

My name is Amanda Podolak. I am not able to attend the hearing, so I am writing a verbal testimony in favor of Bill 197. Just over 3 years ago our family learned the harsh reality of a law that needs serious revision. Words cannot describe the feelings we faced that day.

Today is an important day for a lot of families including ours. The passage of this bill could do a great deal of good for fathers, but also for children. I want so badly to be selfish and say I am only writing this in hopes someday we will see our daughter again, but to be fair to her, I can't. Bill 197 may not even help our family in the way we had originally hoped, but it could help others. Children have the right to know the truth about their own background, medical ancestry, and family.

Our goal is not to tear families apart, but rather build larger ones. Fathers in this situation want to be a part of their children's lives. They want to love them and show them that love. Family members of the father also want the chance to do these things. What is hard for us is that we had that chance for almost 4 years and then just like that it was over. We now have no idea how she is, what she looks like, her interests, or how she likes school. The simple things we take for granted with our other children are the things we miss most with our oldest daughter.

I realize I am the step mom and step moms are stereotypically mean, but I have been here since the very beginning and I love her as if she one of my own. Although it would be hard to swallow if this bill truly did not help our situation, it will give us some comfort that other families will not have to suffer like we did.

On a final note, the law needs to be revised so that children and their families, all of them, can have relationships and share the bond only a family can. Thank you for your time and if you have any questions please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,



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Amanda Podolak
9060 S. Butler Rd.
Perrinton, MI 48871
989-292-1199