

February 18, 2016

To Ms. Leslie Halligan, Chair, and Commission Members
Protect Montana Kids Commission
Helena, MT.

Dear Ms Halligan:

In earlier testimony to this Committee, I had made the point that the growth of poverty would continue to increase and that this would create the necessity for offering adult and child care programs needed by Intermediate and Extended families.

The attached outline shows how our Great Falls YWCA organization is in the process of developing a plan to assist and prepare for grandparents, brothers, and sisters of those who are experiencing abusive family relationships.

Originally our Mercy Home was created during the early 1970s for the purpose of assisting Women and Children who needed assistance in countering abusive relationships. In recent years, resulting from increased poverty and other situations, Males and their children needed similar services. Males as heads of households receive now shelter from external organizations such as the Great Falls Rescue Mission in contract with our organization. In addition, they also participate in male oriented crisis consultations as well as a variety of services such as community living.

Currently, the YWCA is also aware that Intermediate and Extended families also need to be educated on the variety of services available from government and non-profit organizations. For example, complex social assistance programs demand that an adult must be employed for a certain amount of hours to receive social benefits. By default, grandparents tend to have custody of children when they are not in school. Government relations and legal counseling is necessary for those who have such responsibility and this creates very often financial hardships.

In short, the greatest need for today is to include intermediate and extended family members in programs necessary to overcome traumatic abuse experiences. For this reason, the Great Falls YWCA wishes to bring this necessity to your attention.

Please, contact me if you or the members of this Committee need more information. And thank you for your interest.

Sincerely,



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**Great Falls YWCA
and
Mercy Home
Shelter and Crisis Services**
(Dolman, Proposed Plan Draft, 02/16/2016)

Women and Children*

- Confidential Safe Shelter (60 day limit)
- Crisis Counseling
- Case Management
- Classes and Workshops
- Community Living
- Emergency Clothing
- Employment Counseling
- Family Relations
- Power of Sisterhood Mentoring
- Support Groups with shared experiences

Mercy Home has a Healthy Environment where you and your family can work to self sufficiency.

Males and Children*

- Confidential Safe Shelter (60 day limit)
- Crisis Counseling
- Case Management
- Classes and Workshops
- Community Living
- Emergency Clothing
- Employment Counseling
- Family Relations
- Power of Brotherhood Mentoring
- Support Groups with shared experiences

The YWCA has a Healthy Environment where you and your family can work to self sufficiency.

Intermediate and Extended Family Services:
(next of kin: Grandparents, Brothers, Sisters, etc.)

- Child Care services
- Crisis Counseling
- Government Relations
- Legal Counseling
- Mental and Physical Health services

Community Support Organizations:
such as providing a Male Family shelter in cooperation with the Great Falls Rescue Mission.

Please Note: applicants for Mercy Home and YWCA services under age 18 must have parental permission

2/17/2016

My Opinion on Child & Family Services of Montana - It's about money not protecting abused children.
by Georgia Miller 406-781-1830

I don't believe the general public, nor most judges understand how Child & Family Services protect abused children. In September of 2014 my family was thrust into the horror of how Child & Family Services actually "protects" abused children after repeatedly calling them for help. Over the last year I have attended many legislative committee meetings, all of the Protect Montana Kids Commission meetings, many rallies to expose the harm Child & Family Services brings to abused children and their families, have talked to many parents, grandparents and ex CFS workers and read many articles on the subject of child protection. I am a systems analyst so I have been taking in as much information as I can and have been struggling to see what is causing the Child Protection system in this state and country to fail abused children so miserably.

