

To whom it concerns,

My name is Patricia Gordon, I live in Stayton Oregon, I am a now retired child psychologist specializing in the behavioral and emotional health of daughters during divorce proceedings, I have extensively studied the impacts of father presence and absence, as well as the roles of biological and stepparents. Research indicates significant differences in outcomes for daughters based on the presence of a consistent father figure and highlights the unique challenges in stepparent-child relationships.

- Impact of Father Absence on Daughters
- Mental Health and Emotional Well-being: Daughters growing up without a stable paternal presence are more susceptible to low self-esteem, psychological disturbances, and difficulties in romantic relationships.
  
- Educational and Social Outcomes: Father absence has been linked to lower high school graduation rates and challenges in social-emotional adjustment.
- Increased Risk Behaviors: Girls without fathers are at a higher risk of engaging in sexual risk-taking behaviors, experiencing early pregnancy, and living in poverty.
- The Benefits of a Consistent Father Figure
- Enhanced Academic Achievement: A father's active involvement is associated with better academic performance and cognitive development in daughters.

**Improved Mental Health:** Consistent paternal engagement contributes to higher self-esteem and lower incidences of depression and anxiety among daughters.

**Positive Social Development:** Daughters with present fathers often exhibit better social skills and form healthier relationships.

**Emotional Needs: Stepparents vs. Biological Parents**

**Weaker Emotional Bonds:** Studies have found that stepparents often have weaker emotional contact with their stepchildren compared to biological parents.

- **Support Disparities:** Research indicates that stepparents are less likely to receive support from their adult stepchildren than biological parents, suggesting that the emotional needs met by biological parents are not fully replicated by stepparents.
- **Increased Behavioral Issues:** Children in stepparent households are more likely to exhibit behavioral problems and face challenges in social integration, potentially due to the complexities in forming strong emotional bonds with stepparents.

In summary, the presence of a consistent and engaged father figure plays a crucial role in the emotional and behavioral development of daughters. While stepparents can provide valuable support, the unique emotional needs fulfilled by biological parents are not always fully met by stepparents, underscoring the importance of nurturing these relationships to promote the well-being of children.

I support HB 3095 because it is a necessary step toward reforming our broken system. For too long, we've seen the consequences of policies that fail to prioritize the well-being of our children and families. HB 3095 addresses these issues head-on, ensuring that we create a more just, effective, and supportive framework for those who need it most.

Our current system has too many gaps, leaving children without the emotional and financial stability they deserve. This bill acknowledges the importance of consistency, fairness, and accountability, setting the foundation for lasting change. If we truly care about the future of our communities, we must take action now. HB 3095 isn't just a policy change—it's a necessary reform that will help repair a deeply flawed system.

Thank you for your time

-PG

Child psychologist

Daughters need Dads Network