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## Meeting with Senator Greg Bell August 2nd

Posted by admin - 2007/07/31 19:36

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Meeting with Senator Greg Bell to discuss Divorced and non-custodial parent issues.

Even if you can't attend, please call and email everyone you can think of that supports our mission (and that's not already a member of this group) and encourage them to be present at this event.

When: Thursday, August 2, 2007 at 6:00 PM

Where: Salt Lake Main Library  
210 East 400 South Fourth Floor Conference Room  
Salt Lake City, UT 84111-2804

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## Re:Meeting with Senator Greg Bell August 2nd

Posted by admin - 2007/08/13 17:17

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You Tube Video of the meeting. Clip is available:

<http://www.youtube.com/v/PKvVF3gvyYU>

Child Support does not always go to the best interest of the child. See this clip from the meeting with Senator Bell that clarifies that child support is a multi-million dollar interest for the state of Utah. Halfway through the video see a child of divorce question the senator about accountability for the child support the custodial parent receives.

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## Re:Meeting with Senator Greg Bell August 2nd

Posted by admin - 2007/08/16 15:35

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One of the most discussed issues at the meeting was 50/50 equal parenting legislation. Senator Bell explained the difficulties with jumping immediately to a 50/50 parenting presumption from the legislative and practical points of view and was open to looking further into 50/50 equal parenting based on research and studies.

Another of the obvious concerns to non-custodial parents that was brought up was child support. Concerned non-custodial parents contend that child support does not always go to the best interest of the child, but rather to support the custodial parent's interests. See this clip from the meeting with Senator Bell that clarifies that child support is a multi-million dollar interest for the state of Utah. Halfway through the video see a child of divorce question the senator about accountability for the child support the custodial parent receives.

(Transcript below and commentary regarding ORS provided by Utah Fathers Rights Meetup Group)

Audience member: The best interests of the child is what I want to talk about. When we discuss this issue of 50/50 custody what often comes up is the economic situation for mothers. That's not talking about the best interests of the child then. You've switched from the best interests of the child now to the best interests of one parent. And what I would like to say about this is we really need to separate those two issues, because if it's truly in the best interests of the child having involvement from both parents, then why are we messing with that because we're concerned about economics for one parent?

Senator Bell: Well, you make a great point and if you and I were designing a new world that's where we would start. But we're not. We're stuck with a system and I'm just saying that there's no way you're going to lop off hundreds of millions of child support overnight or for even a three year ammortization. You know what I'm saying. It's a huge economic and social shift and you know whether you and I and all the angels agree or not we're not going to get the governor and 103 other people you know to move there overnight so ah you're right. The interests of the child is not necessarily found with the child support cause the child support may or may not go to the best interest of the children.

Another audience member: Senator Bell, I am one of those children. My parents divorced in Montana. And my dad currently lives here in Utah. It was a very unfair situation and I'd like to see something on the legislature that puts parents in responsibility to that child support. I'd like to see a program like Horizontee cards for welfare that maybe we keep track of that child support so that we know it's going for the children cause it's not parental support, it's child support. And my mom took the child support and didn't use it to support me. My mom never gave me a college fund. She never made sure

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I had the tools to be a successful adult. I escaped from my mother from a very abusive situation at the age of 17. My dad had to continue paying child support till I was 19. And I didn't live with my mom and I had no support from her. I would like to see something on the legislature that changes to where we do keep track of child support. My dad is currently \$140,000... of what it goes towards, of what it's spent on. Because the price of raising a child is not dependent on a percentage of a wage, it is a price, but shouldn't we keep track of where that money goes so it's not used for mommy when the children are gone, for her and the new husband to go away to Hawaii. That's not a very useful use of that child support... and there's parents trading their child support for drugs and all sorts of ridiculous things.

Just how much money is this hundreds of millions in child support?? According to the website of the Utah Office of Recovery Services, over \$195.9 million was collected in fiscal year 2006. Of this amount over \$23.4 million was distributed to the Utah Department of Health (as opposed to being distributed to recipient parents), and at least \$6.3 million made it directly into the state's general fund (as opposed to being distributed to recipient parents).