The light finally came on for me after reading an article titled "Beware Child Protective Services: What Victims, Advocates, and Mandated Reporters Need to Know." by Global Research News dated 8/12/2014. Coincidentally, this article was published a month before [REDACTED] were removed from a very loving, protective home. At the same time there were billboards around Great Falls with a message from Attorney General, Tim Fox urging people to call the child abuse hotline if you suspect child abuse. Several people were calling the child abuse hotline with reports of suspected child abuse but nothing was being done. At the time, we did not understand that the Child Abuse Hotline is connected to both law enforcement and Child and Family Services. When it comes to the abuse of children, both the police department and the courts rely solely on the opinion of child protection specialists who work for the Department of Family Services-Child and Family Services (CFS). I've learned the only practice CFS employs to help abused children is to remove them from the custody of their parents or primary care givers and put them in state's custody. According to Sarah Corbally, the Director of Child & Family Services, the only way the state of Montana receives any money from the Federal government to fund their agency is if children are "removed" from their home. So what happens if a "protective" parent calls for help with abuse and the children are in the "protective" parent's custody? There is either no help given or if CFS determines from their so called "investigation" (which many times consists of talking only to the alleged abuser), that the child may have experienced abuse - then the "protective" parent is deemed "non-protective" because she/he obviously failed to protect the child from abuse. Now, instead of CFS focusing on the abuser, they attack the "protective" parent and do everything in their power to convince the county attorney and the judge that this once "protective" parent is now a co-abuser thus warranting CFS taking custody of their children. Now the parent who reached out for help (from now on we will call the mother, yet many times it can be the father), who very well may be a co-victim with her child(ren), is now the enemy of the state. The abused children, who need their "protective" parent more than ever, are taken away from their loving, caring parent and placed in foster care or with their abusive parent's family. The foster care families nor the extended family members do not love the child(ren) in the same way that their "primary care giver" does. Many times the child is even given to the alleged abuser! Now the once protective, loving parent is assigned a lawyer who is supposed to be helping them get their children back from the state. If you are assigned a court appointed lawyer, they are not on your side. They are actually working for and with CFS and the county attorney who is CFS' lawyer in these Youth In Need of Care (YINC) cases. If this parent, who is now deemed a co-abuser, puts up any resistance to what is being done to her or her children, CFS will make her life as difficult as possible. She will be given a treatment plan that is nearly impossible to complete. As many road blocks as possible will be put in her way to extend the time they have her children in state's custody. Every day they keep her children from her results in more money coming from the Feds for their budget. A few months ago I saw a documentary on two situations where

children were removed from their parents. The documentary noted that once parents are in the CFS system their requirements to parent their own children is set at a MUCH higher (unjust) standard (nearly impossible) than what is expected of parents not in the "system." An ex-CFS worker told me that in training she was taught to not throw too much at parents, like the kitchen sink, but when she actually started working as a child protection specialist, the parent's treatment plans were set by her supervisor and in her opinion they were always unrealistic and usually included the "kitchen sink." She was repeatedly told that "we don't do it that way."- the way she was trained.

I have read many studies on "child separation anxiety syndrome" and they all state that children up to the age of 6 not being with their primary care giver even for a few nights causes irreparable damage to the child. The younger the child, the worse the damage is done. The child's lifetime consequence is they learn to not trust people in their lives. I have heard several CFS workers state that removing children from their loving family does not harm them because children are so resilient, "They can bounce back from nearly anything." I guess this is their justification for stealing children for money. I have heard of many cases in Great Falls where judges are mandating parenting plans where even infants are given 50/50 custody with a parent they may not know or hardly even know which means the child is taken away from their primary care giver for 1/2 of their life. I believe the long term effect of these rulings is that trust issues will affect the success of these children's long-term relationship and will add greatly to the ever increasing number of future divorce cases.

Rochelle Beley, a private therapist who addressed the Protect Montana Kids Commission meeting on 1/26/2016 spoke about the negative effects of adverse childhood experiences. She noted that every time a child is removed from their parents or primary care givers, or moved to a different living situation, or even getting a new caseworker can be a significant adverse childhood experience. The effects of these adverse childhood experiences may plague the victim throughout their lifetime.

My suggestion to improve the child protection system is to give help and support tools to parents without removing the children from the parent's or primary-care giver's custody. A friend, Mark Supanich, has proposed a "safe house" plan. When there is suspected abuse, this plan would have the whole family live at a safe house together. The family interaction is watched closely and is part of the "investigation". The parents and their children are given immediate help like parenting classes, counseling, anger management, help with drugs and alcohol addiction, etc. - but the children are not removed from their primary care givers. They live together during the treatment plan phase under close supervision.

I have come to the conclusion Child & Family Services may help somewhat with drug addiction cases. I also believe in these cases, CFS sets the parents up for failure. At the 12/4/2015 Protect MT Kids Commission meeting Maylinn Smith, Associate Professor at University of Montana School of Law, stated that CFS employees are inflicting excessive trauma on parents who are trying to work on their addictions. Addictions which are most likely caused by self medicating for trauma.

