

Proponent Testimony – HB14

Testimony of Jon S. Hepp Jr.
National Parents Organization –
Ohio Chapter, Board Member
Jon.Hepp@Hotmail.com
440-731-0802

Family and Aging Committee
Ohio House of Representatives, 135th General Assembly

March 14, 2023

Dear Chairwoman Jean Schmidt, Vice Chairwoman Melanie Miller, Ranking Member Sedric Denson and members of the House Families and Aging Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on HB14.

PLEASE - PLEASE seriously consider supporting HB14 (AS IS).

Under current law, children and parents' relationships are not protected when parents' divorce or separate and fit, loving parents are losing custody of their children without just cause, simply because their parents are ending their relationship.

- In my particular case, I have NOT had ACCESS to my 2 children since my Ex-wife filed for divorce over 10 years ago.

With the **Best Interest** of our Children in mind, the Ohio Legislature MUST ACT NOW to ensure that the Courts in Ohio start with a presumption of **EQUAL Shared Parenting** when a couple files to separate or divorce.

FAIRNESS

- EQUAL Shared Parenting – is a Movement across the country and around the world.
- ALL Ohio Counties – should all be held to the same standard of justice.
- Judges – should be held to an equal standard across the state – where *Clear & Convincing Evidence* should have to be mandated in order to deviate from a 50/50 parenting plan.

- Society – now has to deal with increased rates of crime and injustice because the Family Unit is being destroyed with unequal parenting laws and more children are living DAD-Deprived lives.
- Financial Means – parents without the financial ability (to pay for high priced attorneys) are not able and shouldn't have to fight for ACCESS to their children in court just because the laws are not fair.

PARENTS – Fit & Loving

- No Fit and Loving parent (or family) should be deprived of a relationship with their child / children that they helped to create.
- Research shows in the majority of cases in which parents are separated or divorced, that children do BEST when BOTH parents are EQUALLY involved in helping raise their child / children on a day-to-day basis.
- Both parents bring unique value to their children and children raised without the care of both parents are at a severe disadvantage in their long-term development.

KIDS – Best Interest

- A child's Best Interest is to have both parents (and their families) EQUALLY involved in their child's / children's lives; as it takes a village to raise a child.

Please support this VERY Important Bill - Ohio's Children Need Both Parents!

Again, thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on HB14 - Chairwoman Jean Schmidt, Vice Chairwoman Melanie Miller, Ranking Member Sedric Denson and members of the House Families and Aging Committee.