



The Quarterly Newsletter of the Children's Rights Council, Inc.  
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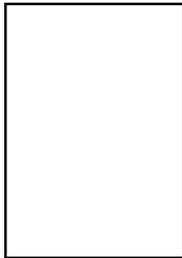
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## Wisconsin Adopts Strong Shared Parenting Law Now 26 States with Joint Custody



Thompson

Children have won a victory in Wisconsin. Starting May 1, 2000, all courts in Wisconsin will be required to presume joint legal custody is in the best interest of the child and to set as a goal "a placement schedule that allows the child to have regularly occurring, meaningful periods of physical placement with each parent and that maximizes the amount of time the child may spend with each parent."

Additional changes included in a bill passed by the legislature and signed by Gov. Tommy Thompson (R) are:

- similar treatment of children in paternity and divorce cases (except for temporary orders);

*New Law Presumes Joint Legal Custody and Regular, Meaningful Contact between Child and Parents.*

- requiring parents to submit parenting plans;
- reducing to 1% per month the interest on child support arrears;
- limiting the liability for past child support to the time of filing of a legal action instead of the date of birth of the child;
- penalties for interfering with court ordered placement; and
- a provision for establishing a study committee to review the role of guardians ad litem.

*Continued on page 3*

**Please Plan on Attending  
CRC's 13<sup>th</sup> National Conference**

**Washington, D.C.**

**May 4-6, 2001**

**Reception at the British Embassy  
to Benefit CRC**

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CRC is a member of



**Children's  
Charities  
of America**

## The CRC

The Children's Rights Council (CRC) is a nation-wide, non-profit IRS 501(c)(3) children's rights organization based in Washington, D.C.

CRC works to strengthen families through education and advocacy. We favor family formation and family preservation, but if families break up, or are never formed, we work to assure a child the frequent and continuing contact with two parents and extended family the child would normally have during a marriage. Our motto is "The Best Parent is Both Parents."

For the child's benefit, CRC favors parenting education before marriage, during marriage, and for parents who are unwed or separated. We work to demilitarize divorce between parents who are involved in marital disputes, substituting

conciliation and mediation for the adversarial process, and providing for emotional and financial child support. We work to strengthen fragile families of children whose parents are unwed. We also favor school-based programs for children at risk.

Formed in 1985 by concerned parents who have more than 40 years collective experience in custody reform and early childhood education, CRC has chapters in 32 states and two national affiliate organizations: Mothers Without Custody (MW/OC) and the Stepfamily Association of America (SAA).

Prominent professionals in the fields of religion, law, social work, psychology, child care, education, business, and government comprise our Advisory Panel.

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## Wisconsin

*Continued from page 1*

### **Bipartisan Effort Succeeded**

These provisions and a bipartisan effort from the Budget Conference Committee, "put Wisconsin into a leadership role in dealing with the national problem of many fathers (and some mothers) being disenfranchised from their children by outdated laws and the gender bias which exists in our legal system," said Jan Raz, president of Wisconsin Fathers for Children and Families, one of the groups that assisted the Parents' Rights Coalition in getting this bill passed. (Raz's e-mail is jraz@execpc.com).

This bill had its origins almost five years ago, when approximately 15 grass roots groups came together under the name of "Parents' Rights Coalition" to discuss problems surrounding the Family Court System in Wisconsin. These groups had many separate concerns, i.e., grandparents rights, juvenile justice issues, paternity cases, single parents, non-custodial access to children, financial child support, court discretion, family rights, parents rights to help raise their children, and relocation of children.

Over 16 months and lots of compromise and discussion, all those left at the table agreed on language and intent of the original bill which revamped the state chapter on family law and some of the children's code.

"Senator Gary George (D) was courageous enough to spearhead the drafting and introduction of the bill into the Senate," said Rob Eisenbart, president of the Coalition. "When support for the bill

grew, so did concerns by politicians and resistance from other groups, including Victims of Domestic Abuse Advocates, court commissioners, and family lawyers. Lawmakers questioned whether the bill would make too much of a change to existing law.

At public hearings, supporters out-

numbered opposers almost every time. Using data, personal stories, and support from some of the judiciary, as well as data showing that children do better when both parents are allowed to stay involved, the legislature moved forward.

