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Testimony in Support of House Bill 191 – Child Support, Custody, and Visitation—Award of Expenses – Suit Money

Good afternoon Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you on behalf of **House Bill 191 – Child Support, Custody, and Visitation—Award of Expenses – Suit Money**.

With regard to child support, custody, and visitation, House Bill 191 defines “reasonable and necessary expense” to include suit money, counsel fees, and costs. The bill thereby clarifies that suit money falls under the types of expenses that can be awarded to a party in child support, custody, or visitation proceedings. The measure establishes that suit money is handled the same way in proceedings regarding support, custody, and visitation as it is handled in divorce and alimony proceedings. Suit money includes “reasonable and necessary” counsel and expert witness fees, private investigator costs, vocational rehabilitation counselors, deposition costs, travel expenses, and investigation expenses and court costs. In making such an award, the Court must consider the financial resources and needs of each party as well as whether substantial justification exists for bringing, maintaining, or defending the proceeding.

I respectfully request a favorable report for House Bill 191.