

Dear Honorable Judiciary Committee,

My name is Kelly Kraft, and I am here today to ask for your support of the Three Strikes bill and Time Taken, Time Given Back.

My story began four years ago when I discovered that my husband at the time was a very different person than I thought I had married. It was an incredibly difficult divorce for my children, my family, myself, and everyone who supports us. After astronomical legal fees, we mutually agreed on 50/50 parenting time, as children deserve a loving relationship with their parents, no matter how the parents feel about each other. I thought it was the final battle and that the war was over. Our divorce decree specifically spelled out all parenting time (as well as many other details not relevant to today's matters before us). The trouble is, a divorce decree is only as good as it is when it is followed. Unfortunately, my ex-husband believes he is above the law and that the rules do not apply to him. I've been forced to bring motions to the court on several occasions to enforce what was already ordered, spending every last penny of savings, maxing out resources, and losing work due to emotional toll of fighting for the return of my child.

In May of 2024, my son was hospitalized with limited visitation hours. We had a wonderful relationship until his dad took advantage of the vulnerable position my son was in, and the alienation took hold. His dad removed him from the hospital despite it being my designated parenting time. I immediately hired my attorney and began the only tool I had available on applying for contempt in the courts, enduring seven excruciating months without seeing him while waiting for the contempt hearing to enforce my court-ordered parenting time. The pain of being alienated from my child is beyond what words can describe. It is a unique and profound agony that no parent—or child—should ever have to endure. This is not just a personal tragedy; it is a form of emotional abuse and instability that leaves lasting scars on a child's well-being. As Robert Garza, who you'll also be hearing from today, once said, "The loss of a living child—whether through alienation, estrangement, or unjust separation—is an agony that defies comprehension. It's not just grief; it's grief trapped in limbo with no closure, no end. You're grieving not just the loss of a relationship but the theft of time, of shared moments of a bond that only a parent and child can truly know. It's like having a piece of your soul ripped away, leaving you to carry on with an unbearable, unshakable emptiness."

Currently, there are no meaningful tools available to law enforcement when one parent decides to withhold a child from the other during their legal parenting time. During the numerous times I have called for assistance—even just for law enforcement to talk to him and encourage him to follow the decree—they say it is a civil matter, and I have to take it up with the courts. That involves hiring an attorney, hoping they are skilled enough to combat all the false allegations from the offending parent, and swiftly get into the courts. In my case, it took from filing on June 10th until November 26th to get in front of a judge! The Three Strikes bill changes that. It provides a clear, measured approach: the first and second offenses result in misdemeanors, while a third offense escalates to a Class C felony. This bill ensures accountability and offers protection for children and parents alike, helping to prevent the kind of emotional damage and instability my son and I experienced.

If this law had been in place, it could have prevented my family's unnecessary suffering. He would have had the support and stability of both parents in his life—something every child deserves. Watching him struggle, knowing I could not be there to support him when he needed me most, was one of the hardest experiences of my life. We are currently rebuilding our relationship after incurring tens of many thousands of dollars in expenses and insurmountable heartache. I urge you to pass the Three Strikes bill. It is a necessary step to protect the rights of

parents and, more importantly, to safeguard the well-being of children who deserve stability, love, and the presence of both parents in their lives.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Kelly Kraft