

Sharon Pennington

Attachment 7

3-18-2019 -

From: Amanda Roberts <amanda01@cheerful.com>
Sent: Sunday, March 17, 2019 2:10 PM
To: Sharon Pennington
Subject: HB 170 vote no

Please consider this as written testimony to the Senate Judiciary Committee.:

Dear Senate Judiciary Committee - My name is AManda Roberts. I am a Licensed Social Worker who has worked with children and families in varying capacities for the past six years.

I am urging you to vote no on HB 170 – Child Protection Notification/Waiver. HB 170 has the potential to cause needless trauma to families and lead them to incorrectly believe they are the subject of a criminal matter. Additionally, HB 170 can lead to children being left in an unsafe home for a prolonged period of time. The fiscal impact of HB 170 is significantly understated, as it will increase the workload and cost of public defenders, judges, and law enforcement. It will also intensify the strain on a child welfare system that has been consistently impacted by staffing shortages and workload challenges.

Currently, licensed bachelor and master’s level social workers in child welfare receive a significant amount of initial and ongoing training in assessment and family-centered practice. Child welfare social workers are experts in engaging families in a trauma-informed manner and linking them to resources to keep a child safe in their home whenever possible. HB 170 will hinder a social worker’s effectiveness in the commun

Imagine you are a young child that is being neglected by a caregiver. One day, a social worker comes to your home, builds rapport with your family, and learns about the stress your parents are facing. The social worker links them to community resources and engages your grandmother and a neighbor to come watch you after school and mentor your parents so they can take care of you. With HB 170, the social worker’s ability to build a working relationship and impact change will be diminished and increases risk to a vulnerable child. In cases of physical or sexual abuse, law enforcement will already be involved and is tasked advising adults of their Miranda rights. HB 170 will result in a duplication of work amongst government agencies.

I urge you to please let social workers do the jobs they are specifically trained for, and not force bureaucracy onto Idaho families. Vulnerable children in our community will be better served by a no vote on HB 170. I also ask that the impact of this legislation be explored through the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare and stakeholders (i.e. law enforcement, judiciary) to more fully understand the consequences of HB 170.

Sincerely,
Amanda Roberts, LSW