

PROPONENT TESTIMONY - HB508

TESTIMONY OF Melissa Price

[Parental Services Coordinator, Ohio]

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.

My name is Melissa Price, I am a Parental Services Coordinator and I have worked with over 8,000 families in the last 16 plus years. I have worked for court officials, councilors, millionaires and even homeless veterans. In the beginning most of my clientele were men. Now, in 2022 It is almost equally split. Many good Mothers and Fathers with no parenting time at all.

In my experience, most of the parties contacting me are not parties who already have a 50/50 Shared Parenting plan. Although I do have clients who had or have 50/50 Shared Parenting when they contact me, they are not the typical client. The large majority of the clients have either no parental rights, very limited parenting time or, not getting it at all.

I feel this Bill would be very beneficial for Ohio families for a few reasons. The first reason being parents would have a better idea of what they have in a parenting schedule, what expectations there are of them and minimize litigation expenses by not having to start from "scratch" per say.

From my experience when only one parent is given total authority after a separation or break-up, it is creating conflict because now one person is the parent and other isn't most of the time. Most non-custodial parents were involved or near the children on a daily or near daily basis before the separation.

I have yet to meet a client that only saw their children every other weekend while the whole household lived together.

This would be much more affordable for my clients who already have Council and for the ones that are Pro Se. The Mothers and Fathers who cannot afford an attorney would at least be able to have a parenting time platform without having to pay an attorney to set that all up and spend up to 2 years fighting just for a few days a month.

The common theme I see and experience would be how the children are affected. I am not a Psychologist, I am a Coach and Coordinator. My observation is seeing more children being diagnosed with some type of emotional disorder or diagnosis since the separation from one Parent. Children as young as 4 being diagnosed with stress disorders, anxiety, depression, self-mutilization, and on and on. There would be less emotional adjustment issues with the children if the parties were sharing time and responsibilities like most parents do when in the same household.

While HB508 will certainly help parents through separation and create a platform for coparenting the right way—- and this bill will help children even more. This bill is the relief these children desperately need.

I urge you to support this bill for Ohio's children.

I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Melissa Price