

HB943, HB1141, HB1195 FWA YAAKOV AICHENBAUM

HB943, HB1141, and HB1195 deal with grandparent visitation. The relationship between a grandparent and grandchild can be very special. Grandparents connect their grandchildren to rich family histories, provide love and emotional support & guidance, and often offer a frictionless relationship that the actual parent does not have with the child. Each of these bills emphasizes different aspects of grandparent visitation.

The optimum legislation needs to address several issues:

- The best interest of the child
- Interference with grandparent visitation
- Grandparents interfering with parent/child relationships
- Parents who engage in parental alienation and thereby attempt to cut off a child from the grandparents from the other side
- Custodial issues involving grandparents when their child is deceased (i.e. the parent of the child is no longer living)
- The prior relationship with the grandparent
- The wishes of the child

Each of these bills addresses some of these concerns, but no one bill addresses all of the issues. Therefore, I ask that these bills receive a favorable report with amendments. The amendments should incorporate the salient features of each bill and also take the following into consideration:

- Children lack the emotional and intellectually maturity to make decisions about totally severing relationships with a grandparent. This is especially true in cases where parental alienation is at work. Therefore, while the wishes of the child should be taken into consideration, this should not be an absolute decision maker in deciding grandparent visitation.
- The lack of a prior relationship is not an appropriate measure in cases in which the child was isolated from the grandparents from the child before a relationship could develop. For example, where an alienating parent intentional withheld an infant child from visiting grandparents, the lack of a prior relationship should not preclude the child from developing a loving relationship with the grandparents.
- Grandparent visitation should not be based on the mutual consent of both parents. Unless, a parent has reasonable and legitimate reasons why grandparent visitation should be denied, visitation should be granted.

Thank you for consideration of these worthy bills.

Yaakov Aichenbaum

PAS-Intervention, MD Chapter

info@parentalalienationisreal.com

www.parentalalienationisreal.com