

RE: SB13 2023 Session Family Law-Custody Evaluations-Qualifications and Training

Support with Amendments

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Support with Amendments

The intent of SB13 is good and has many desperately needed trainings for judges and evaluators. However, I disagree with the following sections:

Page 3

Line 8

Section 2

Part VIII

All forms of domestic violence, including sexual violence, stalking, psychological aggression **AND** **CORERCIVE CONTROL. This is CRITICAL for evaluators to intimately understand and be able to recognize the indicators of coercive control.**

Page 3

Line 10

Section 2

Part IX

The immediate and long-term impacts of parent separation on a child. ***This separation MUST also be understood from the aspect of a child being turned against, manipulated, and psychologically, emotionally, and physically coerced to reject a parent AND the symptoms associated with such separation, the covert way this manipulation is achieved, and the SEVERE PSYCHOLOGICAL and PHYSICAL impacts to the child. This is SEVERELY DEVEASTATING TO A CHILD both short and long term in the absence of founded abuse.***

Page 3

Line 14

Section 2

Part XI

Protective factors that promote a child's healthy resolution of parent separation. **What does this mean? Children are "hard wired" to love both parents, even if a parent as been abusive. This is a regularly observed phenomenon in foster care children. The loss of a parent- even a grossly deficient parent- is an incredible loss for a child.**

Children who lose a parent face lifelong struggles with self-esteem, shame, trust, and worthiness. Children do not blame the parent, rather they blame themselves:

What is wrong with me that my parent treats me this way?

What is wrong with me that mom/dad can't take care of me?

Children faced with separation from parent try harder to gain the love, support, and affection from that parent.

I do NOT support keeping a child in an abusive home, but I do support thorough investigations of ALL allegations of abuse and criminal charges for *founded* allegations and criminal charges for reporting allegations which are later proven false.

Page 4

Line 29

Section2

Part C

Section III The investigation process.... Of suspected child abuse or child sexual abuse. This section *MUST* incorporate psychological and emotional abuse of the child.

- 1. Explanation of forensic interviews *MUST* include child abuse assessments for BOTH parents, including physical, sexual, psychological, and emotional child abuse and coercive control of the child. I support clinical interviews over forensic interviews.**

Page 4

Line 13

Section 2

Part C

Section 3

Part VI The dynamics and effects of DV, including coercive control (good). **This section should also include financial abuse.**

Page 4

Line 33

Part XI Background and current research informed literature regarding parental alienation, its invalidity as a syndrome, and the inappropriateness of its use in child custody disputes.

- **Parental alienation a very real and very devastating form of child abuse and intimate partner violence. It is not recognized as a syndrome.**
- **Parental alienation is in the DSM (V995.51 and V61.29).**
- **Parental alienation includes the coercion, manipulation, psychological, physical, and emotional control of the child.**
- **Children who are alienated often display a lack of ambivalence: all black, all white thinking.**
- **Perhaps the terms has been misused and abused by abusive men in the past, but that does not mean that alienation doesn't happen.**
- **Children RARELY reject a parent.**
- **Children RARELY hate a parent.**
- **Children CLING to their abusers.**
- **Children who have been alienated are at SEVERE risk for short- and long-term physical, psychological, and emotional disturbances including, but not limited, to:**
 - **Depression**
 - **Anger**
 - **Anxiety**
 - **Lack of trust in self and others**
 - **Alterations in reality**
 - **Abusive intimate partner relationships**
 - **Having their own child alienated or perpetrating alienation in their own children**
 - **Substance abuse**
 - **Further victimization**
 - **Poor self esteem**
 - **Academic struggles**
 - **Peer relationships struggles**
 - **Impulse control**
- **If this didn't happen in my own family, I never would have believed that a child could be manipulated to reject a parent and like so many others, I would have asked what that parent did to deserve the rejection. This is a gross misunderstanding of alienation.**