In the last year I have received phone calls and emails from people who suspected abuse and even feared for the life of a child but didn't know what to do. I should be able to tell them to call the Child Abuse Hotline but I cannot. I will never call that phone# again nor encourage anyone else to do so. I wouldn't want another child or family to be destroyed by this agency. It seems that whatever action CFS takes is the opposite of what is in the best interest of the children and family. Now my recommendations are to first of all PRAY! If it is a domestic abuse situation call the YWCA. If it is a drug or alcohol problem call AA and Al-Anon. If it is suspected sexual abuse or physical violence, call the local police department. If the sexually abused child is under the age of 5, good luck with getting any help from law enforcement. You will most likely get negative reactions from CFS. They habitually blame sexual abuse of children under 5 on coaching by the counselor and/or protective parent or both! In many cases the child is removed from the "protective" parent who is accused of psychological abuse and given to the non-custodial parent who may be the abuser. CFS will deny any abuse took place and even

protect the alleged abuser. Only call the child abuse hotline IF you think the children being removed from their current living situation will be truly in the best interest of the child and the child should NEVER live with that person again. Also don't count on the child being placed with a family member because often they are placed in foster care. Following these suggestions would eliminate all calls by the custodial parent thinking they may get some help for their child and themselves.

I have learned that many people who do NOT work for the state profit from children being removed from their parents by the state; lawyers/attorneys (public defenders received \$5,080,329 in FY 2015), evaluators (see below), foster care homes/providers (received \$19,097,101 in FY 2015), day care providers, counselors, and visitation services (\$108,363 in 2015). Remember that none of these people can be paid by the state unless the children are kidnapped from their parents. Sarah Corbally stated during the first Protect MT Kids Commission meeting that if a worker makes a mistake where services cannot be reimbursed by the federal government, it is considered in the department as a "Fatal Mistake." I would think that a fatal mistake would be when a child dies because CFS failed to protect them from their abuser(s.)

I do not have any information of how much private attorneys made from Youth In Need of Care cases but in fiscal yr 2015, there were a total of 3,925 neglect court cases assigned to public defenders in Montana and the cost of these cases to the state of Montana was \$5,080,329. The regions with the top five number of YINC cases with public defenders were 1. Great Falls with 766 new cases at a cost of \$725,608; 2. Billings with 756 new cases at a cost of \$866,752; 3. Missoula with 593 new cases at a cost of \$969,608; 4. Kalispell 462 new cases at a cost of \$632,220; 5. Helena with 340 new cases with a cost of \$581,928. According to a report handed out at the Protect Montana Kids Commission meeting by Sarah Corbally, there were 2,371 new cases filed or reopened cases in Montana District Court in 2015 for Abuse & Neglect. This is up 47% from 1,609 cases of Abuse & Neglect in 2014 and up 235% from 1006 cases in 2009! Billings had the most New Abuse & Neglect cases filed in District Court in 2015 with 512, up 230% from 223 cases in 2014. Great Falls was 2nd with 386 with only a 13% increase of 43 cases from 2014 to 2015. I don't know if this report was for Fiscal year (July 1-June 30) 2015 or for calendar year 2015 as it is much lower (1,554) than the number of new court cases assigned to public defenders in the category of "neglect". Could it be that more than 1 public defender is assigned in a court case? Also some of these court appointed attorneys could have been for tribal courts.

It seems that CFS has their "favorite" evaluators who make a lot of money from the plight of children and parents thrust into the hell of the CFS system. According to Montana's checkbook website the State of Montana paid Michael R. Butz of Billings 109 payments totaling \$93,683.75 for the last 3 1/2 years; while Robert Page of Helena was paid 118 payments totaling \$284,593.75 over the last 3 1/2 years! I know of one case where a parent's court appointed attorney hired Robert Page to do his client's evaluation which cleared him of any wrong doing yet Robert Page did not appear in court to defend this parent against the State of Montana CFS's charges against him. I would also like to note that Robert Page is considered a psychologist by the judges and CFS but he has a doctorate in Education not in Psychology! Sarah Corbally continually said that CFS allows parents to have whatever evaluator or counselor they want but this is not true. Sarah finally admitted at the first Protect Montana Kids Commission meeting that they do prefer to use the counselors and evaluators who work well with the department! When asked if the state has a list of counselors they like to use - Sarah said they did not have such a list. When asked if the state had a list of counselors they don't like to use she didn't have a list for that either.

