

Dear members of the Housing and Aging Committee:

I would like to begin by mentioning that I had originally written my opponent testimony over one year ago, but due to technical glitches, my testimony was never received by the Housing and Aging Committee. Notably, my situation has not only remained the same but worsened as I remain forcibly without contact with my precious child since June 2022 without so much as any due process, legal representation, etc. to which one is entitled under the United States and Ohio constitutions when such drastic circumstances are afoot. I have provided my original testimony in quotations below, and will summarize the events that have most recently transpired in the hopes that the trauma and suffering my son and I are forced to endure will reveal the focus should not be on 50/50 presumption, but on stricter legislation that requires judicial compliance with legal safeguards and textual fidelity codified in our juvenile code, R.C. 3109.04(F), relocation, and most critically, expands and specifies the legislative intent under R.C. 2951.258(D) which covers GAL competency and expected duties. Further, experts must be in compliance with Daubert standard as Ohio is a Daubert state. Based on my experience, the court and its officers have bafflingly refused even the slightest recognition of what the people have legislated.

Neither shared parenting nor equal access should occur when DV or coercive control is alleged, until a genuine, DV expert confirms child safety. Legislation prioritizing children's safety necessitates that qualified DV experts possess this specialized knowledge firmly rooted in scientific research. With only general knowledge of DV and without competent screening for it,

we will continue to have bad outcome cases affecting adversely both sides of the aisle; moreover, if HB14 is enacted, these adverse outcomes will exacerbate in scope and scale. It is my sincere hope that my story, and referenced scientific articles, will illustrate clearly this fact; I am in a somewhat unique situation, not fitting the “alienated vs. the DV victim” dichotomy dilemma that contributes to the derision encompassing this proposed legislation. My son and I have been victimized by both alienating behavior and Domestic Violence, spanning across three different states by the other parent.

My story begins in 2013. Eagerly anticipating my undergraduate graduation with summa cum laude & Phi Beta Kappa honors, it came as a surprise to learn that I was going to be a mother the following October. I did graduate with my BA from Kent State University as planned, but I’d begin my pre- and post- natal experience largely alone.

Obviously and although, it wasn’t in my original plan considering I had taken steps towards settling on a graduate school in the hopes of earning my PhD., I knew that if motherhood for me was on the books, I’d have to take a career detour. Little did I realize this detour would become one of the most terrorizing, life-threatening crash course into the heinous, wicked world of domestic and sexual violence with their corresponding injustices spanning across three different states: Ohio, New Jersey, and Florida. This nightmare wouldn’t begin until the Autumn of 2015, and sadly has not ceased.

October 9, 2013 was the best day of my life. I gave birth in Ohio to the most precious, beautiful healthy little boy in the world. I was blessed to and fully immersed myself into the joys of motherhood. My son and his needs and happiness dominated my decisions. I enjoyed every

moment – and, converted my main living space into essentially an indoor playground with various learning and exploration stations mirroring his developmental stages. I never missed social life, I had the most miraculous blessing before me, and I was determined to ensure his healthy, happy, harmonious childhood.

By contrast, his father was not only absent, but had fled the state shortly after I informed him in January that I was carrying his child. It was not until the fall of 2015 when I, for the sake of my son and the hope he could know his paternal family, reached out to his sister. Things, at first seemed to indicate I had made the correct decision, and I began facilitating visits from Ohio to New Jersey. My son's father recently moved in with his brother who resided in New Jersey, and we decided to see if there was any future as a family unit. Alarming, and rather quickly, things turned for the worse. He became psychotically jealous, controlling, accusatory, possessive and both verbally and physically violent. On countless occasions, he would strangle me or slam my head into whatever solid object or edifice was most convenient to him at the time, then assault me.

When my attempts to de-escalate his abuse through appeasement failed to work, I made a safety plan. Unfortunately, upon my attempt to execute this, I learned he removed my car battery to prevent our escape home. Things continued to escalate, despite never having committed any of the alleged slights or disloyalty which he Irrationally believed. While facilitating visitation in New Jersey, he ended up grabbing a handgun during one of his rages, pointing it at me.

