

February 2, 2010

Families and Human Services Committee Testimony
Re: SB-197, Family law; paternity

We are writing about the importance and need to have Senate Bill 197 pass through the Legislative process and become approved. The legislation that is currently in force and has been in force in Michigan since the 50's is outdated and unrealistic in our society today. The old laws of Michigan involving the rights of biological fathers with their child, regardless of past, current, or future relationships with the mother, have caused more hardships and problems than solutions and Senate Bill 197 is a big step in the right direction to correct those injustices. According to Michigan law, a child that is born into a marriage between the mother and her husband is considered a product of the marriage, even if the husband is not the true biological father of the child! So, where does that leave the true father of that child? How is it possible for the biological father to have no rights to be apart of his own child's life? It's time to begin reforming this law by passing Senate Bill 197 and allowing a father to be a Dad to his child.

Our brother Chad Podolak has been personally affected by the old and unpractical Michigan law by losing all rights to see his daughter and our niece, Kaitlyn. By passing Senate Bill 197 our brother could be a big step closer to seeing his daughter again that he has not seen or heard from since October, 2006! Due to the combination of outdated laws and legislation and the blatant disregard of parental rights for my brother from the mother of his child, our family has suffered a loss uncomparable to any other loss imaginable... the loss of a child and a loved family member. Our brother became aware of his proud parenthood by the mother of his child when Kaitlyn was 2 ½ months old. From that very same day until the day in court when Kaitlyn was ripped away from her father, our brother was involved in every aspect of his daughter's life, whether it was going to Michigan's Adventure Park with daddy, mommy Amanda and brother Jadon, Uncle Brandon and Aunt Roxanne or just hanging out at home with family and friends. Our brother was always the one that would make the drive to see his daughter or to pick her up for a weekend, even after the mother decided to move two hours away in an attempt to deter our brother from driving long distances to see his daughter. We could continue writing about all the different times that our brother and our entire family spent with Kaitlyn for almost 4 years, but instead we will end this letter with one simple request and that is to pass Senate Bill 197 so Chad and his entire family can become whole again by having our precious Kaitlyn back where she belongs... with her Dad and her Family!!

Sincerely,

Brandon, Roxanne & Lucas Podolak