

**Testimony of Franklyn M. Malone**

**CEO, The 100 Fathers Inc.**

**In Favor of SB42 – Child Custody – Relocation of Child – Expedited Hearing**

**(Assurance of Childs Safety Act)**

**Before the Judicial Proceedings Committee**

**On January 31, 2023**

Mr. Chairman, Vice Chair and Members of the Committee:

Senate Bill 42 proposes the requirement of a court to schedule a hearing on certain petition regard the relocation of a child who is the subject of a custody visitation order on an expedited basis under certain circumstances. This legislation also prohibits the court from considering a child’s time spent with a party who relocated in violation of certain notice provisions to be advantageous to the party in a subsequent custody hearing; generally relating to child custody and visitation.

The latest research reveals that there is undeniable evidence that the presence of engaging and involved fathers in the lives of their children has a positive effect on that child’s outcome. According to the National Fatherhood Initiative, 71% of young men are incarcerated, 69% of high school drop outs; 70% of youth in custody come from fatherless families and many wind up in the criminal justice system. Our objective clearly must be family focus and the child’s best interest. All of these fatherless children captured in this research never had the benefit of a relationship with a father.

The 100 Fathers currently leads a national conversation on this relationship of fatherless children and its relationship to violence. For

my own experience as a father residing in Greenbelt, with a former wife who is now a friend, took my baby daughter to Chicago and left me high and dry. I suffered emotionally, psychologically, socially and financially until I was able to locate her some months later and file a court brief forcing the return of my daughter. No father or parent should be forced to suffer the indignity of a missing child whom they wish to parent and love. Ultimately, Senate Bill 42 closes this gap on fatherless children and improves the opportunity for parenting to be a team event that benefits the children. As such, the 100 Fathers Inc. urge this Committee give a favorable report on SB042. Thank you.

Respectfully,

Franklyn M. Malone

CEO, The 100 Fathers Inc.