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### *Sen. George Spearheaded Effort in Wisconsin Senate for Shared Parenting*

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Under pressure from lawyers and abuse advocates, the Wisconsin Bar Family Law section redrafted the bill, gutting about 50% of the original bill, and Gov. Thompson line item vetoed more, said Eisenbart. At best, 25 to 30% of the original bill was left. "It is a start and the new law is an improvement," he said.

### **Governor Wants Both Parents Involved**

Governor Thompson's press release October 22, 1999, stated he was signing the law because he wanted "major changes to the state's child custody law that encourage both parents to be involved in raising their children." The Governor said "We need to do more to make sure both parents are fully involved in the raising of their children, particularly fathers."

Eisenbart, a CRC lifetime member, and long-time advocate/paralegal for a child's rights to be with both parents, is concerned that the new law leaves discretion for bureaucrats and lawyers to oppose shared parenting. He says he and others will closely watch how the law is implemented.

Clair Wiederhold, a director of legislation for Kids and Dads, one of the groups that helped bring about passage of the legislation, said: "Some attorneys, guardians ad litem, court commissioners and judges already apply many of these principles in present cases. However, most don't. This legislation should establish a more uniform, statewide goal of securing the best interest of children by allowing children to have both parents fully involved in their lives. Wisconsin has begun to recognize that dads as well as moms count in their children's lives."

## **Many Helped Gain Passage**

The Parents' Rights Coalition, along with Wisconsin Fathers for Children and Families, Citizens for Family Law Reform, and Legislation for Kids and Dads, worked long and hard from the beginning.

"Judge James Welker of Wisconsin is probably the most supportive judiciary officer in the state," said Eisenbart. "He helped influence the Wisconsin State Bar's Family Law Section into making sweeping reforms in the paternity section of this new law. Without him and some of the bar's support, the bill may not have been signed by the governor," said Eisenbart.

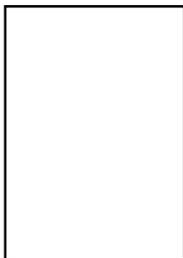
Eisenbart said there is still no protection from:

- one parent moving away with the children;
- courts obstructing or terminating parental relationships without compelling or significant reason; and
- treating children like trophies to be won in an adversarial process fueled by special interests and money.

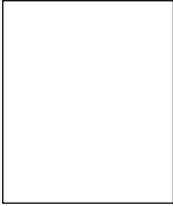
"We should enjoy this program, but not lose sight of the hard work yet to be done," Eisenbart concluded.

### **26 States and D.C. Have Joint Custody**

According to a 1997 American Bar Association publication, 19 states plus the District of Columbia have some form of presumption for joint custody, either legal, physical or legal and physical. They are Florida, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Texas and Washington, D.C. Also California, Connecticut, Maine, Michigan, Mississippi, Nevada, Vermont and Washington. In some of those states, there is a presumption for joint custody only if both parents agree. The states that have added some form of presumption since the ABA report are Alabama, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Tennessee, West Virginia and Wisconsin.



*George*



Levy

## The CRC View

by David L. Levy, J.D.  
President, CRC

### The “Divorce Industry” Results in Poverty for Children and Parents

I read a book recently about how difficult it is to end poverty because there is a well-intentioned but misguided “poverty industry” that serves to perpetuate poverty through top-down run programs instead of enabling poor people to work toward their own economic self-sufficiency.

It reminded me of the “divorce industry” that is also generally well-intentioned, but whose result is the continued financial and emotional poverty of many children, because non-custodial parents are seen as the problem rather than as part of the solution. Many non-custodial parents are affected by divorce, and are impoverished emotionally and financially by the evils of the divorce system.

Robert L. Woodson, Sr., author of “The Triumphs of Joseph”, tells the Biblical story of Joseph who was imprisoned by Pharaoh, but when the ruler had a nightmare he and his soothsayers could not understand, it was the young man from the dungeon who was able to interpret it for him and thereby save the kingdom.

Woodson sees Joseph as a prototype of the men and women who battle daily to change lives in our poorest neighborhoods. While many such modern “Josephs” exist, Woodson argues, their efforts are too often ignored or disparaged by “Pharaoh’s courtiers”—the people who have a vested interest in the existence of poverty and racial tension and have drawn attention away from solutions to the problem.

