

Written Testimony in Support of SB0481

Family Law – Denial or Interference With Visitation Rights
Sponsor: Senator McKay
Submitted by: Robert Garza

Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

Interference with child custody has been and always will be illegal. Violating a court order has been and always will be illegal. Accountability is coming, and change is here to stay.

Despite laws already recognizing denial or interference with visitation as unlawful, enforcement remains inconsistent and ineffective. Across the country, law enforcement officers regularly respond to custody and visitation disputes but often lack clear statutory tools to take immediate action. Without structured consequences and a documented record of repeat violations, prosecutors are hesitant to pursue charges. As a result, court orders are ignored and children suffer.

SB0481 addresses this enforcement gap.

This legislation establishes a clear, escalating accountability structure for repeated denial or interference with visitation rights. By creating measurable consequences for repeat violations, the bill provides law enforcement with authority to act and gives prosecutors a documented record when interference becomes habitual.

Equally important, this bill reinforces the integrity of court orders. When visitation schedules are ignored without consequence, it sends a dangerous message that court rulings are optional. That undermines both public confidence in the judiciary and, more importantly, the stability children depend on.

This legislation does not criminalize routine parenting disagreements. It targets repeated, willful violations that deprive children of meaningful time with a parent and erode their emotional security.

Children deserve consistency. They deserve stability. They deserve to know that when a court says they have a right to time with both parents, that right will be protected.

SB0481 strengthens enforcement, restores accountability, and protects the best interests of children by ensuring court-ordered visitation is respected.

I respectfully urge a favorable report on SB0481.

Thank you for your consideration.

Robert Garza