

TESTIMONY ON HB 1423

TESTIMONY IS FOR SUPPORT OF HB 1423

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I am here in support of HB 1423. I am directly affected by the child support calculations done here in North Dakota. Many of my friends and family are also directly affected. The way the child support agency calculates child support is outdated and needs to change.

Parents nowadays most often share custody 50-50. Studies have shown over and over that this is the best way to raise children in a split home, if possible. That being said, it costs a lot of money to raise children these days. If both parents are responsible for half the children's expenses, (i.e. daycare, food, sports, and so on) then why is one parent paying the other parent? Are we not equals? Are we not fully capable of taking care of our children?

I have especially had an issue with the child support calculation that was done for myself. My ex and I have split custody (50-50), the thing is, if I were to let her have full custody, I would actually pay less monthly for my children. Yes, that is right, less. We split all the children's expenses down the middle. That being said, if she had full custody, she would have to pay for all those expenses herself. I would owe a set amount, and that would be that. I actually like to have my kids, and want them as often as possible so I wouldn't do that.

My point though isn't that I should scheme to pay less money, rather, why are we incentivizing one parent to think like that? Why are we incentivizing not having our children because it actually costs more to have them an equal amount?

I have a great friend of mine that is forced to go out of town and work to make enough money to live and pay child support. My friend would be able to have his kids in a 50-50 scenario if he was able to work in town. Unfortunately, even if he did have 50-50 custody, he still wouldn't be able to afford to live because child support payments are FAR too high. So instead, he doesn't get to spend as much time with his children as he should be able to, which negatively affects a child for the rest of their life.

The other part to this HB 1423, is to allow parents the right of being able to dissolve having any child support payments at all. If both parents are in agreement, what is it the business of the state to tell them they cannot do that? As the law stands today, that is not legal. This legislation would change that. If both parents have their own lawyer, they should be able to rid

themselves of child support if they so choose. This would make it simpler to co-parent, and the state would save money by not having to deal with the situation or recalculate the payments every 18 months.

This bill would do two (2) things:

1. Allow parents to dissolve child support entirely, as long as both parties have their own lawyers to make sure they know their rights. This would make co-parenting easier and would save the state time and money that is spent on these cases
2. It would take the percentage of custody and decrease the amount of support by that much. If you have 50% custody, your support amount would decrease by 50%. This would allow parents to be there for their children instead of focusing solely on work, just to get by and pay their child support.