

Illinois Coalition for Family Court Reform
ICFCR.org
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March 4, 2007

Dianne Post
1826 E Willetta St.
Phoenix, AZ 85006-3047

Dear Ms. Post,

We are writing to voice our support for the lawsuit you intend to file against the United States of America with the InterAmerican Commission for Human Rights. This lawsuit charges the United States with human rights violations in a nationwide pattern of practice via the civil court system. The human rights of American citizens are being egregiously violated on a daily basis in family courts all across America. The courts have demonstrated a pattern of practice of awarding child custody to perpetrators of violence against women and children, and to sexual predators.

The court system is used as a weapon to further abuse victims of domestic violence or incest, by the perpetrators who are almost exclusively men. These criminals are aided by judges and a network of attorneys and mental health professionals who profit from the cottage industry of awarding custody to abusive men. The system is funded and fueled with a campaign of misinformation by The Fatherhood Initiative and other "fathers' rights" groups.

This pattern of practice defies the imagination of an unsuspecting American public. Protective mothers are quickly silenced by false allegations of "alienation" or emotional instability made against them by the perpetrators and other bad actors who profit from the practice. So called Childs' Representatives, Law Guardians, or Guardian ad Litem, make a handsome living acting with quasi judicial immunity in the role of court appointed expert to determine the "best interests of the child." This represents an unconstitutional delegation of judicial power and authority to parties who are not qualified or trained to make such judgments.

In a few counties of Illinois, alone, we have documented more than 225 cases where custody was awarded to abusive husbands/fathers. Examination of the court record and case files shows a clear pattern of misconduct, unconstitutional violations of due process, and often illegal incarceration of the protective parent. She is battered with endless petitions for alleged contempt of court. She is often found guilty of violations without a hearing. Petitions and Orders are filed on the same day, without proper notice, time to respond or a hearing – all done ex parte. Frequently the mothers are driven to poverty in the process – years upon years of litigation, with some cases stretching out for 10 years – and can't afford counsel. The mother, acting pro se, is no match for the fathers rights attorneys who represent the father and are brought in to represent the child. We have documentation of the collusion of these parties and their ex parte communications with judges.

The professional regulatory bodies (for example, Illinois Department of Professional Regulation, or "IDPR") have few, if any, regulations that govern the professionals acting in the capacity of "experts" or legal counsel with regard to misconduct in offering opinions or making legal arguments that define the best interests of the child. Some of the governing members of IDPR are attorneys with a track record of being pro fathers rights; a case of the fox guarding the hen house. In fact, the professional regulations that are the standard by which the IDPR makes rulings, don't include any requirement that the "professionals" act lawfully in the course of managing cases (they are more concerned that the parties pay their professional dues and maintain proper licenses and certifications). This lack of accountability is a nationwide problem.

ICFCR is a non-profit organization with the purpose of providing emotional support and information to parents involved in custody litigation and issues of domestic violence, child abuse, or other parental conflict. We are a grass roots volunteer group of concerned parents. Our more than 225 Victim Impact Statements have generated a great deal of interest in terms of initiating reforms in family courts across the United States.

Most Sincerely Yours,

Annette Zender, Director

Carroll White, Director