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February 24, 2011

Re: Grandparents Rights  
Grandchildren Rights

I have resided in Stratford for over 25 years. Stratford is a small town on the water and a great place to raise children/grandchildren.

Devin, my grandson, born March 13, 1998 had called Stratford his home from August 1998 to August 2005, when he was abruptly removed from my home by his absentee mother.

Devin's home with me in Stratford was the only family, friends, neighborhood he had known. Together we shared many school and town events. We were regulars at all library programs for children. Through Sterling House, the community center, Devin was enrolled in many sport and social activities. In other words, our little town and its surroundings, church, Sunday school, preschools, schools, beaches, parks had been Devin's life.

Devin and I spent many hours exploring museums, aquariums, and exhibits in many cities. We celebrated all the holidays together, many with my parents, Devin's great-grandparents. We visited Santa and the Bunny Rabbit. We celebrated birthdays every year together with his great-grandparents, all those precious childhood things to put in one's memory box.

We also shared many other childhood things such as doctors, dentists, viruses, fevers, staying up all night while he was sick, potty training, learning to ride a bike, scooter, roller skate, swim, fish, play baseball, basketball, soccer, dance lessons, etc. etc.

And yet at the end of each day when it was time for our prayers, my grandson, Devin, would turn to me and say, "Gay Gay, didn't we have a good time today?!" The best ending to any prayer I ever heard.

With all the events we shared together, Devin told me he loved living with me because he felt "SAFE" with me, Gay Gay! Wow, what a profound statement for a child to make. I have to admit was a little bit shaken by this. Why say safe?

Devin has the misfortune of having two irresponsible parents. Devin's mom was absent in his life for all those years. Not one phone call, letter, or any type of contact. Her main interest was the "Man of the Moment". Her life became the man's family, the man's friends, the man's pets etc. Her family was "shut out" by her. Devin's mom was diagnosed Bi-Polar in 2004.

Devin's dad (and I use the term loosely), who resides in Pennsylvania, put Devin in the basement with the lights "turned out" for time outs. Need I say more?

I tried to get guardianship of Devin but his mother refused. That's all she had to do.

It was at this time that I learned that Connecticut has no grandparent rights. Connecticut needs to get on the bandwagon with other states like Ohio, Pennsylvania, California, etc. etc.

Why then is it in other cultures great-grandparents and grandparents are treated with respect? They are given the dignity they deserve for all their wisdom.

I was able to learn where Devin was going to school and visited Devin at recess. When Devin saw me he came running and said "Gay Gay you came to save me!" He stated he was so unhappy and lonely. Devin was taken from everything he called home and safe.

Devin and his mom were living with her "man of the moment" and it only lasted a few months before he asked them to leave his premises. I'm sure her Bi-Polar played a big part in his decision.

I had contacted DCF to check on Devin's well being as he was terrified of his mother. He could never say anything to her without it being taken the wrong way or be threatened "things could be worse". I implored DCF to get Devin a safe area where he could freely express his feelings. They informed me they would have to get his mother's permission. Bridgeport DCF informed me that they were only concerned with physical not emotional abuse. **BELIEVE ME EMOTIONAL ABUSE IS EVERY BIT AS DAMAGING AS ANY HIT OR KICK. I believe Devin has the misfortune of experiencing both physical and EMOTIONAL ABUSE.**

Devin's rights and my rights were taken away without our permission. Grandparents should have a choice as well as their grandchildren.

One often hears the expression "you cannot die from a broken heart", believe me you can!

I fulfilled all the requirements to get visitation for my grandson, Devin. We definitely had a parent /child relationship. Yet after 5 years in court spending all my savings over \$23,000.00 dollars I still am unable to see my grandson.

The bill you are about to pass is too much like the bill which has prevented me access to my grandson and visa versa. I implore you to get grandparents the rights they deserve and change the bill to expressly get those rights.

Sincerely,

Gaye Lynne Eschert

