

**POSITION PAPER OF FATHERS & FAMILIES**  
**HB 1459, "AN ACT RELATIVE TO INCREASING PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT**  
**WITH CHILD CARE"**

Fathers and Families requests your support of HB 2463, "An Act Relative to Increasing Parental Involvement With Child Care", sponsored by Representative Colleen Garry. House Docket 2573, summarized as "dad care instead of child care", seeks to promote stronger relationships between fathers and children by permitting family court judges to allow non-custodial parents to provide child care instead of commercial providers.

Parental care is preferable to commercially available day care, according to numerous studies. For instance, a massive 10-year study by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development demonstrates that young children in child care often develop excessive aggressiveness. Child care facilities also foster transmission of infectious illnesses. And dad-care will **save the Commonwealth \$50-\$100 million per year**. (The Commonwealth spent \$516 million to support child care in fiscal year 2002.)

Most importantly, the bill promotes stronger relationships between children and non-custodial parents. Researchers have demonstrated that fathers are as competent as mothers in providing nurturing, loving care for young children. Michael Lamb, PhD, has recently written, ". . . *the ideal situation is one in which children have opportunities to interact frequently with both parents in a variety of functional contexts (e.g., feeding, playing, disciplining, basic care, limit-setting, putting to bed, etc.)*." Dr. Lamb is Head of the Section of Social and Emotional Development, at the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, of the National Institutes of Health.

The bill:

- requires that the custodial parent has deemed child care to be needed;
- requires that the non-custodial parent be available, capable and desirous of providing child care. Under this bill, judges are not required to permit unfit or dangerous non-custodial parents to provide child care;
- allows child care arrangements to change over time with changes in parental work schedules;
- does not authorize the non-custodial parent to enter the home of the custodial parent for purposes of child care;
- allows custodial parents to decide how much child care, if any, is appropriate.

Fathers & Families' core belief is that children should have two parents actively involved in their lives, both of whom bear the rights and responsibilities of parenting, including the responsibility for financial support. In advocating for a better understanding and respect for the essential role of fathers in their children's lives, Fathers and Families hopes to demonstrate that equal treatment of fathers and mothers is necessary for the wellbeing of our children. Fathers and Families was started five years ago and has grown to a membership of approximately 2,000 members. Forty percent of its supporters are women.

For more information, please contact Fathers & Families President Ned Holstein M.D., M.S. at 617-357-4901 or visit [www.fathersandfamilies.org](http://www.fathersandfamilies.org).