It is no wonder, Woodson writes, that just as the expenditures of billions of dollars has not resulted in signifi-

cant reduction in poverty, because the “Pharaohs” who run programs keep “Josephs”—poor people—uninvolved in their own emancipation from poverty.

He tells of Washington, D.C., where a decades-old law that prohibited “boot-blacks” from the District was used against a black entrepreneur who had set up a thriving business of shoe-shine stands throughout the city, staffed by bow-tied employees, many of whom had formerly been unemployed.

In another case, a hair salon whose practice was limited to braiding hair was threatened with termination because D.C. regulations ruled that its stylists had to pass the same cosmetology exams as beauticians whose use chemical treatments.

As these entanglements with red tape show, it is not the race of the “Pharaohs” but the rules of the game that determines whether the “Josephs” who want to lift themselves out of poverty are allowed to do so or not.

The “Pharaohs” treat the poor as clients rather than as participants who should be involved in creating their own self-sufficiency.

Woodson, founder of the National Center for Neighborhood Enterprise in Washington, D.C., and a MacArthur “genius” grant recipient in 1990, argues that the healing agents in our culture—churches, neighborhood groups, community organizations—must be unleashed to go to work where the efforts of government have failed.

### Parents Not Consulted on Solutions

How many times have separated, divorced or never-married parents been treated as deadbeats and outcasts unconcerned with the support of their own children, and thus unentitled to help solve the problem of child impoverishment.

Reduction of poverty was cited by Sen. Russell Long in 1980 as the main

reason for the new national financial child support collection system.

Now, 20 years later, despite financial child support collections having quadrupled because of a huge federal and state bureaucracy, liens, interception of tax returns, jailings, midnight arrests, posting of the “10 Most Wanted” lists, booting of cars, etc., the poverty rate for children remains essentially unchanged.

The 1999 Current Population Report (website [www.childstats.gov](http://www.childstats.gov)), reports that 18 percent of children in all families lived in poverty in 1980, and 19 percent in 1997. 51 percent of children in single mother headed houses lived in poverty in 1980, and 49 percent in 1997. The reason poverty is essentially unchanged is that America continues to encourage single-parent families for the same reasons that Woodson gives for programs designed to aid the poor—a bureaucratic indifference and hostility to involving the people affected by government decisions in the own solutions.

The child support bureaucracy, family law attorneys, courts, expert witnesses, sheriff’s departments, are all part of the divorce industry. Tens of thousands of jobs and billions of dollars are at stake if this industry’s dominance over children and families is not questioned.

### More Awareness that Children with Two Parents do Better

Fortunately, there is a change in the wind. There is a greater awareness in Washington and elsewhere in the country that children do better when they have two parents.

Two-parent families, preferably married, but also if the parents are never married, separated or di-

• forced, provide the best financial and  
• emotional insulation for children.

• Single parents do a super-human  
• job for their children, but generally just  
• cannot provide as much financial and  
• emotional support as two parents can.

• CRC has helped bring about this  
• change over the years, as have many  
• other people and organizations. I be-  
• lieve a big reason for the change is the  
• research that has piled up like a moun-  
• tain.

• This mountain shows that crime,  
• drugs, academic achievement, and ev-  
• ery other measurement of social be-  
• havior by children is improved if a  
• child has two parents.

In other words, public safety, the safety of the average person in the streets, is affected by how we treat families. Those people are voters, and political leaders want to be seen as doing something for public safety.

Thus, Congress introduces fatherhood bills, and communities across the country establish fatherhood programs that did not exist 5 years ago. In fact, these are parenting bills and parenting programs, because the effect will be to give children both a father and a mother in more instances.

There is a big question, however, as to how these programs will be run. Will they be run top-down, rather than bot-

tom-up, will they involve the very parents who are emotionally and financially responsible for supporting their children, or will they become so bureaucratic that we will not be able to recognize their worth?

I like the idea of this outreach to parents, but I am troubled by the fact that the divorce industry still fuels sole custody adversarial battles all around the country, and that a huge bureaucracy still treats parents of separation and divorce as people to be acted on rather than included in solutions to the problem.

Children deserve better.

