



National Organization for Women-New York State Inc.

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InterAmerican Commission on Human Rights
1889 F Street NW
Washington, DC 20006

Dear Commissioners:

The New York State chapter of the National Organization for Women is writing in support of the petition concerning the human rights violations that occur in the family courts of the United States.

NOW-NYS is comprised of over 40,000 members and supporters. Our mission is to achieve full equality for women. Gender bias in the courts has yet to be fully addressed and continues to be place where women suffer from discrimination whereby children are taken from them in an unjust manner

For many years, on an all too regular basis, our office receives calls for help from women across New York State whose lives or whose children's lives are placed in danger because of the family court's disregard for allegations of abuse, and awarding of custody to abusers. Our office has advocated for women who have been placed in jail or threatened with jail for doing nothing more than attempting to ensure the safety of their children. For the past two years we have co-hosted a national Battered Mothers Custody Conference, attended by over 400 people, the majority of whom are protective mothers. The causes of the problem are multiple, including: gender bias, use of junk science theories such as parental alienation, failure of due process, and corruption. Just this past month, in NY State, a family court judge was convicted of accepting bribes and awarding custody to the highest bidder. The problem is widespread, and the few instances reported in the complaint are just the tip of the iceberg.

We urge the commission to investigate the problems detailed in this petition and to use your powers to protect the human rights of abused women and children facing custody proceedings in United States family courts.

Respectfully submitted,

Marcia A. Pappas
President
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