

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Equal Justice Foundation
Dr. Charles Corry, president
(719) 520-1089
ccorry@ejfi.org

Family courts accused of violating civil rights

Dysfunctional legal system turning The American Dream into 'The American Nightmare' for some parents

“You have 30 minutes to pack everything you own. If you can’t carry it on your back, it will have to stay behind. Look around one last time because you may never return home again.” This came from a fund raising letter by an international relief organization about the plight of Kosovo refugees. Do you think this couldn’t happen here? Not in America, right?

Guess again. The American Dream all too often ends with the American Nightmare. Today, most anyone can be forced from his or her home simply on the accusation of spousal or child abuse.

No trial, no judge, no jury. No notice. The police come knocking in the middle of the night and you must leave. No excuses. No looking back. Now. And the nightmare is only just beginning.

Colorado state family law attorney Maria Sinel has seen parents living with “perhaps the worst thing any parent can suffer, seeing his or her child being damaged or abused at the hands of a system that is supposed to protect those children.” At a press conference in Colorado Springs in autumn 2001, she said, “These are not people who are expressing ‘sour grapes.’ After reviewing information that these parents have given me, I am nothing less than horrified.”

“The complaints of these parents are of the most egregious nature. The ‘system’ is destroying their children and their families, and we are powerless to correct even the most obvious infractions. ... Nearly all of the parents with whom I have spoken are petrified of having their names made public because they fear retribution,” she said.

In at least one case, a parent was desperate to reverse a court order that placed her son in immediate danger, and the court issued a restraining order against her for trying to get help outside of the court system. She was told that she would be found in contempt and jailed if she didn’t silence herself.

Dr. Charles Corry is president and founder of The Equal Justice Foundation. EJF’s approach to family violence and abuse is unique. The Colorado-based group does not rely on hyperbole or hypocrisy. EJF seeks to fix the problem, not the blame. Dr. Corry has said many times that government agencies and private charities are funding a radical political agenda rather than rational solutions for family violence prevention and treatment programs.

“This denial of civil rights and the police-state tactics used today in the name of quelling domestic violence are more dangerous than the problem,” Dr. Corry states. “Most of society, for the sake of civilization, wants to preserve families, not tear them apart, but this is completely at odds with the agenda of taxpayer-funded radical feminist groups whose ideology is anti-male and anti-family.”

EJF knows that our civil liberties and civil rights have been eroded under false banner

of solving human problems with political solutions. The following issues are of great concern:

- Mandatory arrest policies and arrests made without warrants;
- Court orders issued without the defendant present (*ex parte*);
- False allegations of abuse and false imprisonment;
- Illegal and inequitable child custody arrangements; and
- Imprisonment for debt, a practice outlawed decades ago.

Corry notes that under current laws thousands of men are forced from their homes and children with nothing more than the clothes on their backs based on nothing more than hearsay or unsubstantiated allegations, and the right to confront the accuser is denied and that it is often impossible to obtain witnesses in one's defense because of protective orders.

EJF works to counteract political pressure and campaign contributions that encourage gender profiling of both victims and perpetrators of family violence. Proponents of common-sense family laws say dialogue is long overdue. They want an objective examination of the issue, one that avoids closed-door legislative and judicial maneuvering.

Child custody, abuse and domestic violence cases are big business, providing significant revenues for attorneys and law enforcement, social services and judicial agencies. The system hides behind a stereotype of heinous abusers, but the reality is a myriad injustices. As one example, Denver District Attorney Bill Ritter charged two brothers with felony child abuse after one of the men's girlfriend stabbed her 3-year-old daughter during an altercation. One of the brothers was charged even though he was asleep at the time of woman's attack. Ritter proudly called his approach to justice "novel."

EJF advocates laws that truly reduce incidents of family violence such as child abuse and domestic violence. Family violence laws are publicized to fit the classic definition of recurring violence involving physical injuries. The reality is that today's laws are so vague and wide ranging as to encourage injustices and false charges.

Statistics that perpetuate the alarming family violence numbers often are tabulated from places closed to public overview such as shelters, crisis centers and hotlines. David Brown, senior editor for the Ottawa Citizen in Ontario, Canada (which has draconian domestic violence laws), recently noted that hospital workers and emergency personnel cannot verify the publicized number of battered spouses.

"How is it that where the 'front-line workers' are open to approach, there's not a whiff of the great numbers emanating from shelters? How is it that, with the lines of communication I have developed into the community after 35 years of writing a city column, not one of them signals a secret epidemic of violence?" Brown wrote in a December 8, 2001, column.

"The media has to accept much of the responsibility for turning unsubstantiated statistics into facts but, like everybody else, we're caught in confusing battle lines. How can high-profile corporations say no to buying a table at a fund-raiser when the promotion says it's to protect women from violence? Newspapers, including the Citizen, buy tables at these events, giving them legitimacy through financial support and the corporate name on the table," Brown stated.

###

The Equal Justice Foundation is a non-profit organization that promotes progressive justice and civil liberties for all citizens. For more information, contact Dr. Charles Corry at (719) 520-1089, or e-mail him at ccorry@ejfi.org. EJF's Web site is www.ejfi.org and the foundation also sponsors www.dvmen.org dealing with domestic violence against men.