Sarah Corbally stated at the 12/4/2015 Protect MT Kids Commission meeting that Foster Care is not reimbursable from the Federal Government unless the Foster Care parent/provider is a state licensed Foster Care. So, if children are placed with family members, the state does not get any money for these children being in foster care UNLESS the family member is willing to become a licensed foster care provider. Many grandparents or family members don't want to jump through those hoops. I would

like to note that it has been reported by a previous CFS case worker in Great Falls, [REDACTED] that a member of the Foster Care Review Board who made recommendations on individual foster care cases was also [REDACTED] the main organizations providing group homes in Great Falls. [REDACTED] states "I find it a serious conflict of interest that _____'s company benefits financially from children placed in group homes while he sits on a federally sanctioned board that makes decisions regarding the placement of foster children." According to Montana's checkbook website this organization which runs therapeutic group homes in Great Falls has received \$1,441,165.50 from the state of Montana in the last 3 1/2 years. Currently 34.7% of the children in foster care in Montana are placed with a licensed foster family where federal reimbursement is taking place. Of the 49.1% of children currently placed with Kinship Foster care, 16.1% are being paid and 33% are receiving no pay for being a foster parent. In fiscal year 2015 the state spent over 19 MILLION dollars on Foster care!

One placed in Foster care, a child is not always guaranteed to be safe from abuse. In fact, <http://liftingtheveil.org> claims that over 28% of children in state care are abused while in the "system". In one study of former foster children, 9 out of 10 claimed they had been abused by their foster parents. Recently it is reported that several children in a Great Falls foster home were being sexually abused by the foster mother's autistic son. And at least one of the abused children was placed in the home out of sheer retaliation. Then CFS workers tried to interfere with the police investigation. An ex-CFS worker told me that there are very few checks for someone to become a foster parent and many do it for the money, while the requirements CFS sets for the parents to parent their own children are very high and nearly unhuman.

As for the Protect Montana Kids Commission, I hope they will come up with some great ideas to significantly change the way Child & Family Services works. I am very leery of this happening as only 3 possibly 4 members of the 14 member panel are not either paid by state or local governments or their business receives a lot of funding from the state. A few of the suggestions they have already come up with are to have parenting plans ready at the show cause hearing to eliminate another dispensational hearing which should allow the parents being reunited with their children sooner. To save caseworkers time and the state money, a treatment plan does not need to be created for an absent parent and no attorney needs to be appointed for an absent parent (not able to be found).

One solution Child & Family Services presented is a newly created position, Complaint & Critical Incidents Manager, to help with complaints against the Dept. of Child & Family Services. The position has been filled by [REDACTED] who will start in February 2016. I believe this position will not work for the same reason the Ombudsman Office has been a failure. People are downright AFRAID to complain because they could lose their children. I have had parents, foster parents and grandparents alike tell me that their CFS worker told them that if they complain to ANYONE they will never see their children or grandchildren again! Lawyers tell their clients to not talk to ANYONE or your rights will be terminated and you will never see your children again. Parents who get their children back are threatened that if they ever get a call about your family again your children will be taken away for good. So I believe this new office is a total waste of our taxpayer money.

One of the main complaints of Child & Family Services is their employees are overworked and underpaid. If the public understood how the department worked (the only help for abused children must start with removing them from their home), there may be significantly less calls to the hotline. For fiscal year 2015 there were 23,775 calls made to the Child Abuse Hotline. Of those calls 8,908 involving 12, 897 children were forwarded to CFS for an investigation for possible abuse. 1,196 calls were requests for services by parents. I also think that if laws were enacted with stiff penalties which included jail time against calling in false complaints would also cut down on the number of calls to the child abuse hotline.

I also believe unnecessary removal of children by CFS is causing a burden in our court system. In 2015 there were 2,371 Abuse & Neglect court cases in Montana of which 386 were in Cascade County. Each of these cases may require 4 or more hearings each. There were 10,731 cases for Domestic

Relations in Montana with 1,223 of those in Cascade County which would include Divorce and Custody cases. CFS not doing their jobs properly are causing divorce and custody cases to take many more hearings than necessary before being settled. If CFS would have done their job properly [REDACTED] divorce and custody case would have only required 2 hearings. So far there has been 6 hearings, 3 judges, 3 lawyers and 2 1/2 years later and [REDACTED] custody case is further from being settled that it was after the 1st hearing.

