

Dear Chair Lee and the members of the Senate Human Service Committee, I urge a “Do Not Pass” on HB 1362.

The most helpful thing for me to understand this bill was listening to Representative Christensen introduce it and take questions during the House hearing. He explains this bill comes from Utah and that is the reason for so much inconsistency in language and definitions. His opening testimony to introduce this bill came with instructions for the committee to fix it.

When reviewing the testimony as part of analyzing written testimony, I saw very little consistency across all testimony. Some people saw this as a parental rights bill. Others as a preemptive bill to stop unexplained future harm. Some cited this bill as important to protect homeschooling, to stop transgender youth, or simply to stop the political left. A moving piece of testimony in favor of this bill talked about their stake as a parent and their willingness to die for their kids.

That testimony actually stuck with me, more than most others this session. I have no problems with parents who are truly loving and nurturing for their kids. I want those parents to have every opportunity to shine. I, however, don't see what restrictions they currently have that would be solved by this bill. Further, the language within this bill gives me pause when I think about the abuse children face.

According to the [Youth Risk Behavior Survey](#), about 1.5% of our total youth are in homes where their parents are often violent to each other. 46% of total high school youth reported their parents or other adults in their home swore at them, insulted them, or put them down one or more times in the last twelve months before the survey. 2.4% Ran away, were kicked out, or were abandoned by their parents.

While those numbers may seem low, they represent hundreds and sometimes thousands of kids across our state. When we think about parental rights we often think about parents rights as opposed to government rights, but kids are the primary stakeholder in their own life.

Samantha Field's from the Coalition for Responsible Home Education talked this legislative session about the potential harm that becomes possible when parents have near absolute authority over their children.

She speaks about not being given a basic education or progressing past the eighth grade reading level. She speaks about the harm of fundamental rights being given to parents, because it makes the fundamental rights of youth virtually meaningless.

I believe that everyone who has submitted testimony, the legislators who drafted this bill, and those who voted to pass it in the House are likely good parents or know only good parents. But I feel they may not have any direct or indirect experience with child abuse. Bills like the one purpose here terrify me, because when we empower all parents, we also empower abusive parents.

And abuse is not always easy to see. It's difficult to say where reasonable discipline ends and abuse begins, but I absolutely don't want parents testing that line. I don't want parents to feel so empowered as to treat their kids as their property. And I don't want child protective services to be overburdened in its role to protect youth by proving it isn't violating what are several very vague line items around the authority parents enjoy.

I've talked to many human service zone officers in my work, who do govern intervention when parents may be deemed to be unfit or unsafe. I have been told that every effort happens to keep parents and families together. Not even because that's the best choice, but because the alternative isn't always better. The truth is we have a lot of kids who fall through the cracks in our state, who get lost to some really terrible things, and parental rights are not what they need.

When you consider and weigh the intent of this bill, please consider the youth who are impacted by it and weigh that against the power we are giving all parents with it. Please also keep in mind that while legislators and lawmakers may know what this bill allows if passed, laypeople may make incorrect assumptions about their rights and privileges with it.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and service to our state.
Faye Seidler

Testimony Analysis

In Favor

1. [Protect Family Values](#)
2. [Fear around homeschooling and transgender youth](#)
3. [Fear of political agenda](#)
4. [Parents would die for their kids](#)

In Opposition

1. [Due Process Clause of the 14th Amendment already accomplish this bill](#)

Written Testimony	In Favor	In Opposition
Word Count	4500	600
Citizen	14	0
Stakeholder/Qualified	2	1
Politician/lobbyist	2	0
Total 9	18	1
	94.74%	5.26%

In person testimony Mins	21	8
Total Minutes 29	79.31%	17.24%

Committee Vote	Do pass	Don't pass
Total 14	12	2
	85.71%	14.29%

Floor Vote	Yay	Nay
Total 92	50	42