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Written Testimony to the Kansas State Senate Judiciary Committee

Kansas State Capitol Building, Room 346-S
Topeka, KS 66612

SUPPORT SB 157

Dear Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee,

Hello my name is John Thompson. I represent TFRM. We are an organization that is seeking to bring 50/50 parenting to KS as a norm, not as a last resort. It is against our state's constitution to base a ruling on gender. Our state uses the tender years doctrine which states its best for younger children (1 to 5 depending on who you talk to) to be with their mom, this is absolutely based on gender. This doctrine was not factually based, it was decided upon by judges and lawyers. Children benefit from having equal access to their parents even in situations where the parents do not get along. Let's look at a few stats, they have been compiled from the 2017 census, of children not having access to a male role model

4 times more likely to experience poverty.

7 times more likely to be a pregnant teen.

More likely to commit crime.

More likely to go to jail.

2 times more likely to drop out.

These are all unsettling as they should be. For a moment these problems seem localized, like it happens to those people over there, that family there, that child in the grocery store checkout line. If we take a sec to stop and look at these moments in time, the child at the grocery store we can see how it effects our community as a whole.

This child falls in with the wrong crowd, this effects their family. They start to do poorly in school, this effects the other children in their class and their school. They steal in the neighborhood, this effects their community. This effects the victim of the crime and the police, this effects their community. The children get caught and go to jail, this effects their city. The children continue to commit crimes and get longer prison sentences, this effects their city. They finally get out and now need social rehabilitation services, effecting their community. Maybe they'll need help along the way taking state assistance as needed. We can see the effects of children being moved away from their fathers on our country today.

As a whole we pay into these services that will be tapped to help get these people onto a good path for themselves and the community around them. Initially this seems like a, that's them over there, issue.

When we look at the larger picture we can see how leaving kids with limited to no access to their father can cause a much larger ripple effect to their entire community. I believe we have an opportunity to help fix some of these issues before they ever even get the chance to happen by allowing a child access to both of their parents. This is not a silver bullet for all problems but starting with what's best for Kansas kids helps curtail a lot of issues before they start. We want parents to have equal footing and a 50/50 law will make that happen. We have no interest in putting children into dangerous situations that's why the law has rebuttable presumption. If a parent is a danger then we want the kids to be safe. We want a judge to be able to step in and put the best interests of the child first.

Respectfully,

John Thompson