

Submitter: Diana Shera Taylor
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Judiciary
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3095

I have been a domestic relations mediator for almost 30 years and have a deep understanding of the issues facing families when parents separate. Absent abuse or neglect, children love both of their parents, and have a right to spend time with, and be parented by, both parents. Over the years, I have seen a dramatic evolution in in how fathers view their responsibilities towards their children. Years ago, fathers were expected to be the breadwinners, and mothers were expected to be the homemakers. Fathers were away from the home all day working to support their families, while many mothers were at home raising the children and maintaining the household. Back then, typical parenting plans stated that the mothers would have the children most of the time, and that the children could have parenting time with their fathers every other weekend.

That is no longer true. Now, both parents typically have jobs outside the home, and share the household and child rearing responsibilities while they are together. Fathers want to be an important part of their children's lives, and be with them as much as possible. It is no longer rare to have a couple come to mediation and state that the father was a "stay at home Dad" while the mother worked outside the home.

It takes two people to create a child and both parents to raise that child. The presumption absolutely should be joint custody, where both parents work together to make major life decisions for their children. The presumption should also be equal parenting time so that the children have the benefit of having both parents actively raising them. This change in the law would improve parental relationships in that the parents would have to actively work together to focus on the needs of their children instead of whatever issues led to their separation or divorce. When parents are in constant conflict, the children suffer greatly. I fully support this bill, and urge you to pass it.

Thank you.