

**Dear Members of the Legislature,**

My name is Craig Gaube, and I am the proud father of three wonderful children. I strongly support HB 1242 – Rebuttable Shared Parenting because children deserve meaningful relationships with both parents after divorce or separation.

During my custody case, my two mature children submitted affidavits expressing their desire for equal time with both parents. Their voices were ignored. The judge refused to speak with them or consider their wishes. My ex-wife and I were both fit, capable parents, yet the court granted her primary custody based on outdated and biased assumptions about parental roles. Because I was the financial provider rather than the one packing school lunches, I was deemed less essential—despite my deep involvement in my children’s lives.

North Dakota's custody determination process is flawed. The 14 best-interest factors, meant to protect children, are often weaponized in court. In my case, my ex-wife made false allegations to gain an advantage. Despite two independent chemical dependency evaluations confirming I had no issue with alcohol, the court continued to treat me as a risk. The only professional who met with both parents and our children—a parenting investigator—testified that equal parenting was in their best interest. Yet, the judge dismissed this expert opinion, prioritized unsupported claims, and awarded primary custody to their mother.

The consequences have been devastating. My children have suffered unnecessary loss, and the signs of parental alienation are undeniable. The system is failing them.

HB 1242 ensures that equal parenting is the starting point—unless actual evidence proves otherwise—so no child needlessly loses a parent. This bill is not about parents; it is about protecting children from the harm caused by an outdated, adversarial system.

I urge you to support HB 1242 and put children first.

**Best regards,**  
Craig Gaube

