

Isaiah Burrell
March 6, 2019
Re: SB 318
Subject: Supporting Testimony

Good morning Chair Prozanski and committee members, my name is Isaiah Burrell and I reside here in Salem. I am here this morning to share my testimony supporting SB 318 because I have three beautiful daughters that I know would benefit greatly from the passing of this bill. I would like to begin by praying that Chair Prozanski and the members of this committee are able to hear the hearts of everyone supporting this bill. It is easy to mistake passion, pain, and devotion for anger or aggression. Everyone here is a person with a story; whether a story of passion for children's/father's rights, or a story of pain caused by a judge, attorney, or a co-parent. But we are all here, devoted to creating a new chapter, and changing the storyline by advocating for our children and attempting to change the status quo.

Now, consider what this phrase means to you...**"You both are equal parents"**. This is a phrase that I have heard from the Judge appointed to my case numerous times. I know it is the truth, as we both have homes, jobs, attend church and love our daughters dearly. However, because we couldn't agree on joint custody, "Equal" ends up looking like every other weekend with my kids and a few hours during the week. A mediator once told me that bedtimes are where the magic happens. Tucking my children into bed at night, praying a nighttime prayer with them, brushing their teeth, reading them a bedtime story, or comforting them when they have a nightmare are all things that are important to my children, to me, and to the development of our bond and relationship. However, these are just a few examples of things that cannot happen consistently with the 4 nights I'm allotted with my children each month. So, while the Judge says I'm an "equal" parent, that is not the message that me, my children, or their mother are receiving.

A child is 50% mom and 50% dad. Our children deserve to be with their two parents who EQUALLY love them, EQUALLY want to raise them, EQUALLY are able to care for them, and who EQUALLY took part in creating them. So, the question is: What is in the best interest of our children? Is it really one involved parent and a visitor?

I would be happy to share my story with you more in depth, Chair Prozanski and members of the committee, and am willing to answer any questions you may have. Please consider passing this bill, as I strongly believe this is the first step toward a resolve that our children desperately need. I also ask that you take time to watch a segment aired by CNN called "The Dad Dilemma". Here is the link to the video: <https://youtu.be/otC4P72x7vU>. I truly appreciate your time, and feel blessed to have been able to share my story with you.

All the best,

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