

Testimony of Delmer Peterson
December 17, 2024

Chairperson and members of the committee,

My name is Delmer Peterson, and I am here today as a grandparent who has witnessed firsthand the devastating effects of family alienation during a contested divorce. My wife and I have seen our son—an excellent father—spend countless hours, emotional energy, and financial resources simply to have the right to spend time with his children.

The toll on our son has been profound. He has had to fight to prove that the false allegations made by the other parent are untrue, all while trying to maintain a loving relationship with his children. This battle is not only emotionally exhausting but financially draining. The money that could have been spent on his children's future—on their education, health, and well-being—has instead gone to lawyers and experts just to maintain basic parenting rights.

This situation has also had a profound impact on us as grandparents. As the courts grant one parent limited time with the children, we, too, are alienated. We are denied the ability to play an active, supportive role in our grandchildren's lives because the parent we support is given so little time with them. We see less of them, and during this time, the other parent works to undermine the very family structure that could support and uplift these children.

Grandparents like us play a crucial role in the emotional, mental, and social development of our grandchildren. We want nothing more than to be a positive influence, but we need the ability to spend time with them in order to do so.

No child should have to live with half of their support system removed or compromised. I urge you to do the right thing and pass the rebuttable Shared Parenting Bill. This bill will ensure that children are given the opportunity to have both parents, and both sets of grandparents, in their lives without unnecessary barriers or harmful divisions.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Delmer Peterson

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