

Testimony in Support of Rebuttable Shared Parenting

Submitted by: Joyce Peterson

Chairman and Members of the Committee,

My name is Joyce Peterson, and I am a grandmother to 21 wonderful grandchildren. I come before you today to express my strong support for the Rebuttable Shared Parenting bill, a necessary step toward protecting the well-being of children and ensuring that they maintain meaningful relationships with both parents and their extended families after separation or divorce.

I have witnessed firsthand the devastating impact of a system that too often removes one parent from a child's life during legal proceedings. My son, a devoted and gentle father in North Dakota, was forced to defend himself against false accusations and spend all of his financial resources just to maintain a relationship with his children. Though he ultimately secured equal parenting time, the long and drawn-out legal battle—lasting over a year and a half—resulted in significant harm to both him and his children.

During this process, his children were deprived of the stability and love of both parents, experiencing unnecessary psychological distress and manipulation. Even after the truth was established, the lost time was irreplaceable. The legal system, in its current state, allowed a delay that harmed the children's emotional and psychological well-being.

As a grandmother, I have always been actively involved in my grandchildren's lives. I write to them every couple of months and have spent countless cherished hours with them when they visit for hunting, fishing, four-wheeling, playing games, and making memories together at our home in Minnesota. But when a fit and loving parent is removed from a child's life for an extended period, it does not just affect the parent—it also limits the involvement of grandparents and the extended family on that side. This is a tragic loss for children who rely on the love, wisdom, and stability that grandparents provide.

Children deserve the full and complete support structure of both parents and their families. Rebuttable Shared Parenting ensures that children do not become casualties of a broken system that favors one parent over another without just cause. Instead, it upholds the principle that both parents should remain actively involved in their children's lives unless evidence proves otherwise.

I urge this committee to stand for the rights of children and families by passing the Rebuttable Shared Parenting bill. Let us prioritize the well-being of our children by preserving their relationships with both parents and the grandparents who love them.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Joyce Peterson

