

December 5, 2007

Report of Georgia Senator Nancy Schaefer on CPS Corruption

Note from the Fight CPS webmaster:

This is a very important report written by a Senator in Georgia. Please read the entire report, download the PDF, print it to give to your lawyers, caseworkers, local newspaper editors, state and federal senators and congressmen, CASA workers in your area, and whoever else you believe might benefit from reading the truth about CPS from the viewpoint of a Senator. Though this Senator is from Georgia, her report is about all state child protective services agencies. Thank-you, Senator Schaefer, for investigating and writing this report! - ljm

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From the legislative desk of Senator Nancy Schaefer 50th District of Georgia

November 16, 2007

THE CORRUPT BUSINESS OF CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES

BY: Nancy Schaefer
Senator, 50th District

My introduction into child protective service cases was due to a grandmother in an adjoining state who called me with her tragic story. Her two granddaughters had been taken from her daughter who lived in my district. Her daughter was told wrongly that if she wanted to see her children again she should sign a paper and give up her children. Frightened and young, the daughter did. I have since discovered that parents are often threatened into cooperation of permanent separation of their children.

The children were taken to another county and placed in foster care. The foster parents were told wrongly that they could adopt the children. The grandmother then jumped through every hoop known to man in order to get her granddaughters. When the case finally came to court it was made evident by one of the foster parent's children that the foster parents had, at any given time, 18 foster children and that the foster mother had an inappropriate relationship with the caseworker.

In the courtroom, the juvenile judge, acted as though she was shocked and said the two girls would be removed quickly. They were not removed. Finally, after much pressure being applied to the Department of Family and Children Services of Georgia (DFCS), the children were driven to South Georgia to meet their grandmother who gladly drove to meet them. After being with their grandmother two or three days, the judge, quite out of the blue, wrote up a new order to send the girls to their father, who previously had no interest in the case and who lived on the West Coast. The father was in "adult entertainment". His girlfriend worked as an "escort" and his

brother, who also worked in the business, had a sexual charge brought against him.

Within a couple of days the father was knocking on the grandmother's door and took the girls kicking and screaming to California.

The father developed an unusual relationship with the former foster parents and soon moved back to the southeast, and the foster parents began driving to the father's residence and picking up the little girls for visits. The oldest child had told her mother and grandmother on two different occasions that the foster father molested her.

To this day after five years, this loving, caring blood relative grandmother does not even have visitation privileges with the children. The little girls are in my opinion permanently traumatized and the young mother of the girls was so traumatized with shock when the girls were first removed from her that she has not recovered.

Throughout this case and through the process of dealing with multiple other mismanaged cases of the Department of Family and Children Services (DFCS), I have worked with other desperate parents and children across the state because they have no rights and no one with whom to turn. I have witnessed ruthless behavior from many caseworkers, social workers, investigators, lawyers, judges, therapists, and others such as those who "pick up" the children. I have been stunned by what I have seen and heard from victims all over the state of Georgia.

In this report, I am focusing on the Georgia Department of Family and Children Services (DFCS). However, I believe Child Protective Services nationwide has become corrupt and that the entire system is broken almost beyond repair. I am convinced parents and families should be warned of the dangers.

The Department of Child Protective Services, known as the Department of Family and Children Service (DFCS) in Georgia and other titles in other states, has become a "protected empire" built on taking children and separating families. This is not to say that there are not those children who do need to be removed from wretched situations and need protection. This report is concerned with the children and parents caught up in "legal kidnapping," ineffective policies, and DFCS who do does not remove a child or children when a child is enduring torment and abuse. (See Exhibit A and Exhibit B)

In one county in my District, I arranged a meeting for thirty-seven families to speak freely and without fear. These poor parents and grandparents spoke of their painful, heart wrenching encounters with DFCS. Their suffering was overwhelming. They wept and cried. Some did not know where their children were and had not seen them in years. I had witnessed the "Gestapo" at work and I witnessed the deceitful conditions under which children were taken in the middle of the night, out of hospitals, off of school buses, and out of homes. In one county a private drug testing business was operating within the DFCS department that required many, many drug tests from parents and individuals for profit. In another county children were not removed when they were enduring the worst possible abuse. Due to being exposed, several employees in a particular DFCS office were fired. However, they have now been rehired either in neighboring counties or in the same county again. According to the calls I am now receiving, the conditions in that

county are returning to the same practices that they had before the light was shown on their deeds. Having worked with probably 300 cases statewide, I am convinced there is no responsibility and no accountability in the system.