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## Senate Considers \$150 Million Fatherhood Bill

### Senate Considers Bill to Help with Emotional and Financial Support of Children

The Senate is considering a “Responsible Fatherhood” bill (S. 1364) that would provide \$150 million to encourage the role of fathers as parents in low-income families and to help fathers better provide for their children.

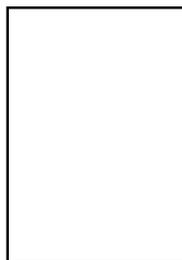
The Senate bill is a counterpart to the “Fathers Count Act” (H.R. 3073), passed by the House of Representatives on November 10, 1999, by a vote of 328 to 93. **CRC Prefers Passage of the House Bill (H.R. 3073).**

Sponsors of the Senate bill are Sens. Pete Domenici (R-NM) and Evan Bayh (D-IN). A hearing should have been held by the time you receive this newsletter by the Senate Finance Committee, chaired by Sen. William Roth (R-DE). If such a hearing has not already been held, it is questionable whether the legislation will become law this year. Sponsors of the House version of the bill (The “Fathers Count Act”) are Reps. Nancy Johnson (R-CT) and Ben Cardin (D-MD), who spoke on the House floor in November, 1999 strongly in favor of its passage.

Congress is considering this legislation as part of its continuing efforts on



*Domenici*



*Bayh*

#### *Sponsors of Senate Bill*

welfare reform and welfare-to-work initiatives. With many mothers now coming off welfare, Congress knows that they must have the financial help of fathers. But the legislation goes beyond welfare-to-work incentives, and encourages the role of fathers as parents in low-income families and to help fathers better provide for their children. Some observers have referred to this bill as a parenting bill, because it will have the ultimate purpose of assisting children to have more involvement by both parents in their lives. Some services and programs are expected to reach out to low-income mothers and divorced parents.

Previous legislation that helped parents to function as parents is the \$10

million a year in access (visitation) funds that Congress has provided to the states since 1997.

#### **Grants Would be for Public and Private Organizations**

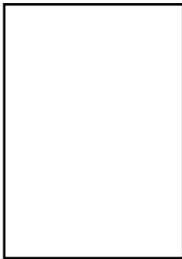
The \$150 million would be for grants to public and private organizations which promote marriage through counseling, mentoring, and enhancing relationship skills. The bill will encourage local efforts by requiring that 75% of the funding goes to non-governmental community based organizations. Preference for funding would go to organizations which promote successful parenting, through disseminating information about good parenting practices, including family planning, encouraging child support payments and regular access between fathers and their children.

It would assist in aiding fathers and their families to avoid or leave the welfare system, by providing activities such as job training, subsidized employment and education to advance job opportunities and careers.

# Child Custody Jurisdiction

## How to Decide Which Court Decides

Michael L. Oddenino



Oddenino

The Uniform Child Custody Jurisdiction Act (UCCJA) and the Parental Kidnapping Prevention Act (PKPA) are legislative responses to the child custody jurisdiction problem.

The Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction is the international response.

The UCCJA began as a model act which became virtually universal state law. The PKPA, on the other hand, is federal law.

The UCCJA creates a two-prong approach to determining which court decides a custody case. First, a general class of jurisdiction is established for custody cases. Second, the law provides a mechanism intended to vest the right to exercise jurisdiction in only one state at any given time. The UCCJA and the PKPA supersede all conflicting or contradictory laws.

The UCCJA, the PKPA, and the Hague Convention apply only to those who have a right to custody.<sup>1</sup> The UCCJA and the PKPA each prescribe four bases for jurisdiction: (1) home state; (2) significant connection, plus evidence regarding the best interests of the child; (3) emergency; and (4) default jurisdiction (no other state has jurisdiction or has declined it). The bases may overlap, so concurrent jurisdiction is common and conflicts of jurisdiction often occur.

For example, the “home state” may not be the same state as the one in which the parties have “significant connections” and where there is “substantial evidence” about the child’s best interests.<sup>2</sup>

The UCCJA, the PKPA, and the Hague Convention on Child Abduction

are all designed to prevent child abduction as well as providing a mechanism for determining which court has the right to decide a custody case. These laws address the problems arising when one parent breaches another’s right to custody by removing the child from his “home state” or “habitual residence” and takes him to another jurisdiction, or when the parent retains the child in violation of another’s custodial rights or interests.

