

February 15, 2012

My name is Donna Roberts and I am the founder of ACRA-A Child's Rights Association. I am here today with a piece of legislation known as the Kansas Protective Parent Reform Act HB2137. I drafted this bill and Representative Phil Hermanson filed it.

Thank you Phil for being an advocate for child victims and families.

As a child activist and a family advocate I am here to ask that you carefully listen to the parents who will be testifying before you, they have endured the backlash of our child protection system, their child or children are the ones who have or is suffering from abuse. Their children and many others are the reason we are here today.

Protective Parents who report what their children are telling are losing custody to the abuser, forced into supervised visits and in some cases lose all contact with their children. What message are we sending to children who are brave enough to come forward and tell about the abuse? We are telling them that you will be punished for telling and then forced to live with the abuser.

I have been personally involved with many families for almost 7 years now. I am amazed how our child protection system continues to force children to live with the abuser. This isn't about moms or dad's this is about the children, child victims who speak out and want the abuse to stop. Society teaches children to tell, we educate them on this issue, but when they do tell their whole world falls apart especially when the abuser is a parent.

The bottom line is that children are telling and telling and our child protection system is failing these children. How can we expect to teach children to tell and then they are not believed? Statistics show that family members pose a real danger more than the stranger danger. My child was victimized at a very young age and I have witnessed the damage done to a child who has been victimized. These parents who report should not be treated as a trouble maker. The persons involved in the investigations should be treating these sexual abuse cases as a crime and not a family matter.

I ask you today to seriously consider HB2137, it will not only protect children from a lifetime of abuse but it will also protect a parent's right to protect their child. It is our duty as parents to do so and that right should not be taken away because of personal opinions, not professional ones.

Thank You,

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