



## FAMILY LAW / DOMESTIC RELATIONS

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# Family Law / Domestic Relations

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The Family Law and Domestic Relations Practice Group at Hall Booth Smith, P.C. is dedicated to providing you with excellent legal advice and zealous legal representation. We realize there is no one-size-fits-all approach when it comes to your legal issues. This is why we focus on the individuals involved and the issues that are important to them. We will guide you through the laws that govern domestic relations and fight tirelessly for your legal rights. The attorneys at HBS share the same goal as you—to make sure your interests and the interests of your family are protected.

The attorneys at HBS focus on the following areas:

- Adoption
- Child Custody and Support
- Divorce
- Domestic Violence
- Military Family Cases
- Modification of Support Orders

- Prenuptial Agreements
- Termination of Parental Rights

### Adoptions and Termination of Parental Rights

Many couples or individuals hope to build a family through adoption. Adopting a child can be a long process that takes an emotional toll on all parties involved. The laws vary depending on whether you are adopting a child born in Georgia, another state, or in a foreign country. The attorneys at HBS will guide you through these laws to make sure your dream of becoming a parent is a reality.

The goal of Georgia law is to make sure the best interests of the child is paramount in any court decision. With that in mind, Georgia law allows the termination of parental rights if it is in the best interest of the child. Examples of when a biological parent's rights may be terminated include abandonment, abuse or neglect, mental illness or deficiency of the parent, alcohol or drug abuse, and incarceration.

We will fight for you if you are seeking to terminate the rights of a biological parent in an adoption proceeding or if the biological parent has neglected or abused a child. Our mission is to make sure the rights of the child are protected in all adoptions or parental termination cases.

### Divorce, Child Custody

Separation. Custody disputes. Distribution of assets. Divorce. These words carry with them strong emotions and legal implications. You need an attorney who understands how to navigate the ins and outs of all legal aspects of domestic relations.

There is one key to successfully representing a client going through a divorce—listening to your wants and needs. Having counseled countless clients, the attorneys at HBS understand that the decisions facing you are serious and deserve our full attention. With that in mind, our legal representation is focused on the individuals involved and the issues that are important to them.

No one begins a marriage planning for it to end. But when it does, it is a painful experience for all involved—husband, wife, father, mother, son, and daughter. The pain and turmoil, combined with a lack of knowledge about the process, can cause you to make poor decisions that can adversely affect you for years to come.

Our belief is that the best way to shorten the pain of our clients and their families is to educate them about their rights following separation and divorce. We will guide you through the laws that govern prenuptial agreements, custody, child support, spousal support, and division of assets. While resolution outside the courtroom is always preferable, we are prepared to pursue judicial rulings in the cases where it is the best, or only, option. If you are going through a divorce, or contemplating separation, you need to consult an attorney who will work to protect your rights.

### Prenuptial Agreements

Prenuptial agreements are contracts between couples contemplating marriage that deal with the distribution of assets in the event of a divorce. They are valid and enforceable in Georgia so long as they were not obtained through fraud or

misrepresentation, they are fair, and both parties are still in the same or similar circumstances as when they signed the prenuptial agreement. There are two keys to valid prenuptial agreements: full disclosure of financial assets and making sure you give your future spouse enough time to read it. If you are being asked to sign a prenuptial agreement, you should have an independent attorney review it to make sure your legal interests are fully protected.

If you are considering a prenuptial agreement or being asked to sign one, the attorneys at HBS have the experience to protect your assets and your legal rights.

#### Modifications of Support Orders

In today's economy, many parents who have been ordered to pay child support are facing tough times. Your hours have been cut, your income has been slashed, you have to take unpaid furloughs, or the worst scenario—you have lost your job. You are left with a tough decision: honoring a court order and falling further into debt or seeking a modification that ultimately will reduce your financial obligation to your children.

Georgia law allows modifications in child support orders in certain instances. A modification may be granted if you have experienced a substantial change in income, which includes being laid off, having your weekly hours reduced by your employer, participating in an organized strike, or having to cut back on your hours due to a serious medical condition.

The attorneys at HBS will work on your behalf whether you are seeking a modification or arguing against one. Our goal is the same as yours—to make sure your interests and the interests of your children are protected.

#### Military Family Cases

Are you in the military or the spouse of a soldier and contemplating divorce? HBS understands the sacrifices our soldiers and their families make in defending our country.

Our attorneys have protected the rights of soldiers facing divorce, including those deployed to combat zones. The bottom line is the attorneys at HBS know how federal law interacts with Georgia law and will protect the rights of our soldiers and their spouses.

We know how federal law protects the rights of parents. On several occasions, we have assisted mothers and fathers whose spouses have taken their children outside of Georgia while they were deployed. If you are on active duty or at drill, there are laws that prevent your spouse from taking your child to another state.

Whether you are married to a soldier or a member of the Army, Marines, Navy, Air Force, or Coast Guard, the attorneys at HBS will fight hard to protect your rights.

## **Leadership**



## **H. Buckley Cole**

**Partner**

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