

November 1, 2023

Dear Senators,

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to give you my feedback on the Family Court system. I will save you much my personal story, as I am sure you've received countless submissions regarding personal experiences already. It will suffice to make a few points.

I was aghast when I entered the Family Court arena. Because there was no documented history of domestic violence in my case, I was told by multiple Family Court professionals not to mention any abuse. Once such a person was Jenelle Faso, who is now a Family Court judge and my first attorney. Almost instantly after entering the Family Court system, I went from trying to protect myself and my son from physical violence which included things like being held up against the wall by my neck, and slammed repeatedly into a mattress and my son “getting popped” folks for misbehaving as a two-year-old, to being berated for not being by my ex’s biggest advocate and refusing to hold hands with him and sing Kumbaya. I almost lost custody of my son. I’m one of the “lucky” ones.

The crisis in Family Court, is undeniably a war against women. The AFC in my case, Karl, Frankovitch, a sexist and biased. bankruptcy attorney who continuously likened my circumstances to the midlife crisis he experienced with his own wife and family. He left his wife for his paramour at one point and is a known heavy drinker in my small community. The forensic evaluator in my case, Dr. Susan Santarpia, received her doctorate from the for-profit school Walden University and wrote her thesis on bulimia. A far cry from anything related to child custody. She was also very dedicated to upholding fathers’ rights at any cost to the children. Equally disturbing is that Dr Santarpia was a former playboy bunny and was so unabashed regarding her time as an escort that she participated in an article written about her and her associates.

However, with all of that being said, the lack of accountability and oversight that is commonplace in the Family Courts is reprehensible. There are dozens of laws in place to ensure that proper procedure and laws are followed. However, none of them are adhered to in Family Court. Family Court is likened to the wild west, and my personal favorite, a kangaroo court. There is no accountability or avenues of recourse if litigants suffer from a corrupt or biased, Family Court professional. Often times at the ruination of their lives. I have personally filed FOIL requests on multiple individuals and got nothing back regarding their billing, income, or professional history, all of which they are required to do. There are so many laws and rules of procedure that are broken on a daily basis, it would be impossible to keep track of them all let alone hold anyone accountable. More disturbing is that any complaints filed against these professionals fall on deaf ears and are never followed up. Litigants are looked at as subhuman and are viewed as “getting what they deserve for not being able to “get along” and coparent. When explaining my circumstances, I was told by my second attorney that I picked my son’s father, so I had to deal with it. His name is Christopher Privateer for the record. That all of this is allowed to happen to productive, law-abiding citizens that have committed no crime is unspeakably cruel. Another common adage in Family Court is that criminals have more rights than we do. I believe that whole heartedly.

Thank you for your time.

Respectfully,  
Nicole Biro