Terrified, I ran into the bathroom to not only avoid being killed, but to avoid any gunfire from potentially striking our precious little boy who was sleeping in his father's bedroom. Eventually, he convinced me that he had put away the gun and demanded we talk downstairs. I had zero desire to speak, my phone was broken due to his violence so I couldn't call for help, but in order to Segway back to our son to make sure he was okay, I acquiesced. Unfortunately, not much conversing occurred. Instead, he assaulted me violently with the most sinister sneer I'd seen. He told me how I was "so crazy to purposely enrage him to violence – you love this shit," as if I was seeking some pathological thrill. I did everything I could to hold back my tears, everything I could to not shake uncontrollably from terror, everything I could to calm myself down.

My body was chronically healing from the physical assaults, my mind was doing its best to cope from repeated sleepless nights caused by his interrogatory terror. I could only pray to God for a miracle as I relentlessly thought about finding my car battery, putting it back in my car, and escaping with our son to our home in Ohio where we had a chance to be safe. By the grace of God, he was fired from his current position, and accepted another job where he worked late afternoon through the early morning hours. Because of this, he allowed my vehicle to have its battery so I could go to the store and buy ingredients to make our son's food. My son and I escaped, but our refuge would only be temporary.

His father, upon learning we left, immediately drove 8 hours from New Jersey to my home in Ohio demanding I let him in. I informed him that, while he could sleep on the couch, he needed to leave in the morning – our relationship was over, I was going to file for child support, and we could figure out a visitation schedule. He became enraged, but seemed to withhold

expression of it, until roughly 4 in the morning where I awoke to his accusatory verbal tirade, and demands.

This time I didn't fight it, but once he was finished, I called the police requesting their assistance in removing him from my home. This was the holiday weekend of New Year's. On or about January 3, 2016, he filed for custody and child support in New Jersey, completely fabricating our place of residence and, essentially, accusing me of abducting our son.

New Jersey has 50 50 presumption, and despite legal paternity never being established, my son's place of birth and legal residence being Ohio and, his father's lack of signature -and, only my last name on Giovanni's birth certificate and social security card - these items he could not produce for New Jersey litigation, had me believe that these points would suffice a successful motion to dismiss based on personal and subject-matter jurisdiction. I supplied our son's daycare records, birth certificate, health insurance card, my driver's license, his vaccination record, my workplace's address – all of which were linked to my son's and my home in Ohio.

While my motion apparently sat on a Jersey judge's desk, he convinced his sister's best friend, Sue Pontoreiro, who practices law in New Jersey to file ex-parte, a motion for emergency custody in New Jersey – relying solely upon a pack of demonstrably false statements of such a disgusting character, I can only bear to refer others to its transcript.

Shockingly, the judge granted it.

The early morning hours that followed began with the police pounding at my door, threatening to charge me with interference with custody if I didn't comply with this order. Being a law-abiding citizen, and naively believing this would be resolved quickly, I complied.

Three months and \$60,000 later, I finally was able to retrieve my son. There was zero cooperation from New Jersey law enforcement since, according to them, 50-50 presumption meant equal access rights, so in their view, it was a civil, not criminal matter. Ohio stated it would be New Jersey jurisdiction.

Nevertheless, court began all over again in Ohio. Eventually, I was pressured to agree to shared parenting, but as the residential parent. He moved right down the road from me in Madison Ohio.

As a means to force me to return, he would offer to have me spend time “as a family” during his parenting time, and I, concerned for our son’s well-being in his care, and afraid he would flee with our son, due to many threats made to do so, took him up on his offers. Not soon thereafter, the abuse began all over again. Eventually, this caused me to recover from a traumatic brain injury at his hands. This TBI required me to learn how to speak, think clearly, and function. I couldn’t remember my address, my phone number – had trouble breathing, and couldn’t figure out what was wrong with me.

I hadn’t connected the dots since I had been strangled and beaten up so many times before without these strange symptoms. Perhaps he drugged me? I wondered. I begged him to take me to the ER; rather than the ER, he eventually drove me to a psych ward. There was zero effort on this place’s employees to determine if my presentation was due to any other reason

than of psychiatric nature. I don't recall much, other than being given some kind of injection that, I later learned, amplified the TBI as I suffered from serotonin toxicity.

