PUBLIC TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION OF
CHIEF STATE JUSTICE ROGERS REAPPOINTMENT

April 10, 2015

Marisa Ringel
Fairfield, CT

Dear Members of the Judiciary Committee,

I am going to define my use of the word **"mob"** here as a group of people, 2 or more, who come together each acting outside of their profession's code of ethics and code of conduct and whom work together to place their own self-interests, and own group interests, higher in priority than the duties that they have been sworn in to, or licensed, to preform.

WE HAVE MOBS IN OUR FAMILY COURT SYSTEM.

I am going to ask you all to agree with me that "to get a referral" = "to get cash". When I am saying the word "Referrals" = I want you to picture the cash value of that referral trading hands. In the Connecticut divorce industry, if a judge or counsel refers a GAL (Guardian Ad Litem) to be appointed on a matter, that judge or counselor is handing that GAL a cash value. When a GAL refers an evaluator or mental health professional and the judge makes it into an order, well, what really happened is that a cash value transaction is taking place. Gavel becomes cash register. Judge becomes broker.

GALs hand out cash values in referrals to mental health professionals. Counsels hand out referrals for a GAL. Judges give referrals to a GAL. There is a lot of cash value wrapped up in the referral circle. And there are alliances, very thick, walled-ones going on that will protect the flow of referrals and keep it amongst themselves. There are mobs in this state operating in what I will call "Referral Rings". If you believe, like I believe, that referrals=cash, then we what we can really call these rings is "Cash Rings".

Referral Rings can consist of counsel, GAL, evaluators, therapists, supervising center, family relations personel, and even a judge sometimes. The game is "Let's form a judicial order ring-around-the-rosey with the litigant in the middle and make all his/her moneies fall down." The judges orders seal the ring tight. The shake down begins. 10K here, 5K there, 20K over there to that one, before you know it, in a short time, that litigant stuck in the middle of the judge-ordered referral ring is out tens, if not hundreds of thousands of dollars. GONE before you can say "Am I divorced yet?"

If a complaint gets out, it gets denied by the Statewide Grievance Board – because mob players sit on the panel. If a Judicial Complaint gets filed you may have a complaint you filed be reviewed by the judge you complained about. Yes. That is actually happening.

INVESTIGATIONS NEEDED IN THE JUDICAL PROCESS ARE NOT TAKING PLACE

The goal in many parts of the judicial process appears to be to pass the party through all facets of the referral ring via court orders, aka judge-brokered deals, so each member of the mob gets a piece of the litigants assets. Those are pretty serious allegations to make. It's not pleasant for me to have to be put in a position where I feel like it would be a grave disservice to my fellow citizens of Connecticut, to my own self and kids, to not say something. Anyone that votes for Chief State Justice Chase Rogers to stay in office, is out of touch with what is happening in these courts and I would suggest you put voting on pause for a month or two while each of you sit-in on some family law cases involving Ceil Gersten, Mary Bringham, Margaret Bozek, Steve Dembo, Gary Cohen, Erika Wikstrom, Christopher Goulden, Janis Laliberti, Sue Coiseneu and then go interview or survey parties of people that have been involved with these people on their case and ask if these forenamed people played fair. Did they fight dirty? Did they fight unethically? Did they collude with others? Did they fight with a total disregard for the consequences they caused you to suffer? Were their services they charged for useful to anyone but themselves? These people need to be investigated – the parties that had to have them on their cases need to be surveyed. From what I have seen, read, heard, compiled already these are some of the members of mobs putting their own self-interests over that which they have been sworn in to perform and have been licensed to bill

for. This is a group of people that should be put on notice or have their licenses revoked. You can book an appointment with me to go over some data of why I say these things if you like.

