

Opponent Testimony to Senate Bill 174

Ohio – what are we doing?!? Senate Bill 174 would perpetuate current Ohio family court policies which arbitrarily sideline one parent from a child’s daily life. This practice harms children’s mental health and well-being. Senate Bill 174 allows outdated parenting schedules and inconsistent standards across counties that limit children’s time with one parent to continue.

Most Ohio counties enforce parenting schedules based on decades old stereotypes, restricting children to only two overnights with one parent every two weeks. These schedules encourage parental conflict and impose emotional, physical, and financial stress on families.

While judicial flexibility can be valuable in complex cases, SB 174 lacks clear standards and accountability mechanisms, allowing personal biases or local norms to influence outcomes. This opens the door to unpredictable rulings that do not reflect the best interests of children. Instead of promoting stability, the bill allows a patchwork of custody decisions across Ohio, undermining public trust in the family court system.

The bill also incentivizes conflict by routinely sidelining fit and involved parents in favor of arbitrary time splits. By failing to prioritize cooperative parenting or recognizing the value of each parent, SB 174 encourages litigation over collaboration. Parents are compelled to fight for time rather than focus on their child’s emotional and developmental needs.

The bill would grant judges total discretion to limit one parent’s involvement, even when both parents agree to shared parenting. This approach contradicts research showing benefits of equal parenting time and is unpopular with the public. This is no complicated: Establish the rebuttable presumption of equal shared parenting time.

SB174 would push Ohio backwards and hurt Ohio’s children and parents.

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