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An Act concerning Visitation By Grandparents

Good afternoon, Senator Musto, Representative Urban, Senator Boucher, Representative Hovey, and members of the committee. My name is Rob Kane, and I am the Senator for the 32nd district. I come before you this afternoon to testify in support of *HB 5313, An Act Concerning Visitation By Grandparents*, and I ask that you pass the bill.

When a marriage breaks up, or parents go their separate ways, the children are the ones who suffer most. But they are not the only ones to suffer from the breakups of the family. While parental rights, custody and visitation are considered by our courts, the extended family members such as grandparents have no such standing. There will be no orders saying when they can visit or what holidays they can share with the children they have known and loved since birth. This bill seeks to provide some protection that the rights of grandparents to see their grandchildren will be respected and protected.

Grandparents are an important part of a child's life, often serving as the emotional touchstone of a family. They can be caregivers, confidants, playmates, and role models to their grandchildren. All they need is the opportunity to see them, to share in their lives, to be a part of their growing up. That is the goal behind *HB 5313*. This bill would provide that grandparents, when it is found to be in the best interest of the child, shall be given visitation rights. These are grandparents who have helped raise the children, who have always been there even when the parents have not. They should not lose out on seeing their grandchildren simply because the parents cannot agree or get along.

Sometimes in our society, it seems like children have no one "there" for them. No one to look out for them, to care for them, to mentor them, to love them. To prevent a grandparent from being "there" for a grandchild is a wrong headed policy that we need to change. Passing this bill would be a good start to that change. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in favor of the bill.