The total budget for Montana Child & Family Services for Fiscal year 2015 was \$70,323,856 - up \$3,646,500 from 2014. Of the over \$70 million spent for Child Abuse only \$108,363 was spent for Child Abuse Prevention & Treatment. This smaller amount comes from a federal grant. Of the over \$70 million spent, federal funding was \$29,310,249 or 41.7% of the total DPHS-CFSD budget. I have been told that CFS makes more money if they can adopt children out. After looking at their budget, this is clearly true. In 2015 the federal government paid 52.5% of subsidized adoption costs while federal dollars only paid 37.8% of foster care costs. State subsidized adoption costs in fiscal year 2015 were nearly 14.5 million dollars! Tennessee Lawyer, Connie Reguli says that there is unlimited federal funds for adopting children. Sarah Corbally and CFSD continually stress that more money from the State will fix their problems. I do believe case workers should receive better pay but they should also be required to be better qualified and have better training for doing a job that so greatly impacts the lives of children and families. When CFS make mistakes or act maliciously they are destroying a child's life as well as destroying the health of the entire family. I think more poorly trained workers will just result in more children removed from their homes.

As for children being left in situations where they are physically abused and may even die [REDACTED] I believe these tragedies are due to the CFS case workers not performing a proper investigation. At the January 26, 2016 Protect MT Kids Commission meeting, I believe it was Jennifer Winkley, the Child Protection Specialist Supervisor from Mile City, who stated that during an investigation, the person who called in the report should be the first contact and at least 2 attempts should be made to contact the reporter. In the majority of hundreds of cases that have been botched by the department, one of the main complaints is that there was little if any investigation or the only person contacted was the "alleged" abuser. Investigations should be done only by workers highly trained in forensic investigations. It was also stated that when a decision was made, the reporter is supposed to be contacted to let them know the outcome. According to the Audit, this almost never happens. A follow-up call regarding the outcome of the investigation to the original reporter could avoid additional calls to the hotline. According to Montana state law (41.3.202) the department shall provide a written report of the results of the investigation to the family if the family requests it. Also if the reporter of the alleged child abuse or neglect requests it, CFS shall verify whether the report has been received, describe the level of response and timeframe for action that the department has assigned to the report, and confirm that it is being acted upon.

Federal legislation is needed to fund child abuse prevention programs. In 2015, the Hatch-Wyden Child Welfare Legislation was introduced in the U.S. Senate with the current title of: The Family First Act. The first part of the Act provides an option for states as well as tribes who administer a Title IV-E program, an option to operate a statewide prevention program. It also has guidelines to ensure children are placed in the foster home which is the most appropriate for the child. Call your US senators and encourage them to support this bill.

From what I've shared here, you can clearly see that in Montana, child protection is not about the safety of children, it is about money! The state of Montana is profiting greatly by the kidnapping of children from their families and from the plight of abused, HURTING children and families! This MUST STOP being about the money and start being about the children!

Beware Child Protective Services: What Victims, Advocates, and Mandated Reporters Need to Know

By Global Research News
Global Research News
The Peoples Voice

Region: USA

By Women's Justice Center

Note: Throughout this text the terms Child Protective Services (CPS) and Child Welfare Agencies are used interchangeably.

Introduction

Probably no other public agency leaves victims and advocates more perplexed than Child Protective Services. On the one hand, people think of CPS with appreciation as they envision a selfless agency rescuing innocent children from horrific conditions. Indeed, CPS workers across the country do this routinely. The gratitude is deserved.



At the same time, the agency seems to be perpetually marred by a steady drumbeat of nightmare stories about CPS emanating from the very families CPS is supposed to serve. This text deals with just one of these problems; the CPS practice of removing or threatening to remove children from the nonviolent, non-offending parent in cases of family violence. This guide explains why this happens with such frequency, how to help prevent it from happening in your case, and what to do about it if you're already caught in its grip. (Since the non-offending, nonviolent parent in these cases is usually the mother, we often refer to this parent as 'the mother', though there are certainly cases where the non-offending parent is the father.)

