

September 7, 2010

MICHIGAN SENATE FAMILIES AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE

HB 4118

HB 4118 has good intentions. However, in my estimation, it does not go far enough to correct the problem. I will give you examples of this through my case of losing my granddaughter.

I lived with and cared for my granddaughter from birth to the age of 5 years and 33 days. CPS decided to give me relative caregiver status at her age of four. CPS and especially their contracted agencies have always had the requirement in their manual guidelines to place children with relatives first. However, making it a law does not guarantee it will be followed. In my case, at least three other laws have been directly violated by the court, and no state agency can do anything about it! **So laws do not really count, especially according to judges with discretion.**

THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CHILD is a wide open window that permits anything to fly through that these agencies desire to use in the removal of a child.

In my granddaughter's case, I offered her a cookie to finish her lunch quickly one day. In court this was called "bad parenting". I also assisted her in the bathroom when she asked, at the age of 4. In court I was told that was "making a child dependent upon an adult" whether it was at home or in the public. I was also told that **SOME DAY, I MIGHT** let my granddaughter and my daughter see each other, because I loved both of them. Therefore, Judge Feeney stated the following -

"I believe that Ms. Sally Borghese's highest and best calling at this point is the assistance of her daughter, Leda. I think that Ms. Sally Borghese's talents are best used in assisting her daughter, Leda Borghese, not in trying to balance the interest of her daughter and her granddaughter, which I don't know if anyone could do that. I truly don't."

NONE OF THESE STATEMENTS ARE REASONS TO CHANGE A CHILD'S LIFE FOREVER!!

The Michigan Office of Children's Ombudsman investigated the case and found no reason that my granddaughter should have been removed from my care. They also cited the contracted agency for violations regarding the case, but the Ombudsman has no power to do anything regarding a court decision.

These decisions made by DHS/CPS and their contracted agencies are done solely based upon federal funding from Social Security Title IV. The contracted agency told me I needed to become a foster caregiver for my granddaughter. My response was that "**no one has to pay me to take care of my granddaughter**". I learned the hard way that was a big mistake! They immediately began to take her away from me. There was no federal funding available to the agencies for relative caregivers, only foster caregivers. This is why they fill the requirement of placing a child with a relative and then after many months, go back and find false allegations to accuse the relative of, in order to remove the child from the relative. Almost without exception, any relative of a child that has been given a caregiver status at some point in a case, has then had the child removed at a later date and placed into foster care. This allows the agency to begin receiving federal funding.

MORE IMPORTANTLY.....



WHAT DOES THIS DO TO A CHILD TO BE REMOVED FROM FAMILY TWICE

When I petitioned to adopt my granddaughter, I had been told by the caseworker doing my home study, that the Michigan Children's Institute Superintendent, Bill Johnson was going to return my granddaughter to me. I then had to meet with Johnson and in a quick question to the caseworker he asked her if this was a IV-A case. Her response was yes. At that point, I did not know that IV-A was the qualifier for the federal funding.

Johnson denied me the right to adopt my granddaughter, saying I was too old. A Civil Rights violation that will see the inside of a courtroom soon. Actually, I do not believe my granddaughter qualified for the federal funding. I believe the state fraudulently qualified her.

Therein is another "BEST INTEREST OF THE CHILD".....relatives that are too old! Does not matter what you are capable of, if you are too old! In other words.....support the state and get the federal funding....no matter what excuse you use !!

HB 4118 just does not go far enough to accomplish the goal of keeping children with relatives.

I also have a question.... are we going to forget those children that have already been removed from families and placed with strangers, or will there be a consideration placed within HB 4118 to re-address those cases? Similar to what California did in 2003, by reopening cases and sending 30,000 children back to their families.

I believe that if you cannot charge a relative of a child criminally, then there can be no reason to remove the child from that relative. Under GOD's command, we are all here to love and help each other and that should be our goal, not destruction of the family for the root of all evil!

Will Michigan ever stop the legal kidnapping and trafficking of children to sell them into adoption slavery?

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