



From the legislative desk of Senator Nancy Schaefer

50th District of Georgia

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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 mother did what she was told. 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 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 the "adult entertainment" world. His girlfriend worked in the same industry.

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 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 does not remove a child or children when a child is enduring definite 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 rendering encounters with DFCS. Their suffering was overwhelming. They wept and cried. Some did not know where their children were, or 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, etc.

I assert:

- 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 gives "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 ignore!
- that the separation of families is growing as a business because local governments have grown accustomed to having taxpayer dollars balance their ever-expanding budgets;
- that Child Protective Services 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!

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- somehow, funds for medicating children 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;

- there are few financial resources and no real drive to unite a family and help keep them together;
- that the incentives for social workers to return children to their parents quickly after removing 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 this system of government that is forced upon the taxpayer;
- that the "Policy Manual" 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 reemoving them from their homes, there might be a greater need for protective services, but today, all children are not always safer away from home. 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;
- some parents are even told that if they want to see their children or grandchildren, they must divorce their spouse. Many, who are underprivileged, feeling they have no option, will divorce.