The Situation as it Usually Unfolds

In brief, the particular problem we cover usually unfolds like this. A mother herself seeks help from CPS or becomes involved with CPS through someone else's report of suspected child abuse. Her child has been physically or sexually abused by a family member, usually by a male family member, or there are concerns the child is living in a home where there is domestic violence. At first, the mother naturally anticipates that CPS will try to help her and her child, and try to punish and stop the perpetrator. So these mothers are stunned when suddenly the CPS/juvenile court system turns its sights on her, even though everyone agrees she didn't perpetrate the abuse or violence.

Suddenly she is the one under investigation, and the perpetrator is seeming to be all but ignored. And worse, CPS is threatening to take her child from her, or has already done so without warning or

notice, and is threatening to keep the child, right at the time that mother and child need each other most. She feels the system turn hostile toward her. Did she, the non-offending parent, protect the child from the violent parent? Did she protect the child from molestation? Did she protect the child from being exposed to domestic violence in the home? Well, no, obviously she did not, or could not, or, in the case of molestation, often didn't know about it.

Instead of being treated more as a co-victim of a violent perpetrator, with help and guidance provided according to the mother's expressed needs, she is treated more as a co-perpetrator, with CPS establishing mandated controls over virtually any which aspect of her life CPS chooses, all under threat of losing her child. In addition to court dates at which it is her behavior that's in question, CPS gives her a mandated, often overwhelming set of programs and goals she must comply with to the satisfaction of the CPS/juvenile court system, in order to – maybe – get the child back – and maybe not. She is also held accountable for maintaining a cooperative attitude throughout, even though she is, in fact, in a profoundly adversarial relationship with CPS (which is why she's given an attorney at court time). At the same time, she begins to realize that the CPS/juvenile court system isn't pushing to hold the perpetrator accountable for his violence, nor is CPS even invested with the power to do so.

Most mothers say they would rather be threatened with jail than to be threatened with the loss of her child. Yet as invasive, terrifying, and awesome as this governmental threat is, virtually all the decisions as to her fitness, compliance, and fate are being decided at the lowest judicial standard of evidence, 51% of the evidence, the 'preponderance of the evidence' standard. This is a far cry from the 'beyond a reasonable doubt' standard the government must reach before sentencing someone to jail for even the briefest time.

The level of proof against her that CPS is required to put forth is so minimal that it provides the mother little protection against any abusive, prejudiced, or discriminatory exercise of power by CPS. The low evidence burden on CPS also makes it nearly impossible for the mother to defend herself, especially against such vague accusations as 'failure to protect', or that 'she knew or should have known', things which don't even constitute a crime in the criminal system. And to top off the injustices, an all too common requirement on her must-do list is that she and/or the child must partake in family conferencing or a family reunification plan in which one or both must meet, mediate, or co-counsel with the perpetrator – the very same perpetrator from whom the mother has been accused of 'failure to protect' the child.

The Dawn of Recognition

Unfortunately, such stories are not the result of occasional human errors that are bound to occur in any public agency. They are, instead, inevitable and frequent outcomes stemming from the flawed founding premises and the weak legal underpinnings of the CPS/juvenile court system. The structure of the system drives toward these injustices no matter how well intentioned individual CPS workers may be. Nor is this to say that children should never be removed from the non-offending parent. There are circumstances in which they should. The problem is that the system is so arbitrary, sexist, secret, and outdated, that it tends toward abusive or mistaken results.

In the last decade, there has been growing recognition and discussion of the CPS problem as it pertains to the non-offending parent. In 1999, the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges put together the Greenbook Initiative, a set of 67 recommendations aimed at remedying

precisely this set of problems. But though the Greenbook gives long overdue recognition to the issue, the recommendations don't call for installing any firm checks on the system, as will be discussed in more detail in a later section.

And in 2004, in New York state, there was a landmark settlement in a class action lawsuit against that state's child welfare agencies. The lawsuit, *Nicholson v. Scoppetta*, had been brought by mothers who had their children removed for no other reason than that the mothers, victims of domestic violence, had failed to protect their children from 'exposure' to the domestic violence. The 2004 lawsuit agreement and an earlier injunction prohibited child welfare agencies from using this reason alone to remove children from non-offending parents.

Though the lawsuit put CPS agencies around the country on notice of their wrongdoing and harm done in these cases, to date it has brought only modest change in practice. The vague laws and weak evidence standards governing CPS means that CPS workers need only adjust the language used in their justification for removing a child, offer the usual scant proof, and many juvenile courts continue removing children in these situations as before.

