

January 9, 2014

TESTIMONY FOR PUBLIC HEARING

The Task Force to Study Legal Disputes Involving the Care & Custody of Minor Children

Connecticut Legislature

c/o Legislative Judiciary Committee Office

Legislative Office Building/Office 2500

Hartford, CT 06106

Thursday, January 9, 2014

Dear Task Force Members:

My name is Dianne. My divorce from an abusive man has been pending since November 2011. Going to trial in Middletown in February.

I have watched the lives of my children and I go from **BAD** to a **NIGHTMARE** that we live and breathe daily. A nightmare that I could never possibly imagine would happen... a nightmare that continues to get worse every single day... a nightmare that the court system and the GAL strongly contributed to... and could have been prevented had the court system and the GAL truly acted for what is in the "best interest" of my children.

I stand before you penniless, on the verge of homelessness, and , yes, childless. I went from being a full time mom, their primary caregiver, to seeing them 2 hours a week. Equal parenting time? No Best interest of my children? Absolutely not!

Financially .. destroyed. Only asset is the marital home. .. a home that is now worth zero after all the attorney's fees are paid leaving no money for my girls to attend college or to buy a new home.

First Attorney requested GAL . Quickly realized that the GAL was waste of money. My parental rights were being infringed upon by a stranger who after two years, still doesn't know the right grades my girls are in. Asked for his removal. Was told could never be done. Wow, such power given to a person who only takes a few classes. She withdrew.\$3000.00 gone. I owe her another \$3000.00 more.

\$2000.00 for second lawyer.Poor representation for one year.He withdrew when my case was sent to Middletown. Now suing me for \$62,000.00. The GAL owe him about \$ 75,000.00. Filed valid grievances against GAL(with the Bar Association). Then the Court granted his motion to obtain an attorney to protect HIM in my divorce proceedings. Bill?..\$11,000.00. Grievances showed the GAL blatantly lied to the court on the record, causing more harm to my children. All were dismissed immediately. \$4,000.00 for present attorney... anticipate owing him \$70,000.00 or more.

The girls' witnessed their father threaten me, write disparaging words on bathroom mirror everyday in crayon, got inches from my face, posturing to hit me, banged on bathroom door and walls excessively when I showered (leaving marks), told girls I didn't love them, wouldn't be there mother soon, blasting hard core music about murder, sex, & drugs, and more. **I tell you this because the GAL had the same knowledge.** Emails to him were ignored. He never called me, or my girls about the abuse. (My sisters called , wrote letters, ignored too.)

Who suffered? **My children.**

Divorce is trauma. Children have a right to love both parents. Children have a right to see both parents. Children have a right to be protected from the emotional abuse that is caused by Parental Alienation . (They become afraid, then align themselves with the abuser out of fear that those same abusive behaviors will come at them. It's a coping skill.)

Father stopped visitation or dictated I meet at a cemetery. He would stay, make the girls say they didn't want to go while video taping them, then they left. (How intimidating for my girls.)

GAL knew all of this.

(Never had time with girls since June 2013 when their father took it upon himself to "make his own court orders". GAL knew it all)

Lawyer filed contempt.

Instead, GAL recommended decreased time. 2 hours a week.

(Father never held accountable.

Father remained in contempt. Still didn't see girls)

Present attorney filed contempt again.

Father was finally fined and jailed. (Didn't stop him, back to violating again).

Regarding CGS SEC 46b-56

In making or modifying any order as provided in subsections (a) and (b) of this section, the court shall consider the best interests of the child, and in doing so may consider, but shall not be limited to, one or more of the following factors:

- (1) The temperament and developmental needs of the child; Court didn't consider
- (2) the capacity and the disposition of the parents to understand and meet the needs of the child; Court didn't consider
- (3) any relevant and material information obtained from the child, including the informed preferences of the child; Court didn't consider
- (4) the wishes of the child's parents as to custody; Court didn't consider
- (5) the past and current interaction and relationship of the child with each parent, the child's siblings and any other person who may significantly affect the best interests of the child; Court didn't consider.. cousins, aunts , uncles, grandparents all alienated by father and GAL. No holidays with me or family for one year.

(6) the willingness and ability of each parent to facilitate and encourage such continuing parent-child relationship between the child and the other parent as is appropriate, including compliance with any court orders; Court didn't consider Father video taping, disparaging, not leaving on visitations, texting during visitations, threatening mother at visitations, not allowing children to see mom and family for one year. Cut off relationship with my children and their cousins, grandparents, aunts, uncles Wouldn't allow kids to attend great grandfather's funeral. All known by GAL

(7) any manipulation by or coercive behavior of the parents in an effort to involve the child in the parents' dispute; Court didn't consider even though Judge said father was using children to hurt me.

(8) the ability of each parent to be actively involved in the life of the child; Court didn't consider

(9) the child's adjustment to his or her home, school and community environments; Court didn't consider GAL lied on the record regarding this matter. One of the grievances

(10) the length of time that the child has lived in a stable and satisfactory environment and the desirability of maintaining continuity in such environment, provided the court may consider favorably a parent who voluntarily leaves the child's family home pendente lite in order to alleviate stress in the household; Court didn't consider

(11) the stability of the child's existing or proposed residences, or both; Court didn't consider

(12) the mental and physical health of all individuals involved, except that a disability of a proposed custodial parent or other party, in and of itself, shall not be determinative of custody unless the proposed custodial arrangement is not in the best interests of the child; Court didn't consider

(13) the child's cultural background; Court didn't consider

(14) the effect on the child of the actions of an abuser, if any domestic violence has occurred between the parents or between a parent and another individual or the child; Court didn't consider

(15) whether the child or a sibling of the child has been abused or neglected, as defined respectively in section 46b-120; Court didn't consider

(16) whether the party satisfactorily completed participation in a parenting education yes BUT co-parenting class is out dated. More for the 1950's

My recommendations:

GAL should not be attorneys

Training should be minimum 80 hours including parental alienation

GAL not appointed unless both parties agree to a capped spending

GAL can be removed

Shared custody is a must

Court must inquire about CGS SEC 46b-56 if noncompliance, mandatory consequences.

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