

H

B

5

3

2

May 12, 1981

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. My name is Emma Borbridge. I am a resident of Juneau and a grandparent. I appreciate the opportunity to be able to appear before this committee to make a few comments in support of House Bill No. 532. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Representative Miller and Representative Cloksin for introducing House Bill No. 532 on behalf of grandparents and their visitation rights as contained in HB 532.

The relationship between grandparents and their grandchildren is a very special and unique one. During the early years of childhood, the world has a certain beauty when seen through the eyes of a small child. That beauty is seen and understood better by grandchildren and grandparents who see it together. Children soon become equal with their parents in the adult world. Many people such as me are among the unfortunate who never knew their grandparents. My grandparents died before I was born, but I liked hearing about them from my mother and father. My image of them is very special and heartwarming. In today's world with the divorce rate at an all-time high, young children are often left to be cared for by their grandparents. In providing care for the child, the grandparents once again become involved in the beautiful world of a small child. There is love and affection in a stable environment. One day without warning the parents may decide to exercise ~~of~~ their custodial rights and take the child away from that stable and secure home. In many instances the child is not allowed to visit his or her grandparents. The child is confused and doesn't understand. It is a wrenching experience for the grandparents. It leaves scars. The physical, emotional, mental, religious, and social well-being of a child can best be met if a normal and healthy grandchild-grandparent relationship can be maintained. In view of the high divorce rate in our state there is a greater need for grandparents to be involved in helping to maintain a continued and stable environment during the child's early growth.

There are pressures in our society that threaten the stability and continuity of the family unit. These same pressures damage the relationship of parents and their children. Now, these conditions are interfering with the life-line that the young and the old hold onto. The stability of a child is strengthened when family ties are strong. HB 532 is a positive step in the right direction.

POSITION PAPER

HOUSE BILL NO. 532

"An Act providing for the award of visitation rights to grandparents."

House Bill No. 532 adds to the section on visitation rights in judgments for custody during divorce or legal separation actions by providing that grandparents be allowed visitation rights. The fact that parents choose to divorce each other should not automatically preclude the child from visiting grandparents who love a child and can give him emotional support. Sometimes the conflict between parents serves to cut off a child from his grandparents; this may not be in the best interests of the child.

The Department of Health and Social Services is, therefore, supportive of House Bill No. 532.

RECOMMENDED BY: John R. Pugh
John R. Pugh, Director
Division of Family and
Youth Services

DATE: 5/6/81

APPROVED BY: Helen D. Beirne
Helen D. Beirne
Commissioner

DATE: 5-11-81

FISCAL NOTE

I. REQUEST

Bill/Resolution No. HOUSE BILL NO. 532
 Title "An Act providing for the award of visitation rights to grandparents."
 Requested by Miller and Clocksin Date 4/24/81

II. FISCAL DETAIL

Agency Affected Department of Health and Social Services
 Program Category Affected Social Services
 BRU, Program, or Subprograms Affected Various

(Note: If more than one budget component is affected, separate line-item amounts and funding for each component in the analysis section.)

EXPENDITURES (Thousands of Dollars)

	FY 81	FY 82	FY 83	FY 84	FY 85	FY 86
100 PERSONAL SERVICES						
200 TRAVEL						
300 CONTRACTUAL						
400 COMMODITIES						
500 EQUIPMENT						
600 LAND & STRUCTURES						
700 GRANTS, CLAIMS, ETC.						
TOTAL	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-

FUNDING (Thousands of Dollars)

GENERAL FUND	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
FEDERAL FUNDS	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
OTHER (Specify Fund Source)	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-

POSITIONS

FULL TIME	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
PART TIME	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
TEMPORARY	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-

III. ANALYSIS (See Fiscal Note Preparation Instructions, Section III)

House Bill No. 532 has no fiscal impact on the Department of Health and Social Services.

IV. DATE 7/30/81 PREPARED BY [Signature] John R. Pugh, Director
 AGENCY Division of Family and Youth Services
 PHONE 465-5170
 Original: Legislative Finance
 cc: Budget and Management
 Prime Sponsor (Last Legislator Name): M. Heikboer M&B Approval [Signature] Date 4/2/81