

Dear Members of the Legislature,

My name is Michael Johnson, and I reside in Dickinson, ND. I am here today to submit my testimony in support of the Rebuttable Shared Parenting, Time Taken, Time Back, and Three Strikes laws. These critical reforms aim to protect children, restore fairness, and bring accountability to a system that has, for too long, failed families.

My wife, Brandy, has been completely and unjustly erased from the lives of her three children for nine years due to her ex-husband's deliberate and abusive actions. Without any legitimate cause, he has alienated her from her children's lives, weaponizing them as tools of emotional manipulation. This devastating situation began when the children were just 11, 9, and 5 years old. Today, two are adults, and the youngest is a high school freshman. Their suffering, though not always visible to them due to manipulation and grooming, is undeniable.

I have witnessed the toll this has taken on my wife. Her emotional and physical health has deteriorated due to the relentless abuse and alienation inflicted by her ex-husband. Despite these challenges, Brandy has remained steadfast in her love for her children. A parenting investigator's report to the court explicitly highlighted manipulation, grooming, and parroting on the father's part. The investigator even stated that he was engaging in parental alienation to hurt Brandy. Yet, shockingly, the judge ignored these findings. The report's final recommendation, acknowledging the father's likely continued manipulation, became the basis for granting him primary residential responsibility. It is difficult to believe the judge thoroughly considered the evidence.

For nine years, we have sought justice. We have filed motions to hold the father in contempt of court orders, endured countless false allegations to law enforcement and CPS, and witnessed repeated counselor shopping designed to justify the alienation. All of this has come at an extraordinary cost: the depletion of my 401(k) and the near destruction of my wife's health. This is not justice. This is the result of a broken system that allows unhealthy parents to make false statements without consequence, perpetuating harm to children and families.

Family law has become a lawless, profit-driven industry where no one truly wins except the attorneys. Children lose their relationships, parents lose their hope, and families lose their stability. Alienation is a severe form of child abuse, with lifelong consequences for both the children and the alienated parent. Research shows that alienated children face higher risks of emotional instability, mental health challenges, and even suicide.

The Rebuttable Shared Parenting, Time Taken, Time Back, and Three Strikes bills offer the change we so desperately need:

1. **Rebuttable Shared Parenting:** Creates a presumption of equal parenting time, ensuring children have the love and support of both parents unless clear evidence proves otherwise.
2. **Time Taken, Time Back:** Restores time unjustly taken from a parent-child relationship due to false allegations, discouraging misuse of the system and prioritizing the child's well-being.

3. **Three Strikes Law:** Establishes clear consequences for parents who repeatedly violate court orders, deterring harmful behaviors and protecting children's relationships with both parents.

These laws are commonsense reforms designed to protect children and families. They address the root causes of harm and provide accountability for those who abuse the system. I urge you to stand with the countless children, parents, and families who have been devastated by parental alienation and systemic failures.

Please support these bills with a "Do Pass" recommendation. Your decision will send a powerful message that North Dakota prioritizes the well-being of children, the integrity of families, and the fair application of justice.

Sincerely,  
Michael D. Johnson  
Dickinson, ND  
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