

SPC

**THE SHARED PARENTING COUNCIL
OF CONNECTICUT**

**Testimony on Bill No. 6286, An Act Concerning Parenting Time and Parental
Responsibility with Respect to the Custody of a Minor Child**

The SPC advocates for redefining the "best interests of the child" to focus on substantial and continuing involvement of both parents in their children's lives, provided that the parents are not found to be abusive. The SPC has a vision of a time when the State of Connecticut actively encourages parental involvement and mediation of disputes between parents. Bill No. 6286 takes a small step in this direction.

The best interests of the child need to be redefined to focus on substantial involvement by both parents and encourage full use of mediation services. Heavy emphasis should be placed on the willingness and ability of each parent to facilitate and encourage continuing a parent-child relationship between the child and the other parent, including compliance with any court orders.

A parental responsibility plan is required by PA 05-258 for most custody cases. The proposed bill strengthens parental responsibility plans, an important step towards involving both parents in a way helpful to children. The SPC recommends the following changes to Bill No. 6286:

[except that the court may determine, based upon the facts of the case, that the best interests of the child require that parenting time and parental responsibility be awarded disproportionately to one parent.] If a parent objects to substantial parenting time for the other parent, up to half time, their shall be a presumption that the objection has exposed the children to harmful parental conflict.

THE SPC HAS DEVELOPED Parental Responsibility Plans for High and Low Conflict cases. Please contact the SPC for more information.

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