

THE BOYS INITIATIVE

Testimony in OPPOSITION to HB104:

The Boys Initiative is a nonprofit organization dedicated to implementing solutions to the issues and trends affecting the well-being and success of boys and young men in our nation and around the world.

We urge you to oppose HB104: Family Law-Child Custody and Visitation

Section 9105.19 (B) states the following: ANY REASONABLE EFFORT TO PROTECT A CHILD OR A PARTY TO A CUSTODY OR VISITATION ORDER FROM THE OTHER PARTY MAY NOT BE CONSIDERED AN UNJUSTIFIABLE DENIAL OF OR INTERFERENCE WITH VISITATION GRANTED BY A CUSTODY OR VISITATION ORDER.

The term "reasonable effort" is not defined and therefore this could be used to counter parental alienation allegations.

A parent who interferes with a child custody schedule or visitation right could be accused of unjustifiable interference. Section 9105.19 (B) is a defense to an allegation of unjustifiable interference. The argument would be that their "reasonable effort" is *not* unjustifiable and they were simply trying to "protect" the child from the supposed terrible influence of the father. Parental alienation *is* unjustifiable interference with the visitation right.

Parental alienation is a real phenomenon often used by one parent to alienate a child from the other parent in child custody cases. It is listed in DSM-5, the current Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of the American Psychiatric Association (APA), under diagnostic code V 995.51 "child psychological abuse," and there has been considerable research to support it as a diagnosis.

Critics of parental alienation who want to deny its existence often point to a 2019 study done by Professor Joan Meier. Unfortunately, the inability to replicate the study using open science practices has led to the conclusion the results are unreliable.

Most concerning about parental alienation is when mothers claim to be "protective" and alienate their child against the father or other positive male role model. Boys and young men need the influence of their fathers. Nearly 25 percent of America's children live in mother-only families. Study after study shows that the involvement of a father or a positive male role model has profound effects on children. Father-child interaction promotes a child's physical well-being, perceptual ability, and competency in relating to others. Furthermore, these children also demonstrate a greater ability to take initiative and display self-control. Children without positive male role models are more likely to be involved in criminal activity, have premarital sex, do poorer in school, and participate in unhealthy activities.

Please oppose SB41. This bill creates a defense to allegations of unjustifiable interference such as parental alienation.

Respectfully,

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