

Honorable members of the committee,

I am here today to speak on behalf of myself and my children, who have been severely by the lack of enforcement and accountability in family court decisions. My name is Lucy Bauer, and I am a mother who has been fighting for years to maintain a relationship with my children. Since 2017, I have been alienated from my four children due to a series of court decisions that have allowed my abusive ex-husband to control and manipulate our family situation.

In 2017, Judge John Grinsteiner of Morton County forced me to hand over my children to their father, despite their cries for me to protect them. The judge's decision was made in private a week after the court hearing, leaving me with minimal parenting time - every other weekend, certain holidays and four one-week blocks in the summer. The decision was based on false allegations made about me, and I have been treated as if I were the problem, as if I were a criminal. Since that ruling, my children and I have suffered tremendous harm.

I have been alienated from my children - my rights as their mother have been stripped away. But it's not just me who has been cut off

from them; my mother and my 2 sisters have also been shut out of their lives. This has created a rift in our family that has yet to heal.

The neglect and harm caused to my children are devastating. Since 2017, they have been forced to homeschool themselves with no adult supervision or support. At age 15, they were told to get jobs and work full-time during school hours. This lack of guidance and emotional support has caused them to fall far behind in their education. I have been denied any involvement in their schooling, even though the court order grants me the right to be a part of their lives and their education.

THREE STRIKES LAW BILL

I have repeatedly gone to court to enforce my rights, yet I have been denied justice time and time again. There have been numerous occasions when my ex-husband has refused to allow me to see my children, even during my limited parenting time. Each time, I have sought legal help. I've hired six different attorneys, each of whom took my money but failed to take any meaningful action to address the abuse and corruption in this system.

My ex-husband knows he can do whatever he wants, when he wants, because he believes he has all the power, and that no one will hold him accountable. The court system has failed to enforce its own orders, and my children and I continue to suffer. This ongoing violation of my parental rights is not just an inconvenience - it is intentional, and it is destroying my relationship with my children.

THE NEED FOR CHANGE

I am here today to ask for your support of the REBUTTABLE SHARED PARENTING BILL and the THREE STRIKES LAW BILL, because of the damage this has caused to my children and myself is profound and ongoing. My children have been robbed of a healthy, loving relationship with their mother. They have been emotionally abandoned, and I have been left powerless to help them. I urge you to pass these bills to ensure that parents like me are not left to fight an endless battle for our children. No parent should have to endure what I've gone through. No child should be made to feel abandoned by their mother, and no court decision should go unenforced when it comes to protecting children and ensuring their well-being.

Thank you for considering my testimony. I am willing to testify before anyone, at any time, to share how this situation has devastated my children and my family. I sincerely hope that you will take action to protect families like mine and ensure that parents who are fighting for their children's rights are given the support and justice they deserve.

LUCY BAUER

Lucy Bauer

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