

Written Testimony in Support of the Rebuttable Shared Parenting Bill

Submitted by Dan Smith

Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Dan Smith, and I am submitting this testimony in **strong support** of the Rebuttable Shared Parenting bill. As a devoted father of two daughters, I believe that our current family court system does not prioritize the true **best interest of the child** when it comes to ensuring equal access to both parents.

Like many parents, I entered the divorce process expecting fairness. Instead, I found myself **poorly represented, rushed into signing an agreement that drastically limits my time with my children, and left with an arrangement that makes me feel like nothing more than a visitor in their lives.** Under the current custody order, I see my daughters for only four nights a month—a mere fraction of the time I should have as their father. This means that for the next **11 years**, my role in their daily lives will be reduced to the sidelines, despite my unwavering commitment to being an active and loving parent.

My ex-spouse often speaks about "**shared parenting**", but the reality is that what I have now is **not** shared parenting—it's minimal, court-ordered visitation that does not reflect the importance of my role in my children's lives. This is not just my story; it is the reality for thousands of fit and loving parents across our state who are unfairly relegated to the background because of outdated legal presumptions favoring one parent over the other.

The Rebuttable Shared Parenting bill provides a solution. By establishing a **presumption of equal parenting time**, it ensures that courts recognize both parents as equally important in a child's life **unless there is clear and convincing evidence to prove otherwise.** This bill does not remove judicial discretion—it simply **shifts the burden away from fit parents having to fight for time with their own children.**

The current system does not reflect modern research, which overwhelmingly supports shared parenting as the best arrangement for children's well-being. Studies show that children who spend **substantial and meaningful time with both parents** have better emotional, academic, and social outcomes. **The law should reflect what is best for children, not outdated biases that marginalize one parent without just cause.**

I urge this committee to pass the **Rebuttable Shared Parenting bill** and give children the opportunity to thrive in the care of both parents. No loving, responsible father should be forced to accept a system that treats him as a part-time visitor in his own children's lives.

Please support families by **voting green** for this bill.

Respectfully submitted,
Dan Smith

