

Act No. 246
Public Acts of 2020
Approved by the Governor
November 5, 2020
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November 5, 2020
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**STATE OF MICHIGAN
100TH LEGISLATURE
REGULAR SESSION OF 2020**

Introduced by Rep. Lightner

ENROLLED HOUSE BILL No. 6294

AN ACT to amend 1998 PA 386, entitled “An act to codify, revise, consolidate, and classify aspects of the law relating to wills and intestacy, relating to the administration and distribution of estates of certain individuals, relating to trusts, and relating to the affairs of certain individuals under legal incapacity; to provide for the powers and procedures of the court that has jurisdiction over these matters; to provide for the validity and effect of certain transfers, contracts, and deposits that relate to death; to provide procedures to facilitate enforcement of certain trusts; and to repeal acts and parts of acts,” by amending sections 2502, 3206, 5501, and 5506 (MCL 700.2502, 700.3206, 700.5501, and 700.5506), section 3206 as amended by 2016 PA 57, section 5501 as amended by 2012 PA 141, and section 5506 as amended by 2008 PA 41, and by adding sections 1202 and 5108a.

The People of the State of Michigan enact:

Sec. 1202. (1) Notwithstanding anything in this act to the contrary, the act of signing or witnessing the execution of a document or instrument under this act, including, but not limited to, a will under article II, a disclaimer under section 2903, a funeral representative designation, a parental appointment of a guardian of a minor under section 5202, an appointment of a guardian of a legally incapacitated individual under section 5301, a durable power of attorney under section 5501, or a patient advocate designation is satisfied by use of a 2-way real-time audiovisual technology if all of the following requirements are met:

(a) The 2-way real-time audiovisual technology must allow direct, contemporaneous interaction by sight and sound between the signatory and the witnesses.

(b) The interaction between the signatory and the witnesses must be recorded and preserved by the signatory or the signatory’s designee for a period of at least 3 years.

(c) The signatory must affirmatively represent either that the signatory is physically situated in this state, or that the signatory is physically located outside the geographic boundaries of this state and that either of the following apply:

(i) The document or instrument is intended for filing with or relates to a matter before a court, governmental entity, public official, or other entity subject to the jurisdiction of this state.

(ii) The document or instrument involves property located in the territorial jurisdiction of this state or a transaction substantially connected to this state.

(d) The signatory must affirmatively state during his or her interaction with the witnesses on the 2-way real-time audiovisual technology what document they are executing.

(e) Each title page and signature page of the document or instrument being witnessed must be shown to the witnesses on the 2-way real-time audiovisual technology in a manner clearly legible to the witnesses, and every page of the document or instrument must be numbered to reflect both the page number of the document or instrument and the total number of pages of the document or instrument.

(f) Each act of signing the document or instrument must be captured sufficiently up close on the 2-way real-time audiovisual technology for the witnesses to observe.

(g) The signatory or the signatory's designee must transmit by facsimile, mail, or electronic means a legible copy of the entire signed document or instrument directly to the witnesses within 72 hours after it is executed.

(h) Within 72 hours after receipt, the witnesses must sign the transmitted copy of the document or instrument as a witness and return the signed copy of the document or instrument to the signatory or the signatory's designee by facsimile, mail, or electronic means.

(i) The document or instrument is either of the following:

(i) In writing.

(ii) A record that is readable as text at the time of signing.

(2) The rights or interests of a person that relies in good faith and without actual notice that a document or instrument described in subsection (1) was executed on or after April 30, 2020 and before January 1, 2021, but was not executed in accordance with subsection (1) are not impaired, challenged, or terminated on that basis alone.

(3) Compliance with this section is presumed. A person challenging a document or instrument described in and executed in accordance with subsection (1) may overcome the presumption by establishing, by clear and convincing evidence, that the signatory or a witness intentionally failed to comply with the requirements under subsection (1).

(4) This section applies to a document or instrument described in subsection (1) executed on or after April 30, 2020 and before January 1, 2021.

