



February 17, 2021

Co-Parenting is Better for Everyone

There is more and more evidence that co-parenting is better for the father, the mother, and the children involved. That is why I have re-introduced [House Bill 0620](#) in the current 102nd General Assembly.

I continue to hear from parents, especially men, that they want to be more involved in the parenting of their children after the marriage to their partner has been dissolved.

Studies have shown children who have involved and supportive fathers or father figures tend to do better academically, while also having an easier time with their language and social development.

And, during the COVID-19 pandemic, according to the Center for American Progress, four times as many women as men dropped out of the labor force in September 2020, roughly 865,000 women compared with 216,000 men. This validates predictions that the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on women—and the accompanying child care and school crises—would be severe. In July, a *Washington Post* article—titled, “Coronavirus child-care crisis will set women back a generation”—pointed out that “[o]ne out of four women who reported becoming unemployed during the pandemic said it was because of a lack of child care—twice the rate among men.”¹ In August, CNN ran the headline, “Working mothers are quitting to take care of their kids, and the US job market may never be the same.”²

Having fathers more involved with their children and more involved with child-care would allow women additional options regarding child-care, education of their children, and employment in the workforce.

House Bill 0620 deletes language providing that nothing in the Act requires that each parent be allocated decision-making responsibilities; provides that it is presumed that fit parents act in the best interests of their children; deletes language providing that in determining the child's best interests for purposes of allocating parenting time, the court shall consider the amount of time each parent spent performing caretaking functions with respect to the child in the 24 months preceding the filing of any petition for allocation of parental responsibilities, or, if the child is under 2 years of age, since the child's birth.

Let's do what is right for our children and their parents, and let's pass House Bill 0620.

Sincerely,

La Shawn K. Ford
State Representative-Eighth District