I have come to the conclusion:

- that poor parents often times are targeted to lose their children because they do not have the where-with-all to hire lawyers and fight the system. Being poor does not mean you are not a good parent or that you do not love your child, or that your child should be removed and placed with strangers;
- that all parents are capable of making mistakes and that making a mistake does not mean your children are always to be removed from the home. Even if the home is not perfect, it is home; and that's where a child is the safest and where he or she wants to be, with family;
- that parenting classes, anger management classes, counseling referrals, therapy classes and on and on are demanded of parents with no compassion by the system even while they are at work and while their children are separated from them. This can take months or even years and it emotionally devastates both children and parents. Parents are victimized by "the system" that makes a profit for holding children longer and "bonuses" for not returning children;
- that caseworkers and social workers are oftentimes guilty of fraud. They withhold evidence. They fabricate evidence and they seek to terminate parental rights. However, when charges are made against them, the charges are ignored;
- that the separation of families is growing as a business because local governments have grown accustomed to having taxpayer dollars to balance their ever-expanding budgets;
- that Child Protective Service and Juvenile Court can always hide behind a confidentiality clause in order to protect their decisions and keep the funds flowing. There should be open records and "court watches"! Look who is being paid! There are state employees, lawyers, court investigators, court personnel, and judges. There are psychologists, and psychiatrists, counselors, caseworkers, therapists, foster parents, adoptive parents, and on and on. All are looking to the children in state custody to provide job security. Parents do not realize that social workers are the glue that holds "the system" together that funds the court, the child's attorney, and the multiple other jobs including DFCS's attorney.
- that The Adoption and the Safe Families Act, set in motion by President Bill Clinton, offered cash "bonuses" to the states for every child they adopted out of foster care. In order to receive the "adoption incentive bonuses" local child protective services need more children. They must have merchandise (children) that sell and you must have plenty of them so the buyer can choose. Some counties are known to give a \$4,000 bonus for each child adopted and an additional \$2,000 for a "special needs" child. Employees work to keep the federal dollars flowing;
- that there is double dipping. The funding continues as long as the child is out of the home. When a child in foster care is placed with a new family then "adoption bonus funds" are

available. When a child is placed in a mental health facility and is on 16 drugs per day, like two children of a constituent of mine, more funds are involved;

- that there are no financial resources and no real drive to unite a family and help keep them together;

- that the incentive for social workers to return children to their parents quickly after taking them has disappeared and who in protective services will step up to the plate and say, "This must end! No one, because they are all in the system together and a system with no leader and no clear policies will always fail the children. Look at the waste in government that is forced upon the tax payer;

- that the "Policy Manuel" is considered "the last word" for DFCS. However, it is too long, too confusing, poorly written and does not take the law into consideration;

- that if the lives of children were improved by removing them from their homes, there might be a greater need for protective services, but today all children are not always safer. Children, of whom I am aware, have been raped and impregnated in foster care and the head of a Foster Parents Association in my District was recently arrested because of child molestation;

- that some parents are even told if they want to see their children or grandchildren, they must divorce their spouse. Many, who are under privileged, feeling they have no option, will divorce and then just continue to live together. This is an anti-family policy, but parents will do anything to get their children home with them.

- fathers, (non-custodial parents) I must add, are oftentimes treated as criminals without access to their own children and have child support payments strangling the very life out of them;

- that the Foster Parents Bill of Rights does not bring out that a foster parent is there only to care for a child until the child can be returned home. Many Foster Parents today use the Foster Parent Bill of Rights to hire a lawyer and seek to adopt the child from the real parents, who are desperately trying to get their child back