Perhaps the brightest spot on the horizon is the year 2005 resolution passed by the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges in support of presumptively open hearings with discretion of courts to close. Since their founding, most CPS/juvenile court proceedings have been operating in secret, completely off the public record. This secrecy has mushroomed the system's tendency toward abuse. The judges' 2005 resolution in support of open hearings is not yet law, but it's a promising step. It's highly unlikely any of the system's abuses will be corrected until this essential public airing and public scrutiny of the system's proceedings is firmly set into law and practice.

The Oppressive Swath of Danger and Damage

The harm of the widespread CPS practice of removing or threatening to remove children from non-offending parents extends far beyond the dangers and injustices to individual mothers and children. The harm extends to nearly every poor, immigrant, or minority race mother who is trying to deal with family violence. Most have heard first hand stories of CPS removing children from other mothers in their neighborhoods. As a result, they become reluctant to seek help for their own situations for fear that the same thing might happen to them.

Though we include a fair amount of information about the structure and history of CPS, the purpose of this guide isn't to do policy analysis nor to make recommendations for change. The purpose of this guide is to give family violence victims, advocates, and mandated reporters information and tips that can help you, as best as possible, to understand and avoid the pitfalls and abuses of the CPS/Juvenile Court system as they pertain to the non-offending parent.

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<http://www.globalresearch.ca/beware-child-protective-services-what-victims-advocates-and-mandated-reporters-need-to-know/5395670>

February 3, 2016

██████████
PO Box 1601
Helena, MT 59624

Dear ██████████

Some of the things that ██████████ has done and has left a significant impact on DFS and will continue to do so. No surprise she appeared at the meeting, just ongoing control.

February 7, 2014 ██████████ announced to the entire Division of Child and Family Services all workers identified as Family Resources Services (FRS) would be eliminated. That was about 35 workers immediately out of jobs. It then changed to as workers resigned the positions were not filled, no approval to fill the positions. The plan was to privatize the work. Workers left and the few remaining were required to complete all of the work without assistance. The positions were never privatized as the work inside state government to privatize was not complete.

This announcement was made by teleconference with the entire state staff of DFS. ██████████ sat next to ██████████ as the announcement was made, giving her approval for this.

The positions were not privatized and not filled, the work load compounded on the few remaining workers. Foster home licensing was not done in a timely manner, kinship homes were not approved in a timely manner, services to the existing licensed homes were not provided. Adoptions were not completed in a timely manner.

██████████ failed to recognize the work that is necessary for CPS to do the job.

November 2013 ██████████ announced the new 4E Waiver program will be implemented. This is a Federally Funded program to work toward permanency for children in a shorter time line, preventing children from being in the system any longer than need be. ██████████ put a great deal of time into this program, with the consent and active involvement of ██████████. They made several promises to workers for positions within the program, hired supervisors for the positions with a formal title –Child Welfare Worker Supervisors with a pay increase. This went on for at least 8 months before it was determined to not be able to go into effect. The Supervisors are still on the job with the pay increase not doing the job they were hired for. During this time ██████████ did not acknowledge or attempt to resolve the problems of caseloads, maintaining staff, hiring qualified staff.

January 2011 ██████████ put the Safety Assessment Model into effect for Montana. This changed policy and law for all families involved with DFS. The signed contract for the service from a private agency was in place. The entire program began to be put into place in Cascade County July 2011 with the entire state in place by December 2011. This was during the time of ██████████ death in Great Falls. Subsequently followed by several other children dying in Montana. ██████████ ignored the immediate damage and harm to children and families in Montana.

[REDACTED] then methodically removed long term workers from the agency. One of the offices asked for a meeting between long term workers and [REDACTED]. This did happen but [REDACTED] was present and the Regional Administrator of the region. The discussion was centered on young new workers with no experience, no training in the area of child abuse/neglect telling the experienced workers how to the job or the complaints to superiors would occur with the result of the experienced worker being found to be in the wrong. The end discussion was [REDACTED] told the experienced workers to leave the job. This did happen. It was made clear they were no longer wanted, valued or respected on the job. The communities are aware of how and why long term respected experienced workers are no longer employed.

The long term worker who did not leave the job on their own was bullied nonstop with false allegations and belittling at all times. This gave the permission and invited all new workers to make any statement, any allegation on any one person they did not want on the job. [REDACTED] invited this behavior and approved of it.

