

## TESTIMONY FOR JUDICIARY COMMITTEE PUBLIC HEARING

Joint Committee on Judiciary  
Room 2500, Legislative Office Building  
Hartford, CT 06106

Friday February 19, 2014

Dear Judiciary Committee Members:

Good morning and thank you for affording me the opportunity to speak before you today. This is the 4<sup>th</sup> time I have testified since January 9, 2013 about the issues concerning the Family Courts. I refer you to my written testimony from January 9 and February 14 public hearings which were submitted to the judiciary previously.

I am here to speak in general about some of the failings of the court system as allowed by Family Court judges and which have been brought to the attention of the Judiciary numerous times in the past by various parties. Many of these concerns are outlined in Federal lawsuits filed against the Connecticut judiciary. It is incumbent that the Judiciary committee look into the seriousness of the allegations made in these lawsuits and the many complaints made to the US Department of Justice.

For example, despite the Judicial Branch's claim to be ADA compliant, ADA violations are rampant in the Connecticut Judiciary. One form of ADA violation is the rampant violations of the Prong 3 test of the ADA by the Connecticut Family Court. Judges routinely exceed their authority by diagnosing a party with a false mental illness despite testimony to the contrary. The persons who are falsely accused are otherwise productive members of society. They are engineers, lawyers, teachers, etc. who contribute daily to our society as a whole by volunteering at church, PTO, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, etc. But when they walk into a Family Court, they are deemed unfit due to so-called hidden mental illness with which the court deems suitable to diagnose the party.

In my case in particular, on August 9, 2013 the GAL in my case falsely accused me of having a mental illness. This required that I

pay for a psychiatrist to evaluate me and produce a report and to pay for a mental health professional to testify on my behalf on August 29, 2013. Yet despite the testimony provided to the contrary, both the GAL and judge insisted that I be evaluated by one of their "friends" if I am to ever see my children again. The GAL's and judge's statements are in writing and irrefutable. I will gladly provide you any documentation you require.

In another particular case with an egregious abuse of ADA protection by a CT judge, it is my understanding after reading the 2012 judgment written by Judge Munro, Ms. Susan Skipp was falsely accused of having an undiagnosed mental illness by Judge Munro. The judgment written by Judge Munro is seriously flawed. First and foremost is that Judge Munro is not a qualified mental health professional to make such determination. In addition, Judge Munro makes many spurious statements in her judgment to support her false allegations. For instance, Judge Munro accused Ms. Skipp of harassing her ex-husband due to her undiagnosed mental illness as evidenced by Ms. Skipp allegedly sending 20+ emails per day for approximately 13 months to her ex husband for an approximate total of 540 emails in that time. I understand that judges are not hired for their math skills. But anyone can easily see that a total of 540 emails over approximately 400 days is NOT 20+ emails per day. It is approximately 1.3 emails per day. This is a very normal amount when children are involved and two parents living in separate households are trying to coordinate issues with the children. Never mind that it is nowhere near Judge Munro's estimate of 20+ emails per day. Yet, Judge Munro used this clearly false allegation and many others to support her claim that Ms. Skipp has an undiagnosed mental illness. Ms. Skipp was a teacher that was courageous enough to work in prisons/ detention centers, places most people would avoid. She was recognized by the Judiciary CSSD for her efforts. None of these facts were taken into account in judgments in Ms. Skipp's case.

This gross abuse of judicial discretion is upheld in the Appellate Courts as they defer to the original judge as the better trier of fact without taking into consideration compelling evidence to the contrary. In a recent case in Ohio, the Appellate court ruled that the original trier of fact did not take into account all of the evidence heard to

refute false allegations and remanded the case back to the trial court. I firmly believe that the CT Appellate courts follow suit.

Many feel that there is collusion between the various vendors used by the court system in these types of situations as some members of the court have relationships with these vendors and appear to profit off the use of these vendors.

In addition, no uniform standards are in place for protecting those accused of having a mental illness. Judges who are not qualified to make these decisions routinely impose restrictions solely on their discretion without any standards in place on the appropriate use of these restrictions. This leaves the affected party unsure on how to proceed as the application of these restrictions are haphazard at best.

In summary, we need better mechanisms in place to ensure that entire judiciary enforces the ADA rules uniformly, ends the illegal discrimination against parties, ensures that the rules of the court are uniformly enforced and that the employees of the court are free to perform their duties without undue influence from outside stakeholders such as attorneys.

Thank you for your time.

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