

Date: 1 - 21- 2025

What: SB 2186. (Three Strikes)

Who: Dorothy Kuester

Retired Early Childhood Educator

Williston School District: (38 years of teaching experience)

Nana to three precious grandsons (ages 6, 4 and 2)

I am here today to testify in favor of SB 2186. (Three Strikes).

In December of 2023 my daughter in law stole my three grandsons. She crossed the state line into Montana and relocated to Glasgow where her parents have a home. Glasgow is 150 miles from Williston. Williston is the community in which my son and daughter-in-law had resided. All three of their children have lived there since their birth. My daughter in law's entire support system is in Williston. Her brother and his family live there. Even her parents live and operate a business in the Williston community. They return to Glasgow occasionally for a random weekend visit.

Upon finding out that his wife left and relocated to Glasgow Montana he immediately filed Contempt of Court and filed for Divorce. This process took a total of eleven months. When the divorce was final, the judge did nothing about the Contempt of Court. He did not require my daughter-in-law to return to Williston with the children. He allowed them to stay in Glasgow and my son was given some weekend visitation along with shared holidays and birthdays.

According to the custody order, my son is to meet his ex-wife in Poplar Montana to exchange the children for his visitation. The order states that if "no travel is advised" then they do not need to meet. Even though there has never been a "no travel advisory", my daughter in law frequently complains about the weather and road conditions. She has said that she doesn't want to venture out in certain conditions. My son has offered to drive all the way to Glasgow to pick up his children. She has asked to move the meeting time up due to the weather. She has arrived at the exchange spot late giving no consideration to notify my son that she is in route. She is the one that chose to live 150 miles away from the children's father.

If she were to not arrive, currently there is no recourse for this type of behavior. The uncertainty of her arrival is stressful. Many divorces are civil, and the needs of the children are given consideration. But not every child is blessed with parents that love and care about their emotional development. They are so often caught in the middle

and used as pawns. As a retired teacher, I have seen first-hand how children have suffered at the hands of their parents. The children are harmed and traumatized when one parent willfully withholds the children from the other parent.

I ask you to please support this “Three Strikes” Bill. It will give our law enforcement the opportunity to uphold the child custody orders, protect our children and hopefully deter a parent from withholding court ordered visitation. It is time for the parent with ill intentions to be held accountable for their actions. Let’s put our children first!