

Cathy Hartley,
Glastonbury, CT

HB 5313; Hearing scheduled 3/2/2010

After reading the language of this bill, I respectfully ask for some re-wording. I'm not clear on how this bill differs greatly from what is currently in place for Grandparent Visitation, but here are my requests for rewording.

Section B - (1) the parent has been absent for a significant period of time

Please add - 'or has died'.

Section B - (2) the applicant's relationship with the child has been parental in nature for a substantial period of time

I don't agree with the word 'parental'; this word is surely up to interpretation. I have read about and seen on the news too many times where many biological parent(s) have left their children alone while they go out 'on the town', have sold their children for sex, etc, etc...have made horrible decisions as a 'parent'. I request this be reworded to 'the applicant's relationship with the child is one that has the child's best interest in mind; a relationship that will form the child in a healthy, sound, strong, committed and loving way'.

Section B - (3) the child will suffer real and substantial harm or neglect if visitation is not granted

Is it not logical that a child will certainly suffer real and substantial harm if, when his/her mother has died is not allowed seeing his loving grandmother? Speaking for example, of a grandmother who has painfully lost her daughter through death, it is heartbreaking that although the boy's father said there would be no problem with visitation prior to the mother's death, he lied, and she can no longer see her grandson. The thread in the fabric of the family unit has become so unraveled in today's day and age. Please consider the child's trauma in not only losing his/her parent, but also 'grandma and grandpa' who rocked him/her, fed him/her, played with him/her, loved him/her, as the sure beginning of that child suffering real and substantial harm as he/she ages. I understand the concept of this, but isn't common sense enough proof that the child will be harmed? How can one present real and concrete 'proof'? If the child's tears aren't proof enough, where have we come as a society? Please do not delay the child in seeing his/her grandparent longer by requiring debatable 'proof' which money and power can easily buy. I suggest adding or replacing with - 'Unmistakable proof of harm or neglect to the child by the grandparent will automatically rescind visitation rights'.

Thank you for your consideration,

Cathy Hartley