(5) As used in this section:

(a) "Electronic" means relating to technology having electrical, digital, magnetic, wireless, optical, electromagnetic, or similar capabilities.

(b) "Record" means information that is inscribed on a tangible medium or that is stored in an electronic or other medium and is retrievable in perceivable form.

(c) "Sign" or "signing" means with present intent to authenticate or adopt a record to do either of the following:

(i) Execute or adopt a tangible symbol.

(ii) Affix to or logically associate with the record an electronic symbol or process.

Sec. 2502. (1) Subject to section 1202, and except as provided in subsection (2) and in sections 2503, 2506, and 2513, a will is valid only if it is all of the following:

(a) In writing.

(b) Signed by the testator or in the testator's name by some other individual in the testator's conscious presence and by the testator's direction.

(c) Signed by at least 2 individuals, each of whom signed within a reasonable time after he or she witnessed either the signing of the will as described in subdivision (b) or the testator's acknowledgment of that signature or acknowledgment of the will.

(2) A will that does not comply with subsection (1) is valid as a holographic will, whether or not witnessed, if it is dated, and if the testator's signature and the document's material portions are in the testator's handwriting.

(3) Intent that the document constitutes a testator's will can be established by extrinsic evidence, including, for a holographic will, portions of the document that are not in the testator's handwriting.

Sec. 3206. (1) Subject to 1953 PA 181, MCL 52.201 to 52.216, part 28 and article 10 of the public health code, 1978 PA 368, MCL 333.2801 to 333.2899 and 333.10101 to 333.11101, and subsection (12), a funeral representative designated under subsection (2), a person with priority under subsections (3) to (5) or a person acting under subsection (6), (7), (8), or (9) is presumed to have the right and power to make decisions about funeral arrangements and the handling, disposition, or disinterment of a decedent's body, including, but not limited to, decisions about cremation, and the right to retrieve from the funeral establishment and possess cremated remains of the decedent immediately after cremation. The handling, disposition, or disinterment of a body must be under the supervision of a person licensed to practice mortuary science in this state.

(2) Subject to section 1202, and except as otherwise provided in this subsection and subject to the priority in subsection (3), an individual 18 years of age or older who is of sound mind at the time a funeral representative designation is made may designate in writing another individual who is 18 years of age or older and who is of sound mind to have the rights and powers under subsection (1). All of the following apply to a funeral representative designation under this subsection:

(a) For purposes of this section and sections 3206a and 3206b, an individual who is named in a funeral representative designation to have the rights and powers described in subsection (1) is known as a funeral representative and an individual who makes a funeral representative designation is known as a declarant.

(b) A funeral representative designation under this subsection must be in writing, dated, and signed voluntarily by the declarant or signed by a notary public on the declarant's behalf under section 33 of the Michigan law on notarial acts, 2003 PA 238, MCL 55.293. A funeral representative designation may be included in the declarant's will, patient advocate designation, or other writing. If a funeral representative designation is contained in an individual's will, the will is not required to be admitted to probate for the funeral representative designation to be valid. A funeral representative designation must be 1 or both of the following:

(i) Signed in the presence of and signed by 2 witnesses. A witness under this section may not be the funeral representative or an individual described in subdivision (c)(ii) to (iv). A witness shall not sign the funeral representative designation unless the declarant appears to be of sound mind and under no duress, fraud, or undue influence.

(ii) Acknowledged by the declarant before a notary public, who endorses on the funeral representative designation a certificate of the acknowledgment and the true date of taking the acknowledgment.

(c) The following individuals may not act as a funeral representative for the declarant unless the individual is the surviving spouse or is a relative of the declarant:

(i) An officer, partner, member, shareholder, owner, representative, or employee of a funeral establishment that will provide services to the declarant.

(ii) A health professional, or an employee of or volunteer at a health facility or veterans facility, who provided medical treatment or nursing care to the declarant during the final illness or immediately before the declarant's death, or a partner, member, shareholder, owner, or representative of the health facility where medical treatment or nursing care was provided.

