
SENATE JOINT MEMORIAL 8018

State of Washington

57th Legislature

2001 Regular Session

By Senators Hargrove and Swecker

Read first time 02/19/2001. Referred to Committee on Human Services & Corrections.

1 TO THE HONORABLE GARY LOCKE, GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

2 We, your Memorialists, the Senate and House of Representatives of
3 the State of Washington, in legislative session assembled, respectfully
4 represent and petition as follows:

5 WHEREAS, The decision to obtain a divorce is a personal one, often
6 done with the best of intentions for all involved; and

7 WHEREAS, While not passing judgment on anyone who chooses to obtain
8 a divorce, it cannot be denied that divorce is an action that impacts
9 not only the spouse seeking the divorce, but also the other spouse, who
10 may not want a divorce, and any children in the family; and

11 WHEREAS, The legislature has declared that the family unit is a
12 fundamental resource of American life which should be nurtured, and
13 that a primary goal of public involvement in the lives of children has
14 been to strengthen the family unit; and

15 WHEREAS, Studies have indicated that divorce can have a negative
16 impact on many aspects of a child's life. These studies show that
17 children whose parents divorce have a lower economic well-being, are
18 increasingly the victims of abuse, are involved more frequently in
19 crime and drug abuse, and are more likely to exhibit health,
20 behavioral, and emotional problems. These studies include:

1 (1) A University of Utah study which found that children whose
2 parents are divorced are one-third more likely to smoke as adults than
3 children from intact families, and boys are one-third more likely to
4 have a drinking problem as an adult; and

5 (2) A Johns Hopkins University study which found that divorce has
6 a negative effect on the mental health of children, one which can
7 follow them into adulthood; and

8 (3) A United States Census Bureau study which found that family
9 income declines an average of thirty-seven percent in families with
10 children after the father leaves, increasing the percentage of families
11 with children in poverty approximately seventeen percent; and

12 WHEREAS, On average, seventy-eight divorces occur each day in
13 Washington, forty-one of them involving children;

14 NOW, THEREFORE, Your Memorialists respectfully pray that the
15 Governor of the State of Washington support single parents with
16 children and encourage stable families by working to reduce the divorce
17 rate among families with children.

18 BE IT RESOLVED, That copies of this Memorial be immediately
19 transmitted to the Honorable Gary Locke, Governor of the State of
20 Washington.

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