### Determining Which State Has Home State Status

The primary factor for determining if a state has jurisdiction to decide a custody case is the “home state” status, where it is assumed that one will find the maximum amount of evidence on the child’s interests. The “home state” is the jurisdiction in which the child has lived with his or her legal custodian for at least six months or a state which was the “home state” within six months of filing. (For example, if a family lives in state A for one year, state A is the home state. If the same family lived in state A for one year and then one parent moved to state B with the children and filed in state B after living in state B for only four months, state A is still the home state).

The UCCJA also allows a state to exercise jurisdiction on the basis of the children having “significant connections” with that state. Thus, under the UCCJA, even though state A is the home state, state B might exercise initial jurisdiction on the basis of significant connections. The PKPA intended to eliminate this possibility by making the “home state” the exclusive state to exercise initial jurisdiction notwithstanding that some other state had “significant connections.” This is a major distinction between the UCCJA and the PKPA.

These laws are also designed to avoid forum shopping, jurisdictional competition, and duplicative litigation. They establish a scheme for determining which

court among one or more state courts has jurisdiction, or, if more than one has jurisdiction, which should claim it.

The UCCJA and the PKPA are also designed to facilitate and promote communication among courts which have or may have concurrent jurisdiction. They require all states to honor prior custody orders. A court that receives information on possible ongoing custody litigation in another state should communicate with the appropriate court in that state. The law actually calls for a judge in state A to communicate with a judge in state B.

The UCCJA provides subject matter jurisdiction and is the exclusive method of obtaining it in child custody cases. Subject matter jurisdiction is determined by statutory definition (e.g., certain length of residence) and may not be conferred by consent of the parties. Absence of subject matter jurisdiction may be raised by the trial court or the parties at any stage of the proceedings.<sup>3</sup>

### Home State Jurisdiction Predominates

The UCCJA establishes a system of concurrent and potentially conflicting jurisdiction. The bases for jurisdiction are hierarchical and continuing jurisdiction always prevails. Home state jurisdiction predominates over significant connection jurisdiction. Emergency jurisdiction will trump either of those bases, but it is temporary. Finally, if no state has jurisdiction on the basis of UCCJA or PKPA rules, the state in which the child and a party are domiciled may claim it.

The law eliminates potentially endless procedural custody litigation by placing the bases of jurisdiction in the aforementioned descending preferential order and by providing for virtually exclusive continuing jurisdiction in the original decree state.<sup>4</sup> In addition, to achieve fairness and cooperation, mechanisms for communication and for declining jurisdiction were included.

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## Continuing Jurisdiction

Once a court properly exercises jurisdiction in a child custody matter, that state is deemed “the decree rendering state.”<sup>5</sup> For example, if state A were the home state and the judge in state A conferred with the judge in state B where a parent filed after only four months claiming significant connections, and those judges determined that state A should exercise initial jurisdiction, state A would then have a hearing and render a custody decree. Assume one parent continues to reside in state A while the other parent resides in state B with the children pursuant to state A’s decree. Two years later the parent in state B wants to modify the custody or visitation schedule. What happens?

State B is now the home state as the children have lived there for two years. State A is the decree rendering state as the initial and current order was rendered in state A. Only state A has the right to exercise jurisdiction even though state B has home state jurisdiction because state A enjoys the continuing jurisdiction of the decree rendering state. Thus, state B cannot properly exercise its jurisdiction unless state A specifically declines to exercise its continuing jurisdiction.

## Continuing Jurisdiction in the International Arena

The dominance of continuing jurisdiction also applies to international cases where a custody order has been rendered under a law consistent with the UCCJA.<sup>6</sup> For instance, a California decision decided by a California Family Court and affirmed by the Appellate Court held that the California courts had jurisdiction, under the UCCJA, to determine the custody of a minor Mexican national.<sup>7</sup> The minor, although a Mexican national, had resided in California for several years with her Mexican national parents. The Court stated that one of the primary objectives of the UCCJA is to “avoid the disruption to the life of a child involved in relitigation of custody matters ...[O]nce a custody order is entered by a court with jurisdiction under [the UCCJA], that court has continuing exclusive jurisdiction [which

prevails over any other basis].<sup>8</sup>

The court also held that no treaty or other source of international law precludes California courts from claiming jurisdiction in a case properly brought. California was “home state” and the state “with the most significant connection” to the parents and the minor child and substantial evidence relating to the minor child’s well-being. Some courts construe the UCCJA to apply internationally only when a foreign custody order is at issue.<sup>9</sup> Other states apply the general policies and objectives of the UCCJA to all custody jurisdiction disputes, including those in the international context.<sup>10</sup>

