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### Support Document for Senate Bill 257- Shared Parenting

My name is Dennis Fontelroy. I am a father of 2 biological adult children and 5 adult children. I am the #5 child of 15 children by my parents Walter and Clarethia Fontelroy.

I found myself in the role of a single parent in the late 1990's when the children's mother made the decision to move from Wichita Kansas back to Coffeyville Ks. We had migrated from SE Kansas to pursue employment as the jobs in the rural areas were dwindling and there were not many opportunities for a firefighter/EMT with my experience and knowledge. The children were ages 6 and 4 at the time.

I raised the children in the home and they made the adjustments in school and were comfortable in the neighborhood. When the divorce was finalized, I had retained residential custody and "Mom" had visitations every other weekend and holidays, while paying the obligatory child support. During those times, the animosity between myself and "Mom" became a source of frustration as we obviously parented differently. I, was more structured, and she was more permissive.

As I began to navigate single parenthood, I began to realize I desired a female role model for my daughter. I began slowly to allow myself to hang out in church activities, where I met my now current spouse.

The animosity and adversarial relationship began to increase resulting in "Mom", who is a social worker by profession, alleging to the authorities that there was violence, abuse, and possible sexual abuse going on. All allegations were found

unsubstantiated by the authorities, but nonetheless effective in causing dissension and creating discord in the home.

I suppose the effects of the divorce and the ensuing custody battle to gain and maintain control of the childrens daily lives causes parents to stoop to many levels that they otherwise would not go. I do know however, that the affect on my children has cost them their initial innocence and belief in a balanced singular focused life of just being themselves. It has caused me to feel the same.

Inasmuch as I grew up with both father and mother in the home, it was my desire to duplicate that model. Much to my dismay, I have had to watch my children struggle with separation anxiety, loneliness, detachment, and a myriad of other issues caused by the separation, court issued orders, and the proverbial disconnect which they have had to overcome.

I know that if we had been able to work out our differences without the pressures of child support and court ordered visitation, my children would not have suffered as they have. My son, who went to the Navy as a result of not being able to live with a man who was not his father, now suffers from depression and PTSD, the result of that choice. My daughter, who is constantly going back and forth between mom and myself, eventually became pregnant as a result of never feeling like she had a real home to always be in.

It is because of this personal experience and the experiences of others I have met while volunteering as a fatherhood practitioner, I support the passage of Senate Bill 257, the Shared Parenting Bill.

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