

House Judiciary Committee
124 North Capitol Avenue
Lansing, MI 48933

Dear Chair Breen, Vice Chair Edwards, Vice Chair Fink, and members of the committee,

I write this letter in strong support of the Michigan Family Protection Act.

The Bill will comprehensively update parentage laws in the state of Michigan, ensuring that all children have access to a clear legal relationship with their parents, regardless of the circumstances of the child's birth or the marital status, gender, or sexual orientation of their parents.

A child's parental relationship is the foundation of their healthy development and well-being over a lifetime. Michigan has not updated its parentage laws for generations, and this leaves our children vulnerable to many harms, including family separation. Michigan courts have tried to keep pace through the case law, but they need guidance and comprehensive policy to ensure that these core protections are codified in our statutes. Therefore, we must pass the Michigan Family Protection Act in order to set these guidelines and ensure that all children in Michigan are protected. This bill is important to me because I am a queer mother, who shares a child with my ex-wife. My son was conceived with the assistance of artificial insemination while my ex wife and I were still legally married. During our divorce we had to make decisions concerning his physical custody, parenting time, health insurance and so on. This was a costly and lengthy process as Michigan courts are still figuring out how to navigate parenting with non-biological parents.

The children of parents conceived using fertility treatments deserve legal protection. Without proper legislation, our children are at risk for losing health insurance, financial protection of 2 parents, and legally supported parenting time. This legislation is critical because Michigan law lacks clear standards to protect both parents. Legal clarity for children and families is long overdue.

Based on the Uniform Parentage Act of 2017, the Michigan Family Protection Act has been thoughtfully crafted by leading experts in parentage law to meet the needs of children and families. The bill will ensure that the Great Lakes state parentage laws remain constitutional, reflect best practices, and protect all children in our state.

I hope you will report the Michigan Family Protection Act favorably out of committee. Thank you so much for your consideration, and please do not hesitate to contact me for any additional information.

Sincerely,
Nkenge Burkhead
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