

PROPONENT TESTIMONY - HB508

TESTIMONY OF Don Lykins

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CIVIL JUSTICE COMMITTEE

OHIO HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, 134TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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Chairman Hillyer, Vice Chair Grendell, Ranking Member Galonski and members of the House Civil Justice Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on HB508.

Don Lykins. I live in Reading Ohio, Hamilton County. Jessica Miranda is my State Rep.

I'm a recently divorced Father of two minor children who sees the need for HB 508.

Divorce was handled in Clermont County which has Shared parenting in its local rules (Title D, DR 22), but only as a "guideline" and subject to deviation after consideration of the best interest factors, as defined in DR 23. In my case it was completely ignored by visiting judge Rocky A Coss, who presided over Highland County court.

My children and I are victims of Ohio's current child custody laws, which heavily favor the mother. I went through the nightmare of NOT getting shared parenting/joint custody due to the broad discretion of a judge who uses "Best Interest" as his guide and decided I was un-fit to be anymore involved in my children's lives than a very part-time uncle. Even though I was the Girl Scout Leader, Robotics Coach, Founder of the Drama Club and Chess Club and Producer of their dramas/musicals at their school, among other accomplishments.

We need to force the courts to automatically adopt shared parenting/joint custody not just as a guideline but as a rule of law. Currently it's not the case and judges have too much "broad discretion" to use the best interest doctrine to keep children away from their Father's. Many judges still feel the Mother is the only parent best suited to raise children, especially if the children are girls.

I'm ProSe in my custody battle and have fought three times over the last 6 years for Shared Parenting, but the courts have denied it for various, very flimsy reasons, usually by ignoring clear and convincing evidence or exaggerating or even fabricating evidence they see beneficial to the mother.

HB508 is very important to me as my children need more time with their father as I provide an environment very different than their mothers, where I'm always spearheading activities to boost their self-esteem, self-confidence through accomplishments such as complex puzzles, reading, writing, piano, rubics cube, juggling, welding, electrical work, etc..

It will help all Ohioians who have been turned away by the courts even though they are very fit fathers. Seems there is a double standard in Ohio, where custody always leans toward the Mother.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you again for allowing me to provide testimony on HB 508. I would be happy to answer any questions.