



Leading Women for Shared Parenting

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1030 15th Street, NW B1

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Washington, DC 20005

January 30, 2018

To: Kansas Senate Judiciary Committee

Re: SB 257 – Modifies provisions of law relating to child custody orders

Dear Senators;

Leading Women for Shared Parenting (LW4SP) is writing to urge you to **vote in favor of SB 257** for the benefit of Kansas children and families.

As part of LW4SP's focus, we review legislation related to Parenting Plans and Child Custody. The Kansas Senate Judiciary Committee is currently reviewing **SB 257, dealing with the Preliminary Orders for Parenting Plans** of families experiencing separation or divorce.

The main components of SB 257 include:

- Establishing a preference for “Shared Parenting” in preliminary orders, which research shows is best for children,
- Maintaining judicial discretion to deal with exceptional cases, falling outside of the normal family, and
- Allowing the presumption to be rebutted with a Clear and Convincing evidence standard

Shared parenting bills were considered in 20 statehouses last session with legislation very similar to SB257 passing unanimously through the Kentucky legislature. Shared parenting was also passed in Arizona in 2012 and a follow up study found [Judges and therapists feel the new law is working well](#).

The undersigned Leading Women represent a U.S.-based organization whose international membership supports the modernization of family laws that maximize the relationship between children and both their parents.

Leaders must begin to address **Fatherlessness, the top social issue in America**, and **one linked to every major social pathology in children**. All credible research supports the implementation of shared parenting, with **60 peer-reviewed studies, including one reviewing 150,000 children**, concluding that children fare best when

time with both parents is maximized. Shared Parenting has been **proven to [improve children’s relationship with both their Father and Mother](#)** and in 2014 **[110 experts](#) on child psychology, child development, child attachment, domestic violence and parental conflict reached a groundbreaking consensus: children’s “best interests” are served the closer the time share allocation comes to equal.**

The women of LW4SP come from all walks of life, hold diverse political perspectives and represent the viewpoint of countless women. The LW4SP membership includes elected officials, lawyers, psychiatrists, psychologists, licensed social workers, researchers, authors, pediatricians, parental alienation experts, columnists, advocates and **a world-renowned team of domestic violence counselors.**

In research, polling and voting, well **over [70% of citizens – men and women alike - consistently support](#) shared parenting provisions in family law statutes.** Your decision to vote in favor of a bill reflecting broad public support accords well with principled leadership and responsiveness to citizens. It also indicates your dedication to improving psychological, social and civic outcomes for children.

Please accept this letter as **our written testimony in favor of SB257** on behalf of our Kansas membership.

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