## Child Abduction

Since the 1970s, the State Department says it has been contacted for help in about 11,000 international child abductions where a parent was involved.<sup>11</sup> The Justice Department reports some 354,100 cases of parental abductions a year, but fails to identify how many are international.<sup>12</sup> The State Department estimates an average of 400 to 500 new international cases per year, a number critics charge is a vast underestimate. A recent study by the American Bar Association Center on Children and the Law shows that in 60 percent of international abduction cases, the children are never returned even though their whereabouts are known.<sup>13</sup> This study shows that parents spent an average of \$33,500 in search and recovery of their children, and a quarter of left-behind parents spent \$75,000 or more.<sup>14</sup>

UCCJA section 23 provides that the general policies of UCCJA extend to the international arena. The provisions of UCCJA relating to the recognition and enforcement of custody decrees of other states apply to custody decrees and decrees involving legal institutions similar in nature to custody institutions rendered by appropriate authorities of other nations if reasonable notice and opportunity to be heard were given to all affected persons. The same goes for the general policies and objectives of the UCCJA and the PKPA.<sup>15</sup>

Parental kidnaping is a federal felony, calling for up to three years imprisonment.<sup>16</sup> It is also a felony in most

states.<sup>17</sup> The federal felony provides at least three affirmative defenses: (1) custody or visitation award to defendant pursuant to UCCJA; (2) flight from a pattern of domestic violence; and (3) defendant had proper physical custody and failed to return the child for reasons beyond his control.<sup>18</sup>

## The Hague Convention

The UCCJA and the PKPA are not the only laws on international jurisdiction over child custody. In 1980, the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction was formed to complement our UCCJA and PKPA in the international arena.<sup>19</sup> The Hague Convention is different from the UCCJA and PKPA in that it does not create recognition and enforcement standards, but demands the prompt restoration of the custody that existed before the alleged abduction.<sup>20</sup>

The United States ratified the Hague Convention in 1986. It went into effect in 1988, upon the enactment of its enabling legislation, the International Child Abduction Remedies Act (ICARA).<sup>21</sup> This Act provides that it “shall apply to any child who was habitually resident in a contracting state immediately before any breach of custody or access rights.”<sup>22</sup> The Convention’s stated purpose is “to secure the prompt return of children wrongfully removed to or retained in any Contracting State,” and “to ensure that rights of custody and of access under the law of one Contracting State are effectively respected in the other Contracting States.”<sup>23</sup> The Hague Convention’s underlying policy is primarily to ascertain a speedy return of an abducted child to the state in which he or she was a habitual resident, without undertaking a full investigation of the case’s merits.

The remedies of the Hague Convention may be invoked when two threshold issues have been satisfied by a preponderance of the evidence.<sup>24</sup> First, the moving party must establish that he or she had lawful custody rights when the child was wrongfully removed or retained. Second, the removal or retention must be from the child’s “habitual residence.” Articles 3 and 5(a) of the Con-

*Continued on page 8*

# Child Custody

*Continued from page 7*

vention provide that the removal or retention is wrongful when “(a) it is in breach of rights of custody attributed to a person . . . under the law of the state in which the child was a habitual resident immediately before the removal or retention; and (b) at the time of the removal or retention, those rights were actually exercised, either jointly or alone, or would have been so exercised but for the removal or retention.” Custody rights are determined by the law of the child’s “habitual residence,” a term left undefined in the Convention and in the United States’ implementing legislation, leaving the issue to be decided upon the facts and circumstances of the case.<sup>25</sup> United States courts have held that the terms of the Convention are to be construed narrowly.<sup>26</sup>

## Conclusion

The framework of laws determining proper exercise of custody jurisdiction is sufficient to answer most custody dispute problems. While some judges create problems by not knowing or following the jurisdictional guidelines, forum shopping in custody cases is not nearly the problem it was before the implementation of these laws. Armed with the knowledge of the “off the rack” dictates of the jurisdictional laws, an attorney can provide clients with advice well worth the fees charged.