THE JUDICIAL PROCESS IS A PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY HAZARD

I would like the case of Jonathan Rich investigated and any other litigant that committed suicide while in the throws of the Connecticut family court process. He was a Richfield, CT father who jumped in front of a truck on i-84 in Danbury on August, 2013 leaving behind two minor children. Atty. Janis Laliberte served as a GAL in that matter. She serves as opposing counsel in my matter and I find her an unethical, dirty player whom, with her client, whom almost drove me to my death in Nov. 2010. I want to know her role and the other attorneys' role with Jonathan Rich's suicide. There is really dirty business. Filthy, rotten dirty business going on in Connecticut family court. Where, in the best-interest-of-the-child, takes a back seat to in-the-best-interest of the referrals origination and the cash ring.

It's a new day in crime… the crime of the frivolous referral made into court order, brokered by a judge, forcing a litigant to drain their savings to dump into the members of the mob, the referral ring's pockets. Referals = Cash.

During the 1980s we saw the Wall Street insider trading crimes, theft with insider knowledge, theft with stock shares, theft with knowledge to gain for oneself with a outright criminal disregard of how that knowledge transfer would cause detrimental consequences to other shareholders, other humans. Here in our family courts we are seeing "referral rings" solidified by judicial orders. It feels like mugging by gavel-point, instead of by gun-point. The only difference is one gets far fewer dollars taken from them at gun-point than by gavel-point. It's enough to drive anyone mad and to drive people over the edge.

I have been collecting responses and trying to analyze it all. I see major problems, and bigger ones coming if we don't clean up this mess.

LACK OF CONFIDENCE AND LACK OF TRUST IN THE JUDICIAL PROCESS

I have grave concerns about the state of our judicial branch. I lost my trust in it as I have witnessed first-had that family court in Connecticut has become a place where, often times, the more dishonest, more unfair, more uncompromising and more aggressive litigants thrive and prevail in judicial judgment, while the more honest, more fair and less aggressive people are punished via gavel and orders, or via colluding GAL and their family relations peers. Book an appointment with me to look at the data. It is not just me, and my case, that I am referring to. If you have seen what I have seen you would be here to saying these things.

I have zero confidence nor trust that the attorneys on my case were, or are, looking to resolve matters more than they are looking for lucrative incomes. And, in more recent years, since the first public hearing on these matters on Jan. 9, 2014, I believe they are looking to punish me for filing a grievance and speaking out publicly against them. They and Judge Klatt made a suspension of my parenting time permanent, within weeks of my public testimony and my ex husband never even filed a motion for that. Keep in mind the only grievance I filed to date against Atty. Erika Wikstrom was after my first seven years of this mess with matters becoming exponentially worse when a Milford bar mob entered my case and we started going in front of Judge Corrine Klatt. There is no doubt in my mind that what I was witnessing was collusion. I have zero trust in the judicial process. I give up on it unless you here in the judicial committee start to take measures to fix it.

RAMPANT CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

I filed a grievance against Atty. Erika Wikstrom, and in turn Atty. Erika Wikstrom hired Atty. Christopher Goulden who sits on the Statewide Grievance Panel. So I would like to ask the judiciary committee to ask Chief Justice Chase Rogers and the head of the family law section, Allen Palmer, how that is allowed and not grounds for discipline. That is the definition to me of Conflict of Interest at the very least. The word corruption also comes to mind and may be appropriate to use here.

INCONSISTENCY IN RULINGS

If I am in Bridgeport and I have had Judge Corrine Klatt on my matter, I am going to have every motion I file denied as a self-represented party and I am going to have the relationship with my child severed permanently if I speak out in a public hearing about the Milford Family Law mob which is what happened at the end of January when the GAL told her that I had given testimony and spoken out about the need to reform our courts. If I am in Stamford with Judge Collins, he's going to take steps to make sure that I am not isolated from my son like I am in the Bridgeport Court system with certain Judges on my matter and help me not be bullied by my ex husband, I observed Judge Collins rule in a productive, methodical way handing down a memorandum of justice with a caliber of judicial integrity that is absent in my case. The case was a very similar matter to mine. Justice depends on which judge you are in front of. You are either going to get it, or not, depending on who you get assigned to stand in front of and how much money you have.

