

Bill 494 – PH 3-31-14

**From:** nicitap@aol.com [mailto:nicitap@aol.com]

**Sent:** Sunday, March 30, 2014 6:28 PM

**To:** Jud Testimony

**Subject:** Letter for state of Connecticut

Sunday, March 30, 2014

State of Connecticut/ Legislators/ Judiciary Committee:

I would like to take this opportunity to express my heartfelt frustration, with the Connecticut Family Law System.

In 2001, my son Peter Nicita's marriage ended in divorce. It has always been his quest to be an active part in the lives of his two children, Alec and Madison, for which he battled and fought to gain. From 2001 to early 2011,, he shared custody with his ex-wife, where he was afforded the opportunity to spend many loving years with his two children, while they were in his care. Being a part of the children's immediate, extended family has always been an extremely important factor in my life. They always enjoyed the love and comforts of sharing many week-ends, summer vacations, and holidays with their great-grandparents, grandparents, aunt, uncles and cousins, as much as we did. We shared many loving and memorable times together.

Unfortunately, parental alienation was always an underlying factor. Over the years, Peter suffered many trying times on his scheduled times of appointments with the children, where they were not permitted to leave their maternal dwelling. These episodes ultimately led to court hearings, where Peter's voice wasn't heard.

The courts appointed a GAL, Tom Fiorentino, to represent the children. In my opinion, he has ignored my plea to aid in visitation of my grandchildren, he has ignored the children's therapist's recommendation that was suggested on their behalf. He has also exacerbated alienation and hindered paternal, parental rights, as well as financially worked the system.

Over the past three years, I have seen my grand-daughter, Madison once, at an evening event at her school, which was in a public setting. Upon dismissal from the auditorium, she brushed up against me and uttered a hello, brief chit chat, and a smile.

This past June, I attended my grandson Alec's high school graduation, also in a public setting. At that time, I had not seen him since early 2011. I was able to seek him out in a crowd, among his peers, and congratulate him personally, where we shared a few moments of time and conversation together. It is unconscionable to me how Connecticut Law has allowed these types of situations to occur.

On behalf of my son, our family, and the children, I believe that it is crucial that changes in the law be made. Here are a few examples:

There is no clear scope of GAL duties

A maximum dollar amount charged by GAL's should be part of CT Law

There is no authoratative body to govern GAL practices

There is no accountability on non- compliance of court orders

The current legal system is perpetuating problems, and is putting financial gains before the best interest of involved children

Laws need to change. Current practices are causing immediate as well as future harm to already broken families who enter the court system.

Sincerely,

Donna Marsico  
(Mother to Peter Nicita, grandmother to Alec and Madison Nicita)