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## Re:Meeting with Senator Greg Bell August 2nd

Posted by admin - 2007/08/17 19:05

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One attendee quoted from the following on the American Psychological Association's finding on joint physical custody:

Contact: Pam Willenz  
Public Affairs Office  
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**CHILDREN LIKELY TO BE BETTER ADJUSTED IN JOINT VS SOLE CUSTODY ARRANGEMENTS IN MOST CASES, ACCORDING TO REVIEW OF RESEARCH**

Living Situation Not As Influential As Time Spent With Parent

WASHINGTON - Children from divorced families who either live with both parents at different times or spend certain amounts of time with each parent are better adjusted in most cases than children who live and interact with just one parent, according to new research on custody arrangements and children's adjustment.

Psychologist Robert Bauserman, Ph.D., of AIDS Administration/Department of Health and Mental Hygiene in Baltimore, Maryland conducted a meta-analysis of 33 studies between 1982 to 1999 that examined 1,846 sole-custody and 814 joint-custody children. The studies compared child adjustment in joint physical or joint legal custody with sole-custody settings and 251 intact families. Joint custody was defined as either physical custody - where a child spends equal or substantial amounts of time with both parents or shared legal custody - where a child lives with primarily one parent but both parents are involved in all aspects of the child's life. This article will appear in the March issue of the Journal of Family Psychology, published by the American Psychological Association (APA).

Children in joint custody arrangements had less behavior and emotional problems, had higher self-esteem, better family relations and school performance than children in sole custody arrangements. And these children were as well-adjusted as intact family children on the same measures, said Bauserman, "probably because joint custody provides the child with an opportunity to have ongoing contact with both parents."

These findings indicate that children do not actually need to be in a joint physical custody to show better adjustment but just need to spend substantial time with both parents, especially with their fathers, said Bauserman. Also, joint custody couples reported less conflict, possibly because both parents could participate in their children's lives equally and not spend the time arguing over childcare decisions. Unfortunately a perception exists that joint custody is more harmful because it exposes children to ongoing parental conflict. In fact, the studies in this review found that sole-custody parents reported higher levels of conflict.

It is important to recognize that the results do not support joint custody in all situations. When one parent is abusive or neglectful or has a serious mental or physical health problem, sole-custody with the other parent would clearly be preferable, said Bauserman. The judges, lawyers, social workers, psychologists and other professionals involved in divorce counseling and litigation should be aware of these findings to make informed decisions of what environment is best for a child in a custody situation.

Furthermore, to address the question of how much the parents' emotional health compared with the custody arrangement influenced the children's adjustment, Bauserman explained that custody arrangement seemed to have more influence. By statistically controlling for past parental conflict (which indicates parental maladjustment), the joint custody children still were significantly better adjusted. This result was also found in other studies cited in Bauserman's review. More primary research is needed, said Bauserman, "on the past and current adjustment of joint custody and sole custody parents before this question can be completely answered."

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Article: "Child Adjustment in Joint-Custody Versus Sole-Custody Arrangements: A Meta-Analytic Review," Robert Bauserman, Ph.D., AIDS Administration/Department of Health and Mental Hygiene; Journal of Family Psychology, Vol 16, No. 1.

Full text of the article is available from the APA Public Affairs Office or at <http://www.apa.org/journals/releases/fam16191.pdf>

Robert Bauserman, PhD can be reached by telephone at 410-767-4322

The American Psychological Association (APA), in Washington, DC, is the largest scientific and professional organization representing psychology in the United States and is the world's largest association of psychologists. APA's membership includes more than 155,000 researchers, educators, clinicians, consultants and students. Through its divisions in 53 subfields of psychology and affiliations with 60 state, territorial and Canadian provincial associations, APA works to advance psychology as a science, as a profession and as a means of promoting human welfare.

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## Re:Meeting with Senator Greg Bell August 2nd

Posted by concernedDad - 2007/08/24 22:23

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This story made it to craigslist. See <http://saltlakecity.craigslist.org/pol/403829362.html>

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