

WITNESS INFORMATION FORM

Please complete the Witness Information Form before testifying:

Date: 5/22/2022

Name: Sara D Moore

Are you representing: Yourself Organization

Organization (If Applicable): Parents Against Post-Separation Abuse

Position/Title: Advocate

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Do you wish to be added to the committee notice email distribution list? **Yes** No

Business before the committee

Legislation (Bill/Resolution Number): HB 508

Specific Issue: Shared Parenting

Are you testifying as a: Proponent Opponent Interested Party

Will you have a written statement, visual aids, or other material to distribute? Yes No

(If yes, please send an electronic version of the documents, if possible, to the Chair's office prior to committee. You may also submit hard copies to the Chair's staff prior to committee.)

How much time will your testimony require? 10 minutes

Please provide a brief statement on your position:

Please be advised that this form and any materials (written or otherwise) submitted or presented to this committee are records that may be requested by the public and may be published online.

I ask that you vote NO on HB 508. This is a bill that trump's children's rights to protection in favor of parental rights.

10% of custody cases are contested.

75% of those contested cases are domestic violence cases.

This bill presents an issue that requires a high understanding of domestic violence and the abuse of power. Because this bill affects 75% of the contested custody cases, it is a bill to strip domestic violence survivors from more boundaries and help abusive parents obtain power and

control. Shared parenting is NOT in the best interest of parents or children who are victims of domestic violence.

One of the ways abusers gain power and control is by creating false narratives. Contrary to what the bill states, courts do not favor fathers and fathers make up more false allegations than mothers.

Studies show that mothers make up allegations of sexual abuse only 2% of the time. However, 75% of sexual abuse claims by protective mothers result in custody given to the accused father. With this extraordinary gap, there is a belief by mothers of sexually abused children, that our family court system is trafficking our children.

These false narratives by abusers are rooted in a well-studied tactic called, DARVO. DARVO stands for Deny, Attack, Reverse Victim and Offender. In this sexual abuse example, the father denies sexually abusing the child. Then claims mother coached the child to make up the allegations and tells the court that the mother was making it up. The court sees the father as a victim of false allegations. The court punishes the mother by removing custody of the child.

When we educate the court about DARVO, the abusers are less likely to get away with their false narratives. However, the false narratives are still planted in the minds of the rulers. So, we must look at the research.

he Saunder's study says that the selection of a custodial parent should be based on which parent is most likely to reduce the fear and stress.

There is conflicting research about the benefit of shared parenting arrangements, but there is widespread agreement by legitimate researchers. Shared parenting can only benefit children under favorable conditions that include 3 things:

1. voluntary agreement by both parents, (doesn't happen in DV)
2. ability to cooperate and (doesn't happen in DV)
3. living nearby (DV survivors seek protected addresses)

Because DV involves a fundamental imbalance of power, co-parenting in these cases is harmful.

Saunders found that abusers use joint decision-making to regain control by refusing to agree to anything the mother wants. He also found that abusers often use visitation exchanges to harass or assault the victim.

In DV cases, if the abuser will receive unsupervised visitation, the best approach is parallel parenting. The children have witnessed their father's abuse and are often frightened when their parents are together. Parallel parenting reduces communication to absolute necessary situations. **Abusers do not co-parent; they counter-parent. It is unsafe and unhealthy to allow shared parenting when there is a history of DV and one parent is afraid of the other.**

Abusers often use shared parenting to interfere with needed treatment. Accordingly, it is critical for the safe parent to have complete control over health care.

It is best practice is to pressure the abuser to change his behavior and to focus on how to reduce the fear and stress he caused. Shared parenting does just the opposite.

Even the research most favorable to co-parenting found it only works under the best of circumstances. You are making a decision for the 75% who are victims of domestic violence. Please vote NO on HB 508.