

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 195 / HOUSE BILL 218:

Family Law – Child Support

TO: Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee and House Judiciary Committee

FROM: **Corrine Berry**

I am a resident of District 25, and I *oppose* Senate Bill 195/ House Bill 218, which will sharply increase penalties for non-custodial parents. The system is currently unfair and has been used by scorned lovers as a tool of vengeance and control, as in my case.

I have an eight-year-old son who I am currently paying child support for. My child's father placed me on child support out of revenge when after we broke up. We were happily together for about six years when my son was born, but thanks to his abusive character, drinking habits, and general disrespectfulness, I chose to separate from him. While I was struggling with breast cancer, he filed paperwork to take full custody of my son.

Thankfully, the judge granted us joint custody during the summer of 2022. In 2023, my ex claimed I was doing little to help my son as I didn't have the resources to provide since my job at the post office cut my hours - a job that I have since lost due to an injury and constantly going back to the courts at his command to fight over custody. He then decided to file for child support and kept me away from my son for nine months. To be clear, I was already taking care of my son and complying with the court orders despite my injuries and dealing with cancer. Yet, I was on still placed on child support, accumulating arrears and had my taxes intercepted. Moreover, when I did pay, my payments were directly for child support - none of those payments counted towards my arrears - creating a mountain of debt.

I am currently \$17,033 in arrears and being charged \$711 monthly in child support. My license has been suspended, and it has been challenging for me to get to interviews, comply with my custody orders, transport my son, or generally live independently. I've been leveraging family and friends, but it won't be long until they are overburdened, and I will have to risk driving on a suspended license to survive.

I oppose Senate Bill 195/ House Bill 218 as written, as it would increase garnishments, tax, and financial interceptions, and even the possibility of incarceration of parents in fraught relations with their exes. I don't want more tools in the hands of narcissistic, vengeful people like my ex to harm me. Please reject this bill.