

February 11, 2025

Good morning Chair Klemin and members of the committee. For the record my name is Tanya Giese. I am a mother, grandmother, and a nurse practitioner in family practice. I am in opposition to passing of bill 1242. I have witnessed first hand why it is not in the best interest of children to pass this bill as written.

My daughter recently went through a divorce that resulted in many months of legal proceedings to determine what was in the best interest of her two boys. To put this in perspective, my daughter was with her ex-husband for ten years. They eventually married and started a family. They had their first boy a year after being married, she became pregnant with their second 2 years later. Two months before their second child was born, her ex walked out on them and was found to be having an affair and subsequently had a third child with the mistress he had. He walked out on them in August of 2023. My daughter's divorce was just approved last week, January 2025. She kept, cared for, supported, and met the children's needs the entire time with little to no help from him. In the 17 months he was gone he did not contribute to financial support at all until Jan of 2024 when he began paying half of childcare as my daughter was unable to afford it on her own. This is the only contribution he made since the day he left.

My daughter had her baby by c-section, went home, worked through her maternity leave in order to afford the two boys, and has essentially provided all of their needs since he left. She paid the hospital and clinic bills, paid daycare, paid for food, supplied all items of need for them, and maintained the bills to pay for their home and all utilities. She held the insurance for all of them during this time as well. She makes half the yearly salary as her ex does, yet she was responsible for 100% of supporting the children he walked out on. I and my mother spent months alternating time and money to assist my daughter as much as we were able as well. We both live 250 miles away from her and did our best to help.

My daughter has spent thousands of dollars pleading her case to the courts regarding custody and primary residency with ample support in her favor. The judge spent weeks going through the evidence and case and in the end did award her full custody with primary residency. My point for sharing this with you is to alert members that not all parents deserve or should be automatically entitled to 50/50 custody just because they are the biological parent. This bill would hurt my daughter and grandsons financially and emotionally. I would like to note that he had an endless amount of opportunity during the last 18 months to offer 50/50 support and chose not to.

As a nurse practitioner I also care for many children and parents that are in similar situations or in those where the children are actually in abusive situations as well. We have court proceedings and judges to hear facts of each case in order to make a decision that is in the best interest of each child. This bill will put every child in the same bucket and assumes that every parent contributes equally during a separation/divorce. This is simply not the case. This bill also allows for parents with alcohol and drug issues, abuse, and legal issues to have equal rights with no concern or consideration of what is best for the children themselves. Please take all situations and possible effects of the passing of this bill into consideration and vote do not pass. I would be happy to offer further testimony or answer questions the committee or house may have. Please contact me at any time.

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