534) of Chester G. Atkins for legislation relative to the protection of children in divorce actions. The Judiciary.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year One Thousand Nine Hundred and Seventy-Four.

AN ACT RELATIVE TO THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN IN
DIVORCE ACTIONS.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 Chapter 208 of the General Laws is hereby amended by
2 inserting after Section 32 the following sections:

3 *Section 32A.* In any proceedings for divorce in which agree-
4 ment has not been made at the time the libel is filed for the
5 support, custody, and visitation of the child or children of the
6 marriage, such child or children shall be represented by
7 separate counsel to be appointed by the court. Such counsel
8 shall be called Children's Counsel and shall be charged with
9 guarding the rights of children during contested divorce
10 action. The amount of compensation for the services of said
11 Children's Counsel shall be determined by the court. The
12 court shall assess counsel fees on one or both parties. Where
13 parties are indigent, fees of such counsel will be paid by the
14 court in such manner as provisions are made for guardians
15 ad litem under Section fifty-six of Chapter two hundred and
16 fifteen of the General Laws.

17 *Section 32B.* At the time of divorce proceedings no child or
18 children of the litigants may be interviewed by counsel for
19 either parent without prior approval of the court.

