

Wisconsin for Children



Fathers and Families

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PRESS RELEASE:

(For immediate release)

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Wisconsin Dads Rally for Support of Equal Shared Parenting at State Capitol on Saturday, June 12, 2004.

(MADISON) Wisconsin Fathers for Children and Families (WFCF), Grandparents Rights of Wisconsin and Wisconsin Women for Equality in Family Law (WWEFL) join forces on Saturday, June 12, 2004 to rally support for shared parenting rights in Wisconsin.

The presence of both parents in the life of a child is vitally important not only to the child, but to the parents and the community. Wisconsin law requires maximum placement with each parent when divorce occurs. However, the judges and commissioners of Wisconsin's family courts frequently fail to apply the law as is written. More commonly mothers are awarded primary placement and fathers are relegated to visitor status.

"How can we expect men to act as good fathers when we treat them as visitors", said Mike Landwehr, divorced father and WFCF member. "It's not rocket science. Limiting the participation of fathers destroys their morale and ability to have a close, nurturing relationship with their kids, creating instant deadbeats out of good dads .

"Each year we spend hundreds of millions of dollars on societal issues related to gang violence, low academic performance, drug abuse, rape, truancy, teen pregnancy... the list goes on", says Tony Bickel, a Madison father of two daughters. "The truth is, there is no amount of money that will ever replace the positive role and influence that a father can have in the lives of his children."

The issue isn't deadbeat fathers , but rather DEADBEAT GOVERNMENT! says Tom Pfeiffer, board member of WFCF. It's time the courts began following the laws as were enacted by the people of this state through their legislature .

"Now is the time for citizens to stand-up and be counted, to influence public policy for the betterment of parents and children-not lawyers, judges, and psychologists who hold a vested interest in parental conflict," says Jim Johnson, a recently divorced father. This issue is just too important to allow it to be swept under the rug at the expense of our children. It is an economically irrational system that is in drastic need of overhaul .

"Unless there is a finding by full due process that a parent is unfit, or that placement of a child with that parent would pose immediate harm, there is no reason why they should not participate fully in parenting their children" says Steve Blake, rally chairman. "The right to parent is perhaps the most important right we have, and undoubtedly is still the most trampled on. Just because parents are divorced doesn't mean they or their children should be treated as second class citizens."

"Parents need the full respect and autonomy they were granted when they became parents, and to be fully involved in raising their children without undue interference from the government when there is no compelling state interest", said Jan Raz, WFCF president.

Scheduled to appear are:

- Jeffrey Leving, prominent attorney who worked on the Elian Gonzales case, and author of "Father's Rights"
- James Novak, Co-founder and past president of WFCF, author of "The Wisconsin Father's Guide to Divorce and Custody"
- Jeffrey Wood, State Representative, Dist. 67, Chippewa Falls
- Mike Ellis, American Parents, Elmwood, WI
- Warren Higgins, Advocates for the Justice System and Legal Reform, MN
- Robert Lorge, attorney, candidate for U.S. Senate

The rally will begin at 11:00AM on June 12th on the State Street steps of the Capitol Building in Madison.

For additional information, go to www.wisconsinfathers.org/rally or call (608) 255-3237.

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