(iii) An officer, partner, member, shareholder, owner, representative, or employee of a cemetery at which the declarant's body will be interred, entombed, or inurned.

(iv) An officer, partner, member, shareholder, owner, representative, or employee of a crematory that will provide the declarant's cremation services.

(3) The following have the rights and powers under subsection (1) in the following order of priority:

(a) If the decedent was a service member at the time of the decedent's death, a person designated to direct the disposition of the service member's remains according to a statute of the United States or regulation, policy, directive, or instruction of the Department of Defense.

(b) A funeral representative designated under subsection (2).

(c) The surviving spouse.

(d) Subject to subdivision (e), the individual or individuals 18 years of age or older in the following order of priority:

(i) The decedent's children.

(ii) The decedent's grandchildren.

(iii) The decedent's parents.

(iv) The decedent's grandparents.

(v) The decedent's siblings.

(vi) A descendant of the decedent's parents who first notifies the funeral establishment in possession of the decedent's body of the descendant's decision to exercise his or her rights under subsection (1).

(vii) A descendant of the decedent's grandparents who first notifies the funeral establishment in possession of the decedent's body of the descendant's decision to exercise his or her rights under subsection (1).

(e) If an individual described in subdivision (d) had the right to dispose of the decedent's body under subsection (1), but affirmatively declined to exercise his or her right or failed to exercise his or her right within 48 hours after receiving notification of the decedent's death, the individual does not have the right to make a decision about the disinterment of the decedent's body or possession of the decedent's cremated remains.

(4) If the individual or individuals with the highest priority as determined under subsection (3) cannot be located after a good-faith effort to contact and inform them of the decedent's death, affirmatively decline to exercise their rights or powers under subsection (1), or fail to exercise their rights or powers under subsection (1) within 48 hours after receiving notification of the decedent's death, the rights and powers under subsection (1) may be exercised by the individual or individuals in the same order of priority under subsection (3). If the individual or each of the individuals in an order of priority as determined under this subsection similarly affirmatively declines or fails to exercise his or her rights or powers within 48 hours after receiving notification that he or she may act under this subsection or cannot be located, the rights or powers under subsection (1) pass to the next order of priority under subsection (3). For purposes of this subsection only, "exercise their rights or powers under subsection (1)" means notifying the funeral establishment in possession of the decedent's body of an individual's decision to exercise his or her rights or powers under subsection (1).

(5) If 2 or more individuals share the rights and powers described in subsection (1) as determined under subsection (3) or (4), the rights and powers must be exercised as decided by a majority of the individuals who can be located after reasonable efforts. If a majority cannot agree, any of the individuals may file a petition under section 3207.

(6) If no individual described in subsections (3) and (4) exists, exercises the rights or powers under subsection (1), or can be located after a sufficient attempt as described in subsection (10), and if subsection (7) does not apply, then the personal representative or nominated personal representative may exercise the rights and powers under subsection (1), either before or after his or her appointment.

(7) If no individual described in subsections (3) and (4) exists, exercises the rights or powers under subsection (1), or can be located after a sufficient attempt as described in subsection (10), and if the decedent was under a guardianship at the time of death, the guardian may exercise the rights and powers under subsection (1) and may make a claim for the reimbursement of burial expenses as provided in section 5216 or 5315, as applicable.

(8) If no individual described in subsections (3) and (4) exists, exercises the rights or powers under subsection (1), or can be located after a sufficient attempt as described in subsection (10), if the decedent died intestate, and if subsection (7) does not apply, a special fiduciary appointed under section 1309 or a special personal representative appointed under section 3614(c) may exercise the rights and powers under subsection (1).

(9) If there is no person under subsections (3) to (8) to exercise the rights and powers under subsection (1), 1 of the following, as applicable, shall exercise the rights and powers under subsection (1):

(a) Unless subdivision (b) applies, the medical examiner for the county where the decedent was domiciled at the time of his or her death.