OUTSOURCING OF JUDICAL RESPONSIBILITIES HAS BECOME A NORM

Custody Decisions were outsourced by Judge Corrine Klatt to the GAL Atty. Erika Wikstrom, who operates like a business partner to opposing counsel, Janis Laliberti instead of operating like an objective 3rd party as her role is defined by law.

Custody Decisions were outsourced to the GAL Atty. Erika Wikstrom by Judge Corrine Klatt and to Dr. Harry Adamonkos. Judge Corrine Klatt rules I can not have the 1-mos suspension of my parenting time I signed to give father and son a chance to hang out and figure our some teenage issues lifted until Dr. Harry Adamokos says so.

Dr. Harry Adamonkos couldn't take the case because he was booked and had no availabilities.

Upon a Motion for Clarification I filed, because Dr. Harry Adamonkos was not available, Judge Corrine Klatt writes a shocking "Denied and Signed her Name" and that's it. I haven't seen my son in over 2 years because the heads of our judicial bench stuck this inept, uncaring judge on the bench. Part of Chief Justice Chase Rogers reform measures are to ensure that a party has the same judge for the duration of their case. Well that is not a reform, that is a nightmare for parents stuck with biased inept judges.

BIAS AGAINST SELF-REPRESENTED PARTIES

If I am in Bridgeport and I have had Judge Corrine Klatt on my matter: Everything got outsourced to whatever professional the Milford Bar mob of Erika Wikstrom and Atty. Janis Laliberti referred to Judge Corrine Klatt. Every single type of recommendation for all sorts of professionals the court wanted to order, of the profesionals that I had recommended as a self-represented party were denied and the decision of which party to use was handed down via order and gavel by Judge Corrine Klatt. All choice of which professionals to use went to those referrals made from the opposing counsel list and her partner GAL. This included who to hire as a reunification therapist two different times and who to use as an attorney to mediate over financial expenses over the minor children. This included therapists for the child. This included an AMC for the child. As a mother I was stripped of all of my rights of whom my child and I were going to see for professionals for therapy, and stripped of any choice in AMC and financial arbitrator in all of these type of court ordered services Judge Klatt made. Couldn't she just hear the case and make a judgement instead of ousourcing? And if your going to order I employ 5-8 professionals, why are 100% of my selects for professionals denied. Why is there all of this bias? Why all of this outsourcing? Why the denial of my rights as a parent? I am not a criminal but am being treated as one. It is all emotionally and financially bankrupting.

COLLUSION BETWEEN COUNSELS AND GALS, AND GAL-COUSEL PARTNERSHIPS AND JUDGE IS REINING CULTURE IN THIS CONNECTICUT JUDICIAL PROCESS.

The GAL was absolutely not an objective 3rd party as she prepared her own questioning for the stand in a partner-like fashion with atty. Laliberti, outside of conference, leaving me out, but I heard what they were doing. The two of them operated in partner-like fashion with a family relations respresentative who is known to give Milford Bar mob nods in favors as she writes up family relations report, Kathleen Goncalves, aka Kathleen Montanaro. She definitely did not include information from my case into her report that would have helped my position with my son. She is not a fair individual and should not be being paid with our tax dollars to write reports on families that aid in severing ties between mother and child.