[REDACTED] removed long term experience supervisors from their position frequently and placed inexperienced workers in the position. Examples: [REDACTED] Regional Administrator Billings; [REDACTED] supervisor Bozeman; Kalispell; [REDACTED] supervisor Great Falls; etc. These records can be checked and confirmed.

How many lawsuits have been filed, and are currently being filed against DFS from past workers.

[REDACTED] eliminated positions causing long term workers to lose their jobs. The positions were never filled or considered for discussion again. The positions that monitored federal compliance were all eliminated resulting in failed compliance resulting in significant financial loss to Montana for children. Resulting in new workers without support to do their jobs sufficiently.

DFS workers threaten and intimate families to comply with DFS. One current worker talks about DFS jumping the gun removing children but now that the children are removed DFS does not have to give them back until they are ready to do so. Another worker "I am DFS and you will do as I say". I am DFS and I can do whatever I want. I am DFS and I can say what I want, no one will believe anything you say. This is normal behaviors of DFS throughout the state. When families complain about mistreatment by a DFS worker, it is true.

DFS losses case all the time and makes the parents prove themselves over several times. A case can have up to 5 workers in one year. No one oversees the case to ensure anything was completed or documented on behalf of the parent. The parent will be required to repeat the treatment plan as many times as DFS deems necessary as the file was lost, paper work lost, documentation never obtained, etc.

Supervisors do not know the cases and do not know how to document on behalf of a parent. Just keep making the parent do it over until I believe they have learned their lesson.

DFS does not return phone calls. Grandparents, kinship providers say the only way to get an answer from the case manager, supervisor or Regional Administrator is to take a day off from work and sit in the waiting room until they get tired of seeing you sit. Then they get mad because stay all day until

someone talks to you. Workers have been known to block a kinship provider's phone number so the call does not go through. When a kinship provider talks to any other professional in the community to get help; the kinship person will lose the support as the Regional Administrator will make calls to have professional person removed. Workers and Supervisors have been known to threaten kinship providers with the loss of the child if they continue to complain about them.

A supervisor in Great Falls has a great talent ability to escalate a parent to extreme anger and frustration, making the parent mentally ill and ill logical until a threat is made or physical altercation happens. She in return will call the police to have the parent arrested for threatening her. The Regional Administrator knows this and approves this every time.

Same supervisor is allowed to make sexual harassment remarks to subordinates with multiple witnesses. When the victim complains [REDACTED] she will in return threaten the subordinate until they quit or she will then threatening them to shut up.

Secondary trauma Corbally talks about all the time. It is a true problem within DFS, everyone talks about it, and it does cause people to leave DFS. However when this is brought to the attention of a supervisor the subordinate is told to shut up and never talk about it with anyone at any time. If you do talk about you will be fired for violating confidentiality. It is not always the secondary trauma causing the trauma; it is DFS management compounding the trauma.

[REDACTED] has continued to threaten me after leaving the agency by causing problems for me on my current job. She and her workers have made false allegations of what I have done. The only way to address this is through an attorney to take legal action against DFS.

The new case managers with the support of the immediate supervisors are very threatening to families and others in the communities. Take a long look at the [REDACTED] office. [REDACTED] has most of the information of this ongoing harm to families. He is absolutely correct in what he is talking about. He has most of the information, not everyone is talking yet [REDACTED] has threatened people if they talk.

[REDACTED] have a very personal relationship with each other. They had phone calls every day after work. [REDACTED] has told several people that [REDACTED] never does anything without her knowledge and permission. This is still in effect today. [REDACTED] is still doing as [REDACTED] tells her. [REDACTED] does not and will not leave anything alone. If she believes she is the only person who can take care of something she will not allow anyone to make decisions. If she believes someone has wronged her she will continue to go out of her way to ensure her intimidating presence is known. This can be found at her previous employment as she still does this today. [REDACTED] has a history of threatening, intimidating people, about a 20 year history.

This is just a little of what I know [REDACTED] has done to the DFS and continues to do so. Everything that is being said about DFS in all communities is true, it happens throughout the state. If it were an isolated community or family maybe it is questionable.

Nothing will change; the committee will not make any difference for improvement as long as [REDACTED] has her control over Regional Administrators throughout the state.

Sincerely yours,

Lorri Clark Cory
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