

Bill 6685

Concerning what was Spoken by Senator Len Fasano

Re: Gal, Aisha Roche - children's law center was appointed gal when I was financially approved for one in the beginning. She stopped returning my calls when I asked her to intervene when my x was neglecting my child's mental health.

After I begged her to intervene and she ignored my plea, 3 days later my 9 year old little girl tried to hang herself while with her father. From that point on this GAL stopped returning MY calls.

At that time and along from the beginning She told me, if I didn't like the job she was doing I could file a motion to req a new one. Joke was I couldn't pay one so I was stuck with the court appointed one.

yesterday I made a motion in court substitute GAL Because I finally found pro bono certified GAL, Joan Kloth Zarnard who is a children's advocate who agreed to take the case. I finally got through to the current GAL last week who said she would be THRILLED to step aside. In court yesterday the opposing attorney vehemently objected to "some woman" being appointed and my motion was tossed out.. before it even made it to the pages of a court calendar.

I was told to "Let it go, because you don't have the money to fight it". They will turn 18 before you are ever granted joint custody

Now my statement To talk about the system failing me.

My name is Margaret Mansfield, known as Peg  
I am a mother of 5 children ages 10 through 30

Because of the spacing of age, Over the past 30 years I have always had 1 or more children under the age of 10, which effectively gives me the title of career full time, “mommy” It’s who I am – and it’s been that way for my entire adult life

My grandmother Peg Mansfield #1 was a founder of the women’s democratic league and ran for state rep in the onset of women in politics in CT. I still have the dress she wore to Governor Bowles’ inauguration 1938. I hope I honor her memory by exercising my 1<sup>st</sup> amendment right today speaking on this heated controversy which I believe to be the current poster child for.

I am fresh from a courtroom demolition of my parental rights yesterday afternoon in the New haven court house. So I am living smack in the midst of this controversy.

Because of the lack of presumption of shared parenting, I was ejected from the home my father bought with 44 years of his hard work day & night at Winchesters in NHvn 2 days after Christmas 2010.

This happened because each custody case is individually decided by Judges who just want to get the file out of court. Although I had previously suffered from the disease of alcoholism, which I fully own, I had been 8 months in successful remission, meticulously rebuilding my life.

Judge \*\*\*, wanting to move the file off her desk, picked my spouse for custodial parent - because there was no documentation of *his* mental instability, it was really easy for her. In this state whoever gets the kids gets the house.

so I was cast out of my own fathers home never having spent a single night of my life alone let alone stripped of my 28 year job tucking my kids in at night.

THERE SHOULD HAVE BEEN A MECHANISM IN PLACE TO FORCE BURDEN OF PROOF OF VALID REASON BEFORE A PARENT LOSES THEIR CUSTODIAL RIGHTS

Several days later January 6, 2011 while adjusting to homelessness my lawyer Paul Sabetta pushed a piece of paper in front of me saying that signing it would be my only hope of getting regaining my position as full time “mom” and if I didn’t sign it the judge would eventually order it anyway.

Even the judge commented that she didn’t think I was “with it” that day. I hadn’t slept or eaten normally since I was ejected from my home. I had no idea what to do, so I did what I was told. It turns out, That paper I signed that day gave my former spouse sole custody of my 8 and 10 year old and possession of my father’s home. 10 days later I landed in Yale New Haven hospital with a complete emotional breakdown and relapse.

Good news is, I got help and since that day have been in successful maintained remission of my disease - active daily in a healthy lifestyle of recovery. That’s 743 groups of “one day at a time”.

I was told that in judges chambers, back in the beginning, all the powers that be agreed that I needed to prove 1 year sobriety before I would be considered to have my children returned to me. So I set out in “baby steps” to achieve that goal.

In the meantime I was humiliated and treated like a violent criminal. My children and I suffered through the most

traumatic experience of our lives thus far in supervised visitation.

Initially set at 20 minutes, twice a month, in a windowless, 10 square foot, cinderblock, basement room with no ventilation and a two-way mirror. The kids and I were horrified by this trauma.

My little girl and boy were frightened about the people who's silhouette they could see through the mirror when they stood at a certain angle. They had nightmares about that room. Who was watching us and why?

I had never committed a single crime of neglect or abuse or harm of any kind.

One year came and went, my motion for modification was put off many times, my right to present my case was blocked time and time again by Attorney Thomas Esposito, attorney for my former spouse. I was only given an occasional bone of an extra hour or two with the kids after I continued filing motions that were objected to every time.

The barricade toward my right to a day in court grew in size last summer when Judge Conroy in New Haven went on record to say,

"You don't actually think I'm going to hear this case do you?" When my attorney said "Yes your honor it is on the docket". Judge Conroy said, "It's summer, Judges have families, I don't have the time."

Even though at a year and seven months, I was still in complete compliance of all the standards set for one year, the case was continued, my time with my children remained that

of a distant relative. While judge \*\*\* spent quality time with her family my children and I would spend another summer just a few hours a week and an overnight twice a month. No camping, no vacation.

#### PRESENT DAY

A month ago my attorney Paul Sabetta who knows I am out of money swore at me and purposely called me a liar in front of opposing counsel and court mediators. I began to look for pro bono legal assistance. I combed the state because none was available to me. It seems The umbrella clearing house of legal assistance in the state of CT (statewide legal) had a conflict of interest because they answered a question at some point over the phone to my x. I was precluded from their assistance or even their referral to the smaller agencies that could help me. I was told I could call them myself, which I did but they each said they couldn't help me unless I went through Statewide Legal.

Yesterday, my attorney abandoned my case. After 3 ½ years and the last cent of \$20,000 of what would have been my retirement account. He withdrew from the case. I objected based on the fact that I retained him for the preservation of my primary residential custody, shared physical and joint legal custody as well as the preservation of continued residence of my home.

As of yesterday, I am still without all of the above and I stood alone before the judge. I had been told yesterday was just a status conference and I would finally be given a date for a hearing. That was not the case.

I was moved to a room with my former spouse, mediator Phyllis Cummings, who with no knowledge of my proof of compliance, started out by saying "I don't understand why you

are pushing for custody when you should be concentrating and spending your time working on your sobriety.” The room also contained opposing attorneys for my former spouse, GAL Aisha Roche, who opposed me from the onset, Having been quoted as saying, “I don’t understand why she’s still pushing for custody, she’s still an alcoholic, right?”

I was destroyed in that room. Fired at from every angle and painted as some self motivated, ignorant bimbo. I was coerced into signing an agreement which effectively changes nothing. Joint custody with final say to my former spouse is exactly the same for my purposes as sole custody to him.

The decision making power he’s had for over two years has put my children at risk including hygiene neglect, exposure to pornographic videos, even to the point of death from neglect of mental health care involving a suicide attempt by my little girl who tried to hang herself when she was bullied because of the above neglect.

Phyllis Cummings wanted my file to go away yesterday. She told me that I lose. Even before I go to court she will save me the time. She would award sole custody when the file comes before her and if I am allowed a trial the judge would rule on my past. Not the present or potential of future excellent enjoyment of quality of life.

She told me I will NEVER get custody because we can’t effectively communicate. My x has chosen to purposefully refuse my request 310 pages of communications wherein I asked for co-parent counseling for the purpose of improving communication. He clearly does this to sabotage any chance of giving up the power and control he cherishes and abuses.

Phyllis Cummings, Judge Conroy, Aisha Roche and the Family court justice system need to be held accountable for their mishandling of the lives of children like mine and NOT be allowed to REWARD the mal parenting crime of blatantly blocking communication with other parent so that they can self servingly retain control.

What happened to me yesterday and all the way back to December of 2010 is absolutely criminal let alone a massive violation of my parental rights as well as the rights of my children to NOT be alienated from their mother because of their father's disdain for her.

The mediator complained about how old my case is. Nobody feels the passage of that time in a more agonizing way than my children and myself. She said "I've spent over an hour that's enough time, it's not worth it."

My answer is, it IS worth it as we continue to live it one moment at a time to put it in perspective as from the musical rent. We feel every single minute that has passed of the 1 million, 69 thousand 9 hundred minutes, How do you measure time... in the life of a child?