(b) If the decedent was incarcerated in a state correctional facility at the time of his or her death, the director of the department of corrections or the designee of the director.

(10) An attempt to locate a person described in subsection (3) or (4) is sufficient if a reasonable attempt is made in good faith by a family member, personal representative, or nominated personal representative of the decedent to contact the person at his or her last known address, telephone number, or electronic mail address.

(11) This section does not void or otherwise affect an anatomical gift made under part 101 of the public health code, 1978 PA 368, MCL 333.10101 to 333.10123.

(12) An individual who has been criminally charged with the intentional killing of the decedent shall not exercise a right under subsection (1) while the charges are pending.

(13) Except as otherwise provided in this subsection, a person who has the rights and powers under subsection (1) and who exercises the right over the disposition of the decedent's body must ensure payment for the costs of the disposition through a trust, insurance, a commitment by another person, a prepaid contract under the prepaid funeral and cemetery sales act, 1986 PA 255, MCL 328.211 to 328.235, or other effective and binding means. To the extent payment is not ensured under this subsection, the person described in this subsection is liable for the costs of the disposition. This subsection does not apply to a person who exercises the rights and powers under subsection (1) as provided in subsection (8) or (9).

(14) As used in this section:

(a) "Armed forces" means the Army, Air Force, Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, or other military force designated by Congress as part of the Armed Forces of the United States.

(b) "Health facility" means that term as defined in section 5653 of the public health code, 1978 PA 368, MCL 333.5653.

(c) "Health professional" means that term as defined in section 5883 of the public health code, 1978 PA 368, MCL 333.5883.

(d) "Medical treatment" means that term as defined in section 5653 of the public health code, 1978 PA 368, MCL 333.5653.

(e) "Michigan National Guard" means that term as defined in section 105 of the Michigan military act, 1967 PA 150, MCL 32.505.

(f) "Nominated personal representative" means a person nominated to act as personal representative in a will that the nominated person reasonably believes to be the valid will of the decedent.

(g) "Service member" means a member of the armed forces, a reserve branch of the armed forces, or the Michigan National Guard.

Sec. 5108a. (1) Beginning April 30, 2020, a guardian, guardian ad litem, or visitor may satisfy any requirement concerning a visit with an individual, including, but not limited to, a visit in the physical presence of a person under this act by instead conferring with the individual via 2-way real-time audiovisual technology that allows direct, contemporaneous interaction by sight and sound between the individual being visited and the guardian, guardian ad litem, or visitor.

(2) This section does not apply after December 31, 2020.

Sec. 5501. (1) A durable power of attorney is a power of attorney by which a principal designates another as the principal's attorney-in-fact in a writing that contains the words "This power of attorney is not affected by the principal's subsequent disability or incapacity, or by the lapse of time", or "This power of attorney is effective upon the disability or incapacity of the principal", or similar words showing the principal's intent that the authority conferred is exercisable notwithstanding the principal's subsequent disability or incapacity and, unless the power states a termination time, notwithstanding the lapse of time since the execution of the instrument.

(2) Subject to section 1202, a durable power of attorney under this section must be dated and signed voluntarily by the principal or signed by a notary public on the principal's behalf under section 33 of the Michigan law on notarial acts, 2003 PA 238, MCL 55.293. The durable power of attorney must be 1 or both of the following:

(a) Signed in the presence of 2 witnesses, neither of whom is the attorney-in-fact, and both of whom also sign the durable power of attorney.

(b) Acknowledged by the principal before a notary public, who endorses on the durable power of attorney a certificate of that acknowledgment and the true date of taking the acknowledgment.

(3) An attorney-in-fact designated and acting under a durable power of attorney has the authority, rights, responsibilities, and limitations as provided by law with respect to a durable power of attorney, including, but not limited to, all of the following:

(a) Except as provided in the durable power of attorney, the attorney-in-fact shall act in accordance with the standards of care applicable to fiduciaries exercising powers under a durable power of attorney.

