



Subject: Concerns Regarding SF 2759 and Advocacy for Inclusive Legislation

Good evening, Chair Latz and esteemed members of the committee, I am George Rerat, the Acting Director of Advocacy for the Minnesota Shared Parenting Action Group (MNSPAG). Our organization stands as the preeminent Minnesota-based advocacy group dedicated to championing the rights of children and families within the framework of Minnesota Family Law, boasting a membership exceeding 12,000 individuals.

Thank you for the opportunity to address the committee today to express our concerns regarding the current iteration of SF 2759. It is our sincere belief that this proposed legislation falls short of meeting the essential criteria for well-considered and well-vetted legislation.

It has come to our attention that certain committee members have been led to believe that SF 2759 reflects a consensus, implying the consultation of key Minnesota-based family and children's advocacy groups, including MNSPAG. However, I must clarify that while our organization, alongside others, did engage in discussions with the Minnesota Bar Association and the AAML at the behest of Senate lawmakers during 2019 and 2020, no agreements were reached on the substantive issues addressed within SF 2759. Regrettably, our input was not solicited nor considered in the construction of this legislation.

The decision by the Minnesota Bar Association and the AAML to exclude our organization from the collaborative process has resulted in a bill that, rather than advancing the interests of parents and children, appears to prioritize the interests of legal practitioners..

MNSPAG has identified several pressing concerns with SF 2759, including but not limited to:

1. **\*\*Increased Temporary Motions/Hearings:\*\*** This bill undermines current Minnesota Family Law judicial policies aimed at limiting motions before the Initial Case Management Conference (ICMC), thereby impeding efforts to encourage families to explore alternative dispute resolution mechanisms like Early Neutral Evaluation (ENE), arbitration and mediation.
2. **\*\*Absence of Fiscal Note:\*\*** The absence of a fiscal note accompanying raises apprehensions about the potential budgetary impacts associated with increased hearings resulting from the proposed legislation.
3. **\*\*Lack of Provisions for Self-Help:\*\*** Notably absent from SF 2759 are provisions akin to the Missouri law, which allows for self-help options through simplified forms for denied parenting time hearings. The bill's complex language and extensive use of undefined terms may further exacerbate the challenges faced by individuals of limited means in navigating the court system without legal representation.
4. **\*\*Concerns Regarding Language on Temporary Hearings:\*\*** The language in the bill pertaining to temporary hearings for denied parenting time, particularly the use of the term "consecutive," poses significant challenges and may inadvertently reset the clock on temporary hearing requests. Additionally, the absence of a similar qualifier for temporary financial hearings raises concerns..

Drawing from the Minnesota Supreme Court's 2020 decision on a criminal denial of parenting time case, it is evident that careful consideration must be given to the language used in legislative bills to ensure clarity and adherence to legal principles. Regrettably, such clarity appears to be lacking in SF 2759.

I urge the committee to heed our concerns and advocate for a more inclusive and well-researched approach to SF 2759. The welfare of Minnesota's children and families should remain paramount in the crafting of legislation that profoundly impacts their lives.

Thank you for your time and consideration of our perspectives.

Respectfully,  
George Rerat  
Minnesota Shared Parenting Group