

TO:
FROM: Kim
DATE: 10/01/2022
RE: PFR LD1824

hello folks,

Yes I agree that there needs to be a strong focus on educating parents on their process & rights, immediately! Especially if the parent's don't agree with the reasons for the removal. Especially if they have evidence that can prove no harm & no one wants to talk about it! This is the best opportunity for the family to sort things out & avoid things that can harm their case. The children can still be removed, without any evidence at all. NO conviction!

Yes I agree that it should focus on housing, DV, custody, guardianship & other legal problems. Because, there are underlying factors contributing to the family's struggles. Another benefit is that, you could potentially reduce the number of children being harvested from families. Relieving the state's burden. The state loses \$. The need for legal support is immediate.

A particular area of need? Yes, people affected by poverty. Which I agree that disadvantaged families who are struggling through chemical addiction, domestic abuse, housing issues for sure, are disadvantaged people who need this. I've reviewed 100's of parent's testimony, reading that they believe that their substantiation worker was not being 100% honest with their substantiation.

Yes, I would like to see the pilot program focus on low-income parents. I believe there are certain areas of need for focus. Lewiston, Rumford & Skowhegan are areas of elevated concern for family preservation activists. When you know your state or your town has a nick name or stereotype of being the "CPS kidnapping capitol of the world." It's a shame that leaders need to understand is a real deterrant to families considering moving here, when we have record high parental rights terminations with equally failed parental appeals. In other words, if you live in Maine, you might lose your child if you have an abusive ex, a messy house, child with behavioral or mental health issues, you might be poor & or have minor person issues, or if you have an ex friend or whatever, you could lose your child. And you will not have a trial by peers or due process or have a fair chance at not losing them in for the first place.

Another suggestions on how this pilot program could help?

Yes, too many to list. Because when there are over 3,000 children in custody, with very few foster homes, & around 100 youth treatment center beds, the trend shows that stripping families is more common than repairing or reunifying families. My concern here, is that the children can still be removed, without any evidence at all. Hearsay has taken over our courts, without a chance in hell of EVER getting them back! So, when we have millions of in federal \$ being issued to our state every time a child is severed from their family. According to parents, without due process, without efficient representation, without any proof of of abuse. But, since no one is talking to parents or children? I've done research for 4 years that tells me there is serious lack of legal support for families & children in custody. The GAL, guardian ad litem is not the child's lawyer, when they are not accurately reporting what the child expressed requests are. Families are prevented from knowing their rights to get legal representation for their child, because they are under-defended from the start, themselves. We need this thing! Please, find a way to talk to families!

I would like to see parents have a chance to get them back. I would like to see them not have to fight so hard, only to fail to get them back, when they've fulfilled all requirements.

Sincerely,

Kim
Lewiston, Maine