1. Johnson v. Johnson, 493 S.E.2d 668 (Va. Ct. App. 1997); In re Prevot, 59 F.3d 556, 560 (6th Cir. 1995); Caban v. Healey, 634 N.E.2d 540 (Ind. Ct. App. 1994); 42 U.S.C. 11603(3)(1)(A) (1994).
2. See, e.g., In re Joseph D., 23 Cal.Rptr.2d 574 (Cal. Ct. App. 1994); In re Marriage of Alexander, 623 N.E.2d 921 (Ill. App. Ct. 1993).
3. Cordie v. Cordie, 538 N.W.2d 214, 216 (N.D. 1995).
4. See, e.g., Kessenich v. Kessenich, No. FA-96053295S, 1996 LEXIS 1517 (Conn. Super. Ct. June 11, 1996) (The fact that Connecticut had become the home state and had most significant connection and most evidence were not sufficient for Connecticut courts to modify a Michigan custody decree, where former husband continued to live in Michigan. Michigan re-

solved the problem by declining jurisdiction.); McDow v. McDow, 908 P.2d 1049, 1051 (Alaska 1996) (a court may not modify another state’s custody decree if the latter court retains jurisdiction).

5. See, e.g., Chapoteau v. Chapoteau, 659 So.2d 1381 (Fla. Dist. App. Ct. 1995).
6. In re Stephanie M., 867 P.2d 706 (Cal. 1994); In re Fischer, 666 So.2d 724, 725 (La. App. 4th Cir. 1995); Koester v. Montgomery, 886 S.W.2d 432 (Tex. Ct. App. 1994) (UCCJA applies internationally as far as due process notice and similar requirements are concerned); Ruppen v. Ruppen, 614 N.E.2d 577 (Ind. Ct. App. 1993) (deferred to Italy).
7. In re Stephanie M., 867 P.2d 706 (Cal. 1994), cert. denied sub nom. See also Mendez v. San Diego County Dep’t of Soc. Servs., 513 U.S. 937, 115 S. Ct. 337 (1994).
8. Id.
9. E.g., Ivaldi v. Ivaldi, 672 A.2d 1226 (N.J. Super. Ct. App. Div. 1996); Koons v. Koons, 615 N.Y.S.2d 563, 567 (N.Y. Sup. Ct. 1994).
10. E.g., Black v. Black, 441 Pa. Super. 358, (1995) (applying UCCJA to international child custody disputes and construing the definition of “state” to encompass foreign nations); Dincer v. Dincer, 666 A.2d 281, 284 (Pa. Super. Ct. 1995); In re Stephanie M., 867 P.2d 706 (Cal. 1994); Zenide v. Superior Ct., 27 Cal.Rptr.2d 703 (Cal. Ct. App. 1994); Ruppen v. Ruppen, 614 N.E.2d 577, 582 (Ind. Ct. App. 1993).
11. Timothy W. Maier, Insight on the News: Kids Held Hostage, News World Communications, Inc., March 8, 1999.
12. Id.
13. Id.
14. Id.
15. Winton-Ibanez v. Ibanez, 690 So.2d 1344, 1346 (Fla. Dist. Ct. App. 1997) (the general policies of the UCCJA apply internationally).
16. 18 U.S.C. 1204 (1994).
17. In California, the applicable statute is Penal Code Section 278, which states “Every person, not having a right to custody, who maliciously takes, entices away, keeps, withholds, or conceals any child with the intent to detain or conceal that child from a lawful custodian shall be punished by imprisonment in a county jail not exceeding one year, a fine not exceeding one thousand dollars (\$1,000), or both that fine and imprisonment, or by imprisonment in the state prison for two, three, or four years, a fine not exceeding ten thousand dollars (\$10,000), or both that fine and imprisonment.”

18. 18 U.S.C. 1204 (1994) provided that the defendant make reasonable efforts to notify the other legal custodian of the problem within 24 hours of the end of his visitation period.
19. Hague International Child Abduction Convention, 51 Fed. Reg. 10498 (1986); Department of State, Treaties in Force 328 (1989); Exec. Order No. 12,