

Ablechild Testimony before the Task Force on Victim Privacy and the Public's Right to Know, Public hearing October 9, 2013, Council Chamber, 45 Lyon Terrace, Bridgeport, CT, 6 pm.

Task Force Members, I am Sheila Matthews the Cofounder of Ablechild.org a national non-profit parent organization located here in Connecticut. Our mission is full informed consent and the right to refuse psychiatric products and services.

Ablechild currently has an ongoing FOIA case against the State of Connecticut Chief Medical Examiner in regards to the information relating to the Sandy Hook homicides and suicide for the release of Adam Lanza toxicology and medical records. We are stakeholders in the request for information on behalf of the public.

Docket No. FIC 2013-197 Valicia D. Harmon, Hearing Officer

CHIEF MEDICAL EXAMINER, STATE OF CONNECTICUT,  
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF MEDICAL EXAMINER; AND STATE  
OF CONNECTICUT, OFFICE OF THE CHIEF MEDICAL  
EXAMINER,

The State of Connecticut has used the Sandy Hook homicides and suicide as an opportunity to promote and mandate mental health screenings and treatments for all children when this vital information on whether or not this very same treatment was involved in this mass murder and suicide.

Withholding this critical information, the State is putting the entire public at risk and blindfolding every citizen from actively participating in legislative solutions that can prevent such future mass murder/suicides from occurring.

While Ablechild does not have any intention of trying our case here, it is important for this task force to understand that the States denial of our request for public disclosure of the critical information is based on a nonexistent law, which is the "Next of Kin" rule that the CME created and was never codified in a public open hearing.

We mention this to ensure that this task force does not codify through this public hearing laws that will impact public safety and prevent vital information on homicide and suicides from being released to the general public. We also want to ensure that this task force does not override any ongoing cases against the State of Connecticut relating to the Sandy Hook mass murders and suicide and the public's right to know.

While the State claims to want to protect homicide and suicide victim's rights, the State has an obligation not to use these same victims to promote political agendas and further place the public health at risk by selectively releasing some information while withholding other information.

It is imperative for this task force to uphold the 36-year-old CT FOIA laws that currently exist. Changes to FOIA would take power away from the public and impact the public's ability to hold its government accountable.

Changes would give more rights to the State. The government is made up of politicians and politics should not outweigh the ethics of protecting public safety and the public's right to know.

We urge this committee to reject any changes at this time to the FOIA commission and to encourage the release of toxicology and medical records of the Newtown shooter/suicide victim to ensure that every citizen can fully participate in the legislative process to help protect public safety and to have all the information to make fully informed decisions relating to mental health products and services.

Thank you.