PROFESSIONALS IN THE JUDICIAL PROCESS TAKE NO RESPONSIBILITY AND BLAME PARENTS

I am a litigant that has been stuck in the Connecticut family court dysfunctional system for 10-years with motions to answer to still on the docket to this day. I am a fit, loving, healthy mother looking for protection and help from the family court system to see my son and reestablish a relationship with him, not seeing him in over 2 years. I see his sister 50% of the time which is normal. I come to court looking for help against this abuse but I am unable to find anything but further abuse, aided and abetted by a GAL, and her peer-in-the-business-of-law, opposing counsel, Atty. Janis Laliberte and a Judge that should not be on a bench. I would like to know how she got there. My case name is Karl Soderlund vs Marisa Soderlund out of the Fairfield Superior Court at Main Street in Bridgeport. My case number is like a prison number to me FBT-FA-05-4005711-S keeping my son from his mother and me from my son. This is of an alarming concern with how disrespecting of our mother-child relationship I have experienced by our state's family court. I have to appear in court multiple times a year and I have to endure the psychological hold on me knowing that there is always litigation to prepare for, defend for, wait for, or show up for, or fill out forms for, write checks for, miss work for – for over ten-years non-stop. I have found that the judicial system wants to rig my case to blame me 100% for their malfunction, malpractices and as a way to cover up the corruption and to get me to stop speaking out. They are trying to belittle and intimidate me into silence.

IN SUMMARY

Connecticut parents have been scourged by unspeakable acts of legal abuse by judges, lawyers-appointed-as-GALs, AMCs, court-appointed psychologists, psychiatrists, court-ordered therapists, supervised visitation centers operating in their own best financial interests and not in the best interests of children of the State of Connecticut. We view the challenge to the Honorable Chase Rogers to be an important moment to define the rights of parents as superordinate than that of the rights of government to enter the private realm of familial association as a Ninth Amendment Unenumerated Right for parents to defend as "'sacred' ground"

On April 1, 2014, when the Judiciary Committee reconvened after the public hearing that went until 10:30am to 11:45pm, Senator John Kissel, spoke to his fellow members of the committee. "The information that other states are trying to get their arms around this… we need to catch up in this area." Referring to GALs sitting in court billing $300 dollars per hour "That system has just run amuk. There are lots and lots of good GALs. There are lots and lots of good family court judges and family court lawyers. But it does appear to me that over the last several years, in some pockets of our state that it has become a cottage industry to the detriment of litigants, especially those that don't thrive on high stress. But most importantly, it has harmed the children. There is no way that I can believe that forcing people into bankruptcy, or foreclosure, or wiping out collage funds is any way beneficial to the minor child in a custody fight. There is just no rational basis for this."

"That's just not fair to people. It needs to be rationalized. It needs to be brought under control."

"The parts of this bill that I wish would go further, is, I do believe that GALs need a boss, need someone that they can report to, and hold them accountable. I think this is great first step. I think it gets us way down the road in a first session than I ever thought that we would get. No two ways about it, if you can say that someone is not following code of conduct and ethical standards than you will have grounds to challenge their behavior. And, putting judges in a position where they're going to set up the rules, and put up the parameters and hold folks accountable for their billing is a great step forward….I think that other states are way ahead of us when they establish some kind of overarching commission, or authority, to review these matters in an objective process. We are not there yet…. I think we are going to have to, at some point get our arms around that...At the end of the day we can do much better."

As a parent I want to ensure that legislators in Hartford hear our message on behalf of the families in crisis going through Connecticut's family court system. Too many of Connecticut's divorcing families are being exploited by profit-maximizers circling Connecticut's divorce industry looking for highly lucrative incomes at the expense of families. Children are in the middle of these adversarial sides while profit-seeking lawyers and Guardian Ad Litems (GALs) are increasingly empowered as judicial discretion has expanded under the administration of Chief Justice Rogers. Past testimony at the legislature on January 9, 2014, March 31, 2014 resulted in the first stage of family court reform which was unanimously passed by the House and the Senate on April 25, 2014. Now is the time for

significant measures and significant reform.

WE CAN DO BETTER.

A NEW CHIEF STATE JUSTICE WILL BE A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION. SHE HAS HAD HER CHANCE AND DID TOO LITTLE TOO SLOWLY.

VOTE NO TO CHIEF STATE JUSTICE ROGERS REAPPOINTMENT!

Thank you,

Marisa Ringel