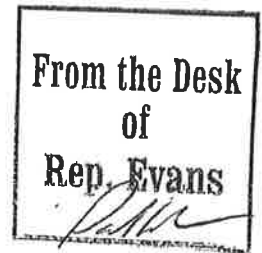


PAUL L. EVANS
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
DISTRICT 20



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



June 15, 2017

79th Legislative Assembly
Oregon House of Representatives
Oregon State Capitol
Salem, Oregon 97301

Ref: Senate Bill 1055-A

Dear Colleagues:

We will soon consider Senate Bill 1055-A for final passage. I write this letter in hopes of your personal support of this piece of legislation. Although this measure is comparatively "small" in terms of scale and scope – it is a critical improvement for military families and children.

Senate Bill 1055-A modifies divorce law to allow a deployed parent the right to petition the court for visitation, during the deployment, between the child of the deployed parent and a stepparent, grandparent, or other family members related to the child. This bill directs the court to consider whether visitation will facilitate contact between the child and the deployed parent, the best interests of the child, and the third-party visitation factors of ORS 109.119.

The realities of modern military service continue to wreak havoc upon families and children. Right now, there are hundreds of thousands of women serving in the US Armed Forces, with hundreds in our own Oregon Air and Army National Guard/s. Deployments (military service away from home station, often overseas) are difficult enough under the best of circumstances. For divorced couples (especially in cases where the mother is in uniform) are becoming even more so – because Oregon does not have the same protections found in many other states.

This bill, if/when passed, will provide added peace of mind for deploying service members: deployment will no longer be at the potential risk of protracted complications associated with custody rights. This measure, modeled upon the 2012 Uniform Deployed Parents Custody and Visitation Act (Uniform Law Commission) has proven itself in about a dozen states already: it ensures the "child's best interest" remains the overriding standard for courts making custody determinations.

Thank you for your consideration on this matter. We have and continue to ask much of the men and women we send into Harm's Way upon our behalf, this is a straightforward solution to an emergent problem – a problem we can do something about. Please let me know if there are any questions I may be able to answer or additional information needed for your decision.

Respectfully,

Paul L. Evans
State Representative