

**THE PARENTHOOD PLEDGE
WOULD HELP CHILDREN
SUCCEED IN LIFE BY:**

**SETTING A MINIMUM STANDARD
FOR ENTERING PARENTHOOD**

**VERIFYING PARENTHOOD IS THE
FOUNDATION OF OUR SOCIETY**

- ◆ **COMPETENT PARENTS RAISE
COMPETENT KIDS**
- ◆ **COMPETENT KIDS BECOME
PRODUCTIVE CITIZENS**
- ◆ **COMPETENT KIDS BECOME
COMPETENT PARENTS**

**FORMALLY DEFINING AND
AFFIRMING PARENTAL RIGHTS
AND THE RESPONSIBILITIES
OF PARENTHOOD**

AND RESULT IN

**THRIVING FAMILIES
A STRONGER ECONOMY
LOWER PUBLIC SPENDING**

A STRONGER NATION

**THE PARENTHOOD
PLEDGE**



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**THE PARENTHOOD
PLEDGE**

I understand and accept the responsibilities of parenthood and will carry them out to the best of my ability.



**Parents
Whose
Child
Thrives**

**Parents
Who Abuse
& Neglect a
Child**

**ADD \$1.4
MILLION TO OUR
ECONOMY**

**COST OUR
ECONOMY
\$2.8 MILLION**

**ALMOST 6 MILLION CHILDREN ARE
REFERRED TO CHILD PROTECTIVE
SERVICES EVERY YEAR**

WHY DO WE NEED A PARENTHOOD PLEDGE?

THE PROSPERITY OF OUR NATION DEPENDS UPON COMPETENT PARENTS WHO PROVIDE THEIR CHILDREN:

- ▶ Essential love and support.
- ▶ Protection from physical, emotional, and social harm.
- ▶ Food, clothing, shelter, education, health care, and social and recreational activities
- ▶ Limits and encourage civil behavior.
- ▶ Resources for intellectual, social, and moral development.

WHAT HAPPENS TO CHILDREN IN ABUSIVE & NEGLECTFUL FAMILIES?

Child abuse and neglect damages lives and results in juvenile delinquency, crime, welfare dependency, health and mental health problems, abuse of their own children, and domestic violence.

HOW DOES THIS AFFECT OUR ECONOMY?

Each child of competent parents will contribute \$1.4 million to our economy.

Each neglected and abused child costs our economy \$2.8 million in lost income and public expenditures.

Failing to intervene until children are damaged by abuse and neglect is inhumane and costly.

HOW DOES THIS AFFECT YOU?

Struggling families account for:
26% of your state budget
45% of your county budget

HOW WOULD THE PARENTHOOD PLEDGE WORK?

The Parenthood Pledge would:

- ✦ Be incorporated in the birth certificate application.
- ✦ Remind parents of the responsibilities of parenthood as they pledge to fulfill them to the best of their abilities.
- ✦ Clarify and affirm parental rights for legal and physical custody of a newborn baby.
- ✦ Help parents understand the responsibilities of parenthood as is done for adoptive parents.
- ✦ Help to ensure that newborn babies have a chance to succeed in life.
- ✦ Be the goal of prenatal Parenthood Planning Counseling for vulnerable mothers and fathers.

WHAT IS PARENTHOOD PLANNING COUNSELING?

Parenthood Planning Counseling assists a family in making decisions that are in the best interests of the parents and the unborn children. It would be activated whenever a person who has a legal and physical custodian or guardian or has been adjudicated as an unfit parent becomes pregnant and chooses to continue the pregnancy to childbirth.

Parenthood planning counseling would be performed by existing prenatal counseling and coordinated services teams when a pregnancy is identified.

KEY REQUIREMENTS

1) Persons, including fathers with legal standing, making The Parenthood Pledge would have parental custodial rights for their newborn babies except when they are under the custody or guardianship of other persons or the state or have been adjudicated as unfit parents.

2) If a mother or father is in the custody of another person, that person may co-sign The Parenthood Pledge if willing and able to do so. That person will be the presumed custodian of the dependent person's newborn baby until the mother or father is qualified to make The Pledge alone. In Wisconsin although grandparents are responsible for the financial support of their minor children's children, they do not have custodial rights for their grandchildren.

3) When the custodians or guardians of dependent mothers and fathers are unwilling or unable to make the Parenthood Pledge, they would be assisted in making a voluntary adoption plan for the newborn baby.

4) If no one is legally or willingly able to make the Parenthood Pledge, a guardian *ad litem* for the child would be added to the Parenthood Planning Counseling Team, and custody of the child would be assumed by the state with an involuntary adoption plan at birth.

5) The child abuse and neglect statute would pre-emptively terminate parental rights of a parent adjudicated as unfit with an adoption plan.