

Thank You Senator Chair Prozanski for giving us this opportunity to speak.

My name is Tom Bushman Jr. and I am here with my son, Thomas Bushman the 3rd of Jackson County to present his testimony.

In June of 2015, my son and his girlfriend had a child together whom they named Tai. Being that my son is a disabled veteran, he stayed at home and was the main caregiver for Tai for the first 10 months of his life while his girlfriend worked. After this time, his girlfriend and him separated. My son tried to get 50/50 joint custody, but his Ex wanted full custody and consequently made up accusations about my son to get full custody. Judge Hoppe in Jackson County automatically gave his Ex full custody without any evidence or investigation of her claims. The judge also honored his ex's request that my son's visits be supervised. DHS refused to facilitate his visits as they stated they had no proof to warrant a need for supervised visitation. Consequently, he was not able to see his toddler son for ****months****. My son was finally granted unsupervised visits with Tai when he presented undeniable proof of ****her**** false accusations. However, his ex was able to keep full custody.

When my son finally was able to see Tai again, Tai would cling to his daddy and cry and would panic any time he left the room. Fearful, not knowing moment to moment when he would see his daddy again.

November 29th, 2017 my son's dear 2 year Tai was found unresponsive in the care of his mother and new stepdad. Tai passed away on December 2nd at 2am. ******** Which My son was not permitted to be present when his only son died per the mother's decision.

A good father should not have to fight to see their child and especially in the last moments of their child's life. And no child should live in fear as to when they will see a parent again or God forbid, die without their parents at their side.

Our prayer is that an automatic 50/50 joint custody be put into effect for all separating parents and that full custody only be granted in cases with proven abuse. It is in the best interest of a child to receive love and equal time with both good parents. Thank you for your time and God Bless.