

Testimony of Latasha Klein – Date 1/6/2025
In Support of a Rebuttable Shared Parenting Bill

Dear members of the legislature,

My name is Latasha Klein, and I am here today not just as a mother, but as an advocate for children and families who deserve fairness and balance in our family court system.

I am the proud mother of my beautiful daughter, Scarlett, who is six years old. From the moment she was born, I was her primary caretaker, raising her alongside my mother in a loving and stable home. Scarlett was my world, and I was hers.

When I separated from my ex-husband in May of 2022, I approached the situation with an open heart and a commitment to fairness. I told him I was willing to share 50/50 custody because I believe that both parents are essential in a child's life. Unfortunately, once lawyers became involved, our cooperative intentions were overtaken by adversarial tactics. Despite initially agreeing to 50/50 custody in mediation, my ex-husband pursued sole custody aggressively.

In court, on June 5th, 2023, I stood alone—without a lawyer—to advocate for what was best for Scarlett. I spoke only about her needs, her well-being, and her happiness. I believed, naively, that no court or lawyer could strip away the bond between a mother and her child. But I was wrong. The court awarded sole custody to my ex-husband, despite my plea for an equitable arrangement.

Now, I am allowed only limited time with Scarlett: two weekends a month and a few hours of visitation on alternating weeks. This drastic reduction in time has been devastating for both of us. Scarlett, once secure in the love and presence of her mother, struggles to understand why our time together has been so drastically diminished. The joy and stability we shared have been replaced by confusion and heartbreak.

This is not just my story—it is the story of countless parents and children across our state. Our current system often forces families into winner-takes-all outcomes, leaving children to bear the emotional toll of fractured relationships. Rebuttable shared parenting offers a solution that starts with a presumption of fairness and ensures both parents have equal opportunity to remain actively involved in their child's life unless evidence proves otherwise.

This is not about me, nor is it about my ex-husband. It is about Scarlett and children like her, who deserve to grow up with the love and guidance of both parents whenever possible. I urge you to support this bill and give children the chance to thrive in balanced and loving environments.

Thank you for your time and for listening to the voices of parents and children who need your support.

Signed,
Latasha Klein



