



PAS Intervention
A 501c3 Nonprofit
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PA HB 1397

Dear Legislators:

I support PA HB 1397 – a Shared Custody Proposed Bill. As a veteran in this field for over 23 years and vetted expert in custodial interference, it cannot be understated as to the importance of shared equal parenting. As per Laurie Nichols, we both strongly agree that this bill is one of the few ways we have to reset and fix our dysfunctional family courts.

Below is some suggestions and thoughts I share with Laurie and others about this bill.

Presently, in many states there is some serious issues with allowing children under the age of 18 to decide where they want to live and if they want to remove a parent from their lives. This issue creates unnecessary family court turmoil and erosion of families. If we would not allow this to happen in an intact family then why are we allowing this to happen in a divorce family. I call this the Intact Family Rule.

Furthermore, science has taught us the following:

- 1) Children do NOT have the emotional or mental maturity to make such a momentous decision as to remove one parent from their lives.
- 2) Science has further taught us that the human brain does not stop growing until age 25 or 26. And it does not stop maturing until age 35 or 36.
- 3) It is why children are not allowed to vote until age 18.
- 4) It is why children are not allowed to drink or smoke until age 21.
- 5) It is why children are not allowed to rent a car until age 25 or 26.
- 6) Children of high conflict custody cases often have serious emotional and mental delays. They often maybe of a physical age of 13 or 14 but emotionally and mentally are stuck at the age when the custodial interference and abuse began. This means they are not able to make a safe decision about their own future relationship with their other parent.



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- 7) Statistical data also shows that even children of abuse do not remove their parent from their life. My colleague, Linda Gottlieb, worked with over 3000 foster children for 25 years. The one thing that all of these children always asked was "when can I go home?" "when can I see my parent."

How then can we expect a child lacking in all of these necessary emotional and mental skills to be able to comprehend the gravity of removing a parent from their lives just because of a divorce?

I would also like to make a few additional suggestions that Laurie Nicholson has also echoed in her testimony based off of a program I have created and copyrighted called 3 Strikes YOU'RE OUT!! This program allows for only 12 weeks and 3 chances for a parent to comply with the courts orders and to stop impeding in the children's relationship with the other parent. There are many bells and whistles build into this program to assist the professionals and the courts to help recognize when one parent is deliberately impeding a once health relationship between the children and the other parent. In fact, I recently spoke in September at the 3rd Annual PASG conference in Philly about it to some 400 plus professionals and parents.

Time is of the essence if we want to stop the ravaging of children and families. The law needs to be changed to protect innocent children from the guilt, shame and lost memories they will have as adults because they did not realize the gravity and seriousness of removing a once loved and happy relationship with the other parent.

Will this stop alienation and custodial interference? Probably not, but it will curb it and help to prevent courts and kids from destroying a once positive relationship with the other parent by not allowing emotionally and mentally immature children from making this mistake.

Please this is one huge step in the process of fixing our family courts.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joan Kloth-Zanard".

Joan Kloth-Zanard
MFT, ADA, RSS, ABI, GAL, MDCF, LC