



National Parents Organization Urges Michigan Lawmakers to Move Shared Parenting Forward

Michigan Joins 20 States Considering Family Court Reform

LANSING, MICHIGAN, USA, June 13, 2017 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Michigan lawmakers have the opportunity to improve children's educational achievements, decrease their use of drugs, and improve their overall health and adjustment without any cost to the taxpayer by passing shared parenting into law. With these benefits to hundreds of thousands of Michigan children in mind, National Parents Organization urges the Judiciary Committee of the Michigan House of Representatives to pass House Bill 4691 when it votes on the bill this Thursday, June 15, at 8:30 a.m.

The legislation embraces parental equality and shared parenting – a flexible arrangement where children spend as close to equal time as possible with each parent after divorce or separation. Specifically, the bill proposes a rebuttable presumption of shared parenting when parents divorce or separate, meaning the conversation begins with the two-parent solution.

“Passage of this bill will work to ensure that children receive the consistent love and care of not one, but both parents after separation or divorce,” said Linda Wright, a Michigan mother who's taking an active role in working to pass this legislation. “We can't afford to allow our broken family court system to continue with the sole custody status quo – our children can't be deprived of either parent any longer.”

The bill had had multiple hearings in the past two months and is sponsored by Rep. Jim Runestad with co-sponsorship from Rep. Tim Kelly, Rep. Scott VanSingel, Rep. Peter Lucido, Rep. Roger Hauck. Rep. Tristen Cole and Rep. Jim Tedder.

While shared parenting remains unusual, a trend toward shared parenting has developed in recent years. It has been the usual arrangement for several years in Sweden and Australia, and research there has shown much better outcomes for children. A handful of states in the U.S. have benefited from laws supportive of this arrangement for several years. Plus, in the last year alone, more than 20 states have considered the reform, and states including Kentucky have passed bills supportive of shared parenting in recent months. At the same time, research continues to show that shared parenting is in the best interest of children when their parents divorce or separate.

“It is wonderful that Michigan has this historic opportunity to move child custody laws in line with gender equality as well as the overwhelming body of research showing that most children desperately want and need shared parenting after divorce or separation,” said Ned Holstein, MD, Founder and Board Chair of National Parents Organization. “I urge Michigan lawmakers to swiftly move this proposal into law. Instead of setting up parents for a bitter and unnecessary custody battle, the bill will allow families to heal from the pain of divorce and separation from a position of equality and co-parenting.”

HOUSE BILL 4691: COMMENTS FROM LEGISLATIVE HEARINGS

Rep. Runestad said: “It is in the best interest of children to be raised by two-loving parents whenever

possible. Divorce between two parents is not a good reason for the system to profit by pitting parents against each other in an ugly competition over who is the better parent. A child needs and wants both parents, and nothing is more important to people than their right to take care of their child. Parents can come to agreements about what is best for the child when there is a presumption that parenting time should be shared between parties. This legislation is for children, and there are provisions in the bill to protect children from an unfit parent and in domestic violence situations.”

Family law attorney David Helms said: “The Shared Custody Act will safeguard children’s rights and access to both parents. It will start both parties on the same footing and maintain the continuity necessary for a healthy, happy, well-adjusted and stable child.”

ABOUT NATIONAL PARENTS ORGANIZATION

National Parents Organization, a charitable and educational 501 (c)(3) organization, seeks better lives for children through family law reform that establishes equal rights and responsibilities for fathers and mothers after divorce or separation. Visit the National Parents Organization website at www.nationalparentsorganization.org.

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