

PARENTAL ALIENATION & US CONGRESSWOMAN MALONEY'S NATIONAL 'BRIDGET'S LAW'---A NEW ATTACK ON TARGET FATHERS & MOTHERS?

"With the help of Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney, NY, we'll have a national 'Bridget's Law' in the foreseeable future...It's a silent national crisis of women losing their children for no good reason."--Bridget Marks From The New York Post's Buxom Bridget Goes Feminist (4/5/09)

Bridget Marks says her nasty custody battle with a philandering ex-lover has transformed her from a buxom nude model into a full-blown political activist.

"Who would have thought a fun-loving party girl like me would become a feminist activist for other women's rights?" Marks told Page Six. "Ha, ha! You never know where life's road will take you." Last year, the former Playboy pin-up, now 43, got state Assemblyman Jonathan Bing and Sen. Tom Duane (both D-Manhattan) to craft "Bridget's Law," which protects parents from being penalized in custody cases for making "good-faith efforts" to protect their kids from child abuse. It was signed into law by Gov. Paterson. "And with the help of Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney, we'll have a national 'Bridget's Law' in the foreseeable future," Marks told us. "It's a silent national crisis of women losing their children for no good reason"... Five years ago, Marks lost custody of twin daughters Amber and Scarlett, now 9, in a battle with gambling tycoon John Aylsworth...

Mothers (and fathers) do sometimes make good faith reports that they're children are being abused, and Marks is correct that they shouldn't be penalized if it proves that their reasonable suspicions are groundless. However, that's not what both courts found that Marks did, and, to *Post* writer Richard Johnson's credit, he doesn't pretend that it is, writing:

The court found Marks had coached the girls to lie that Aylsworth had molested them and poisoned their relationship with him. An appeals court returned the girls to Marks in 2005, saying what she'd done was 'abhorrent,' but there was no reason to remove the kids from her custody.

Still, one might have hoped that Johnson would take what happened a little more seriously. During the custody battle Marks successfully took her side of the story to the public via appearances on *Larry King Live*, *PrimeTime Live*, *The O'Reilly Factor*, *Dr. Phil* and others,

as well as through sympathetic "news" articles in the *New York Post* and the *New York Daily News*. In upholding the lower court's findings in the case, two state Appellate Division, First Department judges, David Friedman and Peter Tom, explained: [The trial court's] finding--for which there is ample support in the record--[is] that the mother coached the girls to make false accusations that their father sexually abused them. The Law Guardian and the neutral expert witnesses who testified in this case--the psychiatrist appointed by the court as the independent forensic evaluator, two certified social workers retained by the Law Guardian, and two social workers who supervised the father's visitations during the tendency of the proceedings--all take the view that the accusations are false, and that the children were coached to make them. Even the expert witnesses called by the mother seem to have recognized that the accusations were made in a manner consistent with coaching.

Regarding "Bridget's Law," the Feminist Family Law Movement claims that abusive fathers often employ "Parental Alienation Syndrome" in family court. I've never doubted that such cases are possible, though they're not very common. There have been several cases which the FFLM has made into *cause celebres* in recent years, including Holly Collins, Genia Shockome, and Sadia Loeliger. In each of these three cases I've closely examined the FFLM claims that abusive fathers used claims of Parental Alienation Syndrome or similar tactics in order to win custody of their children from protective mothers. In each case I found the FFLM's claims to be, frankly, a fraud. To learn more, see *The Controversial Holly Collins Custody Case--What Really Happened?* and *Shockome Syndrome*. "Bridget's law" could make it easier for false accusers. As best I can tell, this *Post* article is the first public mention of a national "Bridget's Law" and Maloney's role in it--we'll see if anything comes of it.