

HB 2547 Testimony

Thank you Representative Neron.

Good afternoon Chair Power, Vice Chair Wallan, and members of the committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on behalf of HB 2547. For the record, I am Michelle Pelletier.

As Ms. Neron stated, my family's experience in Oregon's family courts has been horrible and yet shockingly similar to many other families in Oregon. Our story spans over 14 years and is in seemingly endless litigation to this day. Part of the reason for this is that we have a different Judge almost every single time we step into the court room. I cannot tell you how many Judges we have had over the last 14 years since we have been in the living hell that is called Oregon family court. As recently as our last hearing on 1/29/2021, Judges have stated on the record that they have not read any of our file (which contains over 14000 pages) prior to our hearings. Frankly Judges often do not review the materials of the hearing set before them until that day if at all. This leaves rulings that seem to come out of left field if not the Twilight Zone and result in more trauma to our child and actually draw out litigation to the tune of \$10-15K a year at least.

When judges do not retain a case, they do not know the big picture, and that is on top of many Judges who are clearly not trauma and domestic violence informed. The fact is that our abuser, a man who strangled and burned me and threw our child into a wall, is able to continually file new motions over the same matters causing ongoing trauma to our child and perpetuating his control in our lives while also financially abusing me through endless litigation and baseless filings.

Most "family" court reform bills currently in review or recently passed across our nation are named after children and/mothers who have died due to the failures of the courts. I would like to see bills like HB 2547 passed to prevent more trauma, injury and death to our children. Laws such as Kayden's Law, named after a 7-year-old PA child who was murdered by her father in 2018 after the courts ignored her mother's fight for protection, Piqui's Resolution in CA named after 5-year-old Piqui was brutally murdered by his father in 2017 in CA due to the court's failure to protect, Kyra's Law named after Kyra Franchetti who was 2 when she was murdered by her father in 2016 and the list goes on and on.

As of January 31, 2021, since 2008, there have been over 760 children murdered in similar scenarios. These children's stories share similarities in that again and again, the courts dismissed protective parent's and often the children's own pleas for protection.

Our child is now 16 and thankfully still alive. However, she has suffered untold trauma due to the court's failures to protect her from abuse for years. When she informed her therapist of abuse at age 10, our daughter was briefly protected with supervised parenting time with her father for several months. Then we had a hearing before yet another judge who did not know our case and her father was actually granted *increased* parenting time. This was a new judge to our case who did not understand our history or know our case. This judge made a life altering and damaging decision which caused 4 more years of additional abuse and trauma to our child. Dogs have more rights and protection than children in our family courts.

We tell children to tell if someone hurts them just as we tell domestic violence victims to seek help and yet over and over victims are not protected.

Our child was flung back into an unsafe situation and the last instance of physical abuse was more severe than when she was 10. Our daughter is now considered a victim of a crime by the Oregon Dept of Justice, she has been safe for almost 2 years however, however she is not out of the dark and now suffers from depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder. All because the court did not protect her because we had multiple judges on our case who did not know our history.

Much of this could have been avoided if one judge had retained and heard our case and knew our history. Still, today, despite all of this in Oregon family court her father is allowed to continue to exert his control and abuse through endless motions, hearings and litigation in an attempt to force our child back with him. Just today my ex's new attorney requested a deposition with me which will draw out more costs, more court, more time and more trauma. Our child will be nearly 17 at our next hearing currently slated for May 2021.

This is a problem because if the same judge who is familiar with our 14 year, 14000+ page file of endless court licensed abuse would have heard our case they would know our story, they would have heard the testimony from our child's own

attorney, from her therapists, doctors, etc., and they would know the trauma this endless litigation causes to our daughter.

This is a solution I believe in.

I urge your support for HB 2547 I am happy to answer any questions you have, and I thank you for the opportunity to testify today.