While I was recovering from my TBI, he filed for emergency custody in Ohio, and it was granted. From then on, he moved to Medina county (without my knowledge) and continued to prevent me from exercising any parenting time. I was eventually granted one day a week for a few hours, and despite, on one occasion of many, he cut off all contact around February 2022, for 6 weeks straight, I filed police reports and so on, to no avail. Just like the New Jersey abduction, he was never sanctioned – neither civilly or criminally for any of his evil, illegal acts.

The last I had contact with our son was July 31, 2022 – our son reported to me that his father was planning a secret “relocation” to Florida despite our already scheduled, pending court date, its very purpose to address my objections to his relocation. In order to be safe, I took him to Montville PD where he not only reported with acute detail of when, where, and how this was to occur, but reported his father's abuse against him personally.

This led me to obtain DV CPOs naming our son and me as protected parties from him. Unfortunately, our precious son was already being forcibly moved to Florida without my nor the court's permission. Thanks to our brave son's police report, I was quickly able to locate them in Bradenton, Florida where he was served with the DVCPO order after I hired a private investigator who was armed with Gio's police report. He was also a certified process server which meant I didn't have to wait a week for the Manatee County Sheriff's department to serve him officially.

This was tantamount since, our precious child was, and unfortunately, would remain in danger due to further, systemic interstate failures. This order required Ohio and Florida law enforcement to assist me in obtaining physical custody of our son, but Florida refused to comply, labeling it as a “civil matter” unless I domesticated the order down there, or was able to get a “pick up order,” from my jurisdiction. The legal concept of which, I came to learn upon motioning for it, does not exist in Ohio.

At my soonest opportunity, and upon Ohio law enforcement refusing to act, they claimed that it’s Florida’s jurisdiction, and thus, I was forced to fly to Florida, stay in a hotel on my own dime, until this end would be achieved. Unfortunately, it was one that after thousands of dollars spent that I couldn’t afford, but gambled in trust, followed with innumerable proverbial doors slammed in my face, I ultimately learned that my lawful efforts and obedience to given directives would prove vainglorious.

Neither in Ohio nor Florida could I convince a judge to grant me an emergency hearing, and the police in Manatee County were exceptionally hostile, refusing to act. One deputy from Manatee County Sheriff’s Department suggested I find our son at school and kidnap him back to Ohio. Another from the same department accused me of “deputy shopping,” demanding I “need to do some fucking research at the law library,” when attempting to report the crime of custodial interference.

During this time, pouring rain in the form of Hurricane Ian blasted into Manatee county, and the hotel rates jumped 3-fold since there were so many forced evacuations. Eventually, and adding further insult to injury, I received a response from legal aid of Florida who, after having a

meeting to determine if they could assist, declined, stating that it was a matter “best handled in Ohio.”

Completely broke, and absolutely broken, I returned roughly days prior to Halloween 2022, alone. Further devastating, I learned Ohio wasn’t set to have any hearings until February, and the pro-bono attorney who originally agreed to take my case, no longer was on the OAESV legal panel and thus, I was unrepresented.

Because of this, I was forced to file for a continuance, and despite all of our efforts, I have no legal representation and have heard absolutely nothing from our son. I don’t even know if he is alive, and despite his having a case open with the National Centers for Missing and Exploited Children, neither law enforcement nor Child Protective Services in either state will intervene.

It's an absolute disgrace what these failings of justice have caused us to endure. Not one day, since the end of 2015, has gone by without shedding tears. Not one.

Passing this bill essentially decriminalizes abusive behaviors, and people who otherwise wouldn’t engage in such egregious conduct due to the fear of jail time, will see no reason to refrain from leveraging the risks of HB14 to the destruction of a child’s well-being. Too many judges and evaluators have made it their practice to act on flagrant misinformation that contravenes safety; until we create legislation that ensures the experts in domestic violence possess exceptional familiarity with the most credible, scientific research and application in the courtroom we aren’t prioritizing safety. Until the safety of children is the first consideration that carries the most weight in court, we aren’t ready for HB14.

Prioritizing safety provides the substantial improvement needed; it takes away from a generalized need for DV expertise and replaces it with a specific set of skills that permit the accurate, reliable discernment of genuine DV cases by the court. Certainly, deliberately false allegations, when they occur, are concerning, demonstrating further that specialized, qualified DV expertise in the courtroom is critical. When a parent is engaging in this behavior, willing to commit perjury to "win," expect that same parent's broken moral compass to feed their children the false narrative. This being true, it's likely only one of many tactics of coercive control and abuse that a parent will utilize. Thus, we should ask ourselves, "How is it appropriate to expose our children to it by the abuser in equal measure to the healthy dynamics of a safe parent?" Moreover, the difficulty to prove clearly and convincingly that it would be detrimental to our children, in the legal sense, cannot be understated.

We know that abusers are adept at manipulation; I emphasize that this ability has severe implications regarding their potentially misusing HB14, or any other new law. This bill will only enable alienating behaviors and DV to proliferate while severely reducing safe, legal remedies.

As of June of last year, we had one hearing where the GAL branded me an "almost criminal," for lawfully obtaining temporary DV-CPOs for my son and me, and evidently having the nerve to wish each to be enforced. As a result, she recommended my parenting time be restricted to video chats only. No police records or evidence appeared to have been reviewed, neither my residence nor my son's father's residence in Florida was visited. No interviews by the GAL with any law enforcement officers were conducted, nor did it appear any schools were

evaluated. Despite acknowledging I had no history of being a risk, danger, etc. to our son, her recommendation was to deny my child the love, nurturance, and guidance I always provided. Not one iota of concern was placed on the fact my son's father absconded with our son, cut off all contact, without the permission of the court for nearly a year, and no custody evaluator nor expert was permitted to be appointed in my case. I did my best to navigate an unnecessarily grueling, traumatic, unethical proceeding as a pro se litigant, and I have no doubt that if I had legal representation, the outcome would've been totally different.

As a result of the most horrific day of my life, the proceeding that took place almost one year ago, I became deathly ill and continue to be hospitalized at least once a month, requiring infusion treatments, the likes of which have yet to provide a cure. Too ill to pursue legal relief at this point, I face the grim reality of my death prior to restoration of justice for my child, and without the opportunity to hold and care for my child. This evil is one no person without compelling circumstances should ever fathom possible. I pray that, although my testimony is poorly written due to its evoking the most difficult emotions to bear, those who wish to address "alienation" of parents, do so through the lens of my testimony, as it reveals the horrific dynamics at play that HB14 will undoubtedly, ironically enable. I am willing to provide any lawmaker further information to assist in drafting an efficacious piece of legislation that works for all Ohio families and children.

If there is any question about this, I invite anyone to look into my case in full detail and ask yourself if this wasn't exactly the result. Additionally, to realize how few solutions would

remain practical and effective, I suggest inquiring, "What solution or remedy is left to pursue in this case or cases like it?" I have lost everything and gained nothing. Instead of contributing to society, meeting my potential, and raising my beautiful child, I had to leave my job with no income multiple times. I had no ability to pay my bills after spending every single penny I had on failed efforts to recover my child. How can I explain gaps in my resume to a future employer, or ask a future landlord to overlook a potential eviction history? How can I afford "decent legal representation" after spending over \$100,000 on it over the years? And, how would I afford to pay for my son's funeral in the tragic event he is murdered like over 850 children were over the past 10 years? I don't know if I will ever get justice, let alone hold my child again. This is simply because those with the authority to intervene and prioritize my child's safety couldn't be bothered to do so.

No safe parent should have my life. It is one of unrelenting agony that accumulates over time, ad infinitum. I feel as though I'm dying from an all-consuming, blistering, suffocating grief that has, like a parasite, permeated deep into the marrow of my bones and well through my soul. Truly, my quality of life is one who's perpetually imprisoned in her distraught state of despair; it's inexpressible with words, and perhaps, it's best I stop trying to do so here.

Please recognize that equal timeshare is only a red herring; We must instead enact credible, science-based, effective legislation that would eschew long-discredited theories, misinformation, or otherwise bad data that serves no genuine value, except in bolstering political agendas when little else could be less political than child safety. Only then could a bill

like HB14 be considered here.

Please, do not let our suffering, trauma and loss go to waste because you prioritized an ideology over proper order of operations and oversight; Do not inadvertently catalyze the cross like the one we bear onto the future shoulders of any other parent or child who'd be affected by this bill; Please vote No.

Kindest regards,

Tiffany Saporito