

State of New Mexico
House of Representatives
Ben Lujan, Speaker of the House
Ken Martinez, House Majority Leader
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PRESS RELEASE

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Contact: Victoria Chávez 646-241-5335
Amanda KinKaid 505-363-7417

**Rep. Stewart's Bill to Enact the Uniform Child Abduction Prevention Act
Passes HCPAC**

Santa Fe, NM – Under legislation sponsored by Rep. Mimi Stewart (D-Albuquerque), a court with the authority to determine child custody would be able to order abduction prevention measures during custody proceedings if it finds that there is a credible risk of child abduction. House Bill 56 passed the House Consumer and Public Affairs Committee today with a vote of 3-0.

Rep. Stewart said, "This legislation makes jurisdictional issues uniform in child custody cases so that a child's safety is paramount as it should be." She added, "This is an excellent tool to help protect children who are at a credible risk of abduction during cases of familial disputes, abuse, or neglect."

House Bill 56 would enact the Uniform Child Abduction Prevention Act, which would allow a court, with the authority to determine child custody, to order abduction prevention measures during custody proceedings, if it finds that there is a credible risk of child abduction. It addresses child abduction by a family member or a party known by the parent to pose a threat.

The court may order that other measures be taken to prevent imminent child abduction, including: issuing a warrant to take physical custody of the child, directing the use of law enforcement to locate and return a child or enforcing the court's custody determination

More than 203,000 children are abducted by a family member each year in the U.S. The majority of these are abducted by one of their parents during a custodial dispute. About 46% are gone for less than a week – 21% for a month – and about 6% not returned to the rightful parent. These incidents are usually driven by hostility between parents with the innocent child caught in the middle. At times, these incidents involved international custody disputes, where one parent wants to leave the country with the child, making shared custody impractical.

House Bill 56 now heads to the House Judiciary Committee for consideration.