(b) The attorney-in-fact shall take reasonable steps to follow the instructions of the principal.

(c) Upon request of the principal, the attorney-in-fact shall keep the principal informed of the attorney-in-fact's actions. The attorney-in-fact shall provide an accounting to the principal upon request of the principal, to a conservator or guardian appointed on behalf of the principal upon request of the guardian or conservator, or pursuant to judicial order.

(d) The attorney-in-fact shall not make a gift of all or any part of the principal's assets, unless provided for in the durable power of attorney or by judicial order.

(e) Unless provided in the durable power of attorney or by judicial order, the attorney-in-fact, while acting as attorney-in-fact, shall not create an account or other asset in joint tenancy between the principal and the attorney-in-fact.

(f) The attorney-in-fact shall maintain records of the attorney-in-fact's actions on behalf of the principal, including transactions, receipts, disbursements, and investments.

(g) The attorney-in-fact may be liable for any damage or loss to the principal, and may be subject to any other available remedy, for breach of fiduciary duty owed to the principal. In the durable power of attorney, the principal may exonerate the attorney-in-fact of any liability to the principal for breach of fiduciary duty except for actions committed by the attorney-in-fact in bad faith or with reckless indifference. An exoneration clause is not enforceable if inserted as the result of an abuse by the attorney-in-fact of a fiduciary or confidential relationship to the principal.

(h) The attorney-in-fact may receive reasonable compensation for the attorney-in-fact's services if provided for in the durable power of attorney.

(4) Before exercising authority under a durable power of attorney, an attorney-in-fact shall execute an acknowledgment of the attorney-in-fact's responsibilities that contains all of the substantive statements in substantially the following form:

I, _____, have been appointed as attorney-in-fact for _____, the principal, under a durable power of attorney dated _____. By signing this document, I acknowledge that if and when I act as attorney-in-fact, all of the following apply:

(a) Except as provided in the durable power of attorney, I must act in accordance with the standards of care applicable to fiduciaries acting under durable powers of attorney.

(b) I must take reasonable steps to follow the instructions of the principal.

(c) Upon request of the principal, I must keep the principal informed of my actions. I must provide an accounting to the principal upon request of the principal, to a guardian or conservator appointed on behalf of the principal upon the request of that guardian or conservator, or pursuant to judicial order.

(d) I cannot make a gift from the principal's property, unless provided for in the durable power of attorney or by judicial order.

(e) Unless provided in the durable power of attorney or by judicial order, I, while acting as attorney-in-fact, cannot create an account or other asset in joint tenancy between the principal and me.

(f) I must maintain records of my transactions as attorney-in-fact, including receipts, disbursements, and investments.

(g) I may be liable for any damage or loss to the principal, and may be subject to any other available remedy, for breach of fiduciary duty owed to the principal. In the durable power of attorney, the principal may exonerate me of any liability to the principal for breach of fiduciary duty except for actions committed by me in bad faith or with reckless indifference. An exoneration clause is not enforceable if inserted as the result of my abuse of a fiduciary or confidential relationship to the principal.

(h) I may be subject to civil or criminal penalties if I violate my duties to the principal.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

(5) A third party is not liable to the principal or any other person because the third party has complied in good faith with instructions from an attorney-in-fact named in a durable power of attorney whether or not the attorney-in-fact has executed an acknowledgment that complies with subsection (4). A third party is not liable to the principal or any other person if the third party requires an attorney-in-fact named in a durable power of attorney to execute an acknowledgment that complies with subsection (4) before recognizing the durable power of attorney.

(6) An attorney-in-fact's failure to comply with subsection (4) does not affect the attorney-in-fact's authority to act for the principal as provided for in the durable power of attorney and does not affect the attorney-in-fact's responsibilities or potential liability to the principal.

(7) Subsections (2) to (6) do not apply to any of the following:

(a) A durable power of attorney executed before October 1, 2012.

(b) A delegation under section 5103 or a similar power of attorney created by a parent or guardian regarding the care, custody, or property of a minor child or ward.

(c) A patient advocate designation or a similar power of attorney relating to the principal's health care.

(d) A durable power of attorney that is coupled with an interest in the subject matter of the power.

(e) A durable power of attorney that is contained in or is part of a loan agreement, security agreement, pledge agreement, escrow agreement, or other similar transaction.

(f) A durable power of attorney in connection with a transaction with a joint venture, limited liability company, partnership, limited partnership, limited liability partnership, corporation, condominium, condominium association, condominium trust, or similar entity, including, without limitation, a voting agreement, voting trust, joint venture agreement, royalty agreement, license agreement, proxy, shareholder's agreement, operating agreement, partnership agreement, management agreement, subscription agreement, certification of incorporation, bylaws, or other agreement that primarily relates to such an entity.

(g) A power of attorney given primarily for a business or a commercial purpose.

(h) A power of attorney created on a form prescribed by a government or a governmental subdivision, agency, or instrumentality for a governmental purpose.

Sec. 5506. (1) An individual 18 years of age or older who is of sound mind at the time a patient advocate designation is made may designate in writing another individual who is 18 years of age or older to exercise powers concerning care, custody, and medical or mental health treatment decisions for the individual making the patient advocate designation. An individual making a patient advocate designation under this subsection may include in the patient advocate designation the authority for the designated individual to make an anatomical gift of all or part of the individual's body in accordance with this act and part 101 of the public health code, 1978 PA 368, MCL 333.10101 to 333.10123. The authority regarding an anatomical gift under this subsection may include the authority to resolve a conflict between the terms of the advance health care directive and the administration of means necessary to ensure the medical suitability of the anatomical gift.

(2) For purposes of this section and sections 5507 to 5515, an individual who is named in a patient advocate designation to exercise powers concerning care, custody, and medical or mental health treatment decisions is known as a patient advocate and an individual who makes a patient advocate designation is known as a patient.

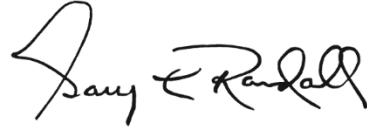
(3) Subject to section 1202, a patient advocate designation under this section must be in writing, signed, witnessed as provided in subsection (4), dated, executed voluntarily, and, before its implementation, made part of the patient's medical record with, as applicable, the patient's attending physician, the mental health professional providing treatment to the patient, the facility where the patient is located, or the community mental health services program or hospital that is providing mental health services to the patient. The patient advocate designation must include a statement that the authority conferred under this section is exercisable only when the patient is unable to participate in medical or mental health treatment decisions, as applicable, and, in the case of the authority to make an anatomical gift as described in subsection (1), a statement that the authority remains exercisable after the patient's death.

(4) Subject to section 1202, a patient advocate designation under this section must be executed in the presence of and signed by 2 witnesses. A witness under this section shall not be the patient's spouse, parent, child,


grandchild, sibling, presumptive heir, known devisee at the time of the witnessing, physician, or patient advocate or an employee of a life or health insurance provider for the patient, of a health facility that is treating the patient, or of a home for the aged as defined in section 20106 of the public health code, 1978 PA 368, MCL 333.20106, where the patient resides, or of a community mental health services program or hospital that is providing mental health services to the patient. A witness shall not sign the patient advocate designation unless the patient appears to be of sound mind and under no duress, fraud, or undue influence.

(5) As used in this section, "community mental health services program or hospital" means a community mental health services program as that term is defined in section 100a of the mental health code, 1974 PA 258, MCL 330.1100a, or a hospital as that term is defined in section 100b of the mental health code, 1974 PA 258, MCL 330.1100b.

This act is ordered to take immediate effect.



Clerk of the House of Representatives



Secretary of the Senate

Approved _____

Governor