

Written Testimony
by Craig Tuttle of Scott City, KS
In Support of SB157 on March 8, 2019, 10:30AM, Room 346-S
Creating a presumption in favor of shared parenting time for temporary orders

Dear Chairman Wilborn and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee,

The following are a list of items that support passing the shared parenting SB157.

- I. Voters favor Shared Parenting: There is currently national momentum of support for shared parenting in many states and in Washington, and Kansans are apparently very aware of that. In our state of Kansas, a recent scientific survey shows there is a vast majority, 40 to 1 ratio, who support shared parenting when asked a variety of questions about Shared Parenting.
- II. Research supports Shared Parenting: A meta study¹ of 60 studies shows
 - a. Joint Physical Custody (Shared Parenting) provides better outcomes of children on all measures of well-being.
 - b. Better outcomes of children regardless of conflict levels between parents or household incomes. Thus, the better outcomes for children were only due to having a better relationship between the children and both parents.
 - c. Children are better off whether the parents agree to Shared Parenting or are ordered by court to use Shared Parenting.

¹ Linda Nielsen (2018): Joint versus sole physical custody: Outcomes for children independent of family income or parental conflict, Journal of Child Custody, DOI: 10.1080/15379418.2017.1422414
- III. Children's Relationship with both Parents helps financially and emotionally: SB157, Shared Parenting, for fit, willing and able adults can reverse the out-of-date traditions of deciding which household is "the best" in a divorce. A shared Parenting arrangement also levels the financial situation so each parent can have the best chance at providing for the children. The relationship with both parents is needed by the children more than finding which parent or household is the best. Even though parents who are divorced may endure more travel or extra exchanges, they will be rewarded by having children who mature into emotionally strong adults.
- IV. Shared Parenting Court and legal costs for are LOWER: In my situation, Shared Parenting was agreed at the start because we knew the Court was likely to Order 50-50 physical custody. Therefore, in Districts around Kansas, the same should occur when Courts start with the assumption of Shared Parenting 50-50% physical custody. On the other hand, custody battles drive court and legal costs higher when one parent receives a court-awarded majority time such as 26 or 27 days per month physical custody when both parents are fit, willing, and able. The ones who pay the real price for unbalanced physical custody or residency, are the children.
- V. Shared Parenting and Rural/Urban Revitalization Plans: Revitalization plans focus on mental health, crime, and drug use. The statistics are much worse for children from single parent homes where children are fatherless or where the child has little or no contact with their father. I would like to suggest that Kansans can do something more beneficial at no cost. That is to help children to have a rich, loving, and complex relationship with both their parents, and direct our courts on this effort.