

Testimony ON Committee Bill No. 5505

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Wallingford, CT

March 11, 2015

Thank you very much for the opportunity to once again address this committee. My name is Jean-Pierre Bolat. I've been a lifelong resident of Connecticut since 1965...except between 1983 and 2010...as I was serving our country abroad in the United States Navy and living abroad. **I am testifying today in favor of Committee Bill No. 5505.**

In June 2011, I was granted Sole Legal Custody and Primary Physical Custody of my three children. Last year, on March 31, 2014, I testified before this committee regarding the inaction of the GAL in my case. On that date, my daughter had been so alienated by the lies of her mother that she had refused to stay overnight with me **for over two years**. During those two years, I wrote dozens of letters and emails to our GAL outlining and documenting the emotional abuse of my children's mother. All to no avail. As I testified twice before this committee, the response of the GAL to each of my earnest requests for intervention was, "What do you want me to do?" and he did nothing but bill me for his time to read my emails and take my phone calls. I begged him to act, to use his authority with the court, to do what was in the best interests of my children...to call a status conference, to fill out the proper forms, to demand that the mother stop her bad behavior and to act in the best interests of the children. He never did.

So the day following my testimony here last year, April 1, 2014, I decided to act on my own. That day (a day that was legitimately "my day" per the Parenting Plan), I refused to allow my daughter to leave my home. Her mother called the police and sent them to my home, and she also called the GAL. The police responded and when they learned that I had custody, they did not do anything. The GAL called me and told me to let my daughter go with her mother. But when I challenged him that he should come and pick her up personally from my house if he truly believed I was wrong, he DID NOT come. He knew I was right...and had always been right. My daughter was alienated from me by her mother. And because he would not act in her best interests, I finally had to act on my own. And guess what? Since April 1, 2014, she has remained with me during my Parenting Time and our relationship continues to recover day by day. She is a Straight "A" student, runs cross country, plays lacrosse and plays violin in the orchestra. She is happy and enjoys living with me, her siblings, and going to school with her friends.

But did any of that matter to the GAL and the mother? No. Did the best interests of the children matter to the GAL and to the mother? No. Two months later, in May of last year, I was forced to once again defend myself and my children against the onslaught of custody battle from the mother, her lawyer, and the GAL. As the mother moved further away from the children to live near her boyfriend, she filed to gain custody of only one of the three children, my daughter. The GAL supported her! I refused to allow the mother and GAL to split up my three children. During the 7-day hearing, the GAL testified against me, tried to use my children against me, tried to destroy my credibility as a person and father, and even lied on the stand to favor the mother (yes, he did lie...sadly I do not have the resources to legally “prove perjury”....at least not at the current time). In addition, he

- Convinced my daughter to write him a letter requesting that he help her live with her mother...a letter that he then introduced as evidence...with no prior consent from me. Total violation of his duties as a GAL.
- Directly asked each of my children where they wished to live...violation of his duties as a GAL.
- Misrepresented the truth several times and even lied while on the witness stand, under oath...violation of ethics and his oath both on the stand and as an officer of the court.
- Presented bills to the court that were clearly and unequivocally remanufactured...for example, bills dated several years ago that listed the address I’d only recently moved to...and he testified under oath that they were copies of original bills. Though I objected to the fraudulent bills, the Judge ordered that I pay them.
- **He did not know that there were 16 Statutory Guidelines** under Conn. Gen. Stats § 46b-56 for the Best interests of the Children...HIS JOB AS A GAL...and **he could only name 3 or 4 of the guidelines.**
- Colluded with the mother and her lawyer to coordinate testimony against me.

But even through all of that...I won and the children have remained with me...a testament to a Judge who actually listened to the facts despite the testimony of the GAL. However, the financial and emotional toll incurred was astronomically...I lost my job a month after the hearing (in part due to my numerous absences for court and stress) and I am left to pick up the pieces.

I am in favor of Bill No. 5505 because our GALs (and our Family Court Judges who appoint and support them) are not being held accountable when they act unethically or violate their statutory duties. We are a nation of laws, but there does not seem to be a balance when members of the legal system act in collusion and do not act in accordance with established rules, regulations, guidelines, and laws. I believe this bill will send a message that they are no longer immune to the law and impervious to consequences. I believe "we the people" have an expectation and a right to ethical treatment by lawyers, GALs and judges...and we must have recourse to hold them accountable for the wrongs they commit when they commit them. I lost two years with my daughter due to the GAL's inaction and refusal to fulfill his statutory obligations to protect her best interests. I lost employment in part due to numerous days in court fighting the GAL, the mother, and the system. And to top it off, I was ordered to pay his fraudulently manufactured bills. I believe I should have the right to hold him accountable.

The Divorce/GAL industry is the only industry in America where we are forced, under penalty of incarceration and attachment of wages, to pay for something we do not want and do not need, at rates that are NOT regulated, NOT monitored for fraud, NOT fair by any standard, and NOT accountable under any Truth in Negotiations Act or Generally Accepted Accounting Principles. This abuse of our rights must end.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "J. P. Bala". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a horizontal line underlining the name.