

# OM'S LAW : KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE FROM FAMILY VIOLENCE

2024 Utah Legislative Session HB 272 : Child Custody Proceedings Amendments

## OM'S LAW KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE FROM FAMILY VIOLENCE

HB 272 : Child Custody Proceedings  
Amendments (Rep Cutler, Sen McKell)



### OM'S STORY

Om's law is named after a 16-year-old boy from Utah, **OM MOSES GANDHI**, who was murdered by his father on *Mother's Day weekend 2023*, during *court-ordered, unsupervised parent time*. Despite 14 years of his mother's warnings to the court of his father's domestic violence, threats, coercive control, substance addictions, and sexual assault history, Om was senselessly killed.

OM ISN'T ALONE. Each year, **too many children are court-ordered into custody and parent time with an abusive parent without safeguards in place**. *Unsafe parents* regularly use the family court system to harm children, often with little oversight and at great expense. **HB272 changes that. It's our responsibility to keep Utah children healthy and safe.**

### #1 CHILD SAFETY FIRST

Elevate child safety as the **FIRST** priority of custody and parenting.

Courts must first consider all safety risks, including evidence of domestic violence, in determining children's best interest.

### #2 EXPERT TESTIMONY

Limit expert testimony in family court to **qualified and credentialed professionals**.

Expert evidence in custody and parenting adjudications is subject to evidentiary admissibility standards.

### #3 SAFE THERAPY

Implement **guidance and limits on family court use of reunification treatment**.

Any court-ordered reunification treatment must demonstrate proof of safety, effectiveness, and therapeutic value.

### #4 CHILD ABUSE TRAINING

Increase training for family court personnel.

More evidence-based training to recognize trauma, psychological control, and other signs of abuse when domestic violence is a factor.

### CHILD ADVOCACY 101

UTAH IS THE **YOUNGEST** STATE IN THE NATION. OVER **25%** OF UTAHNS ARE CHILDREN



**ONE IN 7** CHILDREN ARE SEXUALLY **ABUSED**

1 in 7

**60%** OF CHILDREN EXPERIENCE **CHILD ABUSE**



**91% OF ABUSERS ARE A PARENT OR ADULT KNOWN TO THE CHILD**



*"We've made great strides in recognizing domestic violence in our criminal justice system. It's time to do the same in the family court system."*  
**Lt. Governor Deirdre Henderson**

*"Family violence in all forms threatens the physical and emotional health of children. Utah courts must recognize danger signs to protect and care for our kids"*  
**American Academy of Pediatrics, Utah Chapter**

*"After following all the rules, the system still failed us. Children deserve better, to be protected."* **Om's Mom**



Utah Chapter  
American Academy of Pediatrics  
DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN®



UTAH  
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE  
COALITION



DEIDRE M. HENDERSON  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR  
STATE OF UTAH

