



15 March 2024

Children & Family Affairs Subcommittee  
Tennessee House of Representatives  
632 Cordell Hull Bldg.  
Nashville, TN 37243

Re: House Bill 2936  
Position: Support

Honorable Representatives,

The liberty interest of parents in the care, custody, and control of their minor children is “perhaps the oldest fundamental liberty interest recognized by [the U.S. Supreme] Court.” *Troxel v. Granville*, 530 US 57 (2000) at 65. Yet this right is often neglected in state statute.

This year, Tennessee has the opportunity to set an example in preserving these rights not only in judicial precedent, but in state code. Furthermore, it is the nature of legislation to spell out certain aspects of the scope of these rights in more detail than a court ruling can provide.

House Bill 2936 takes advantage of the opportunity to accomplish both of these aims.

While supporting the fundamental rights of parents, this bill simultaneously preserves the compelling interest of the State in protecting children from abuse or neglect, both by including the “strict scrutiny” review in section 26-8-103 (b) and by specifically excluding in section 26-8-103 (d) any perceived right to abuse or neglect a child.

That said, this bill shows proper respect to the tremendous responsibility that parents bear in raising their children according to the dictates of their own conscience, as is the right of a free people.

Nearly 100 years ago, the U.S. Supreme Court held that “The child is not the mere creature of the State; those who nurture him and direct his destiny have the right, coupled with the high duty, to recognize and prepare him for additional obligations.”

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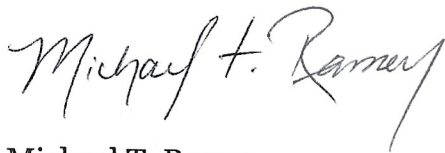
*Pierce v. Society of Sisters*, 268 US 510 (1925) at 535. HB 2936 will establish in Tennessee law a full recognition of this balanced right and duty.

Further, the Court has held that “natural bonds of affection lead parents to act in the best interests of their children.” *Parham v. J.R.*, 442 US 584 (1979) at 602. And we all have seen this in action. For instance, parental involvement is a deciding factor toward positive outcomes in schooling of all kinds.

*Parents* are the best resource we can guarantee to our children, the best tool for their success. This bill will preserve that parental role for the good of the next generation.

For these reasons, the Parental Rights Foundation supports this bill and urges the Subcommittee to support it, as well.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michael T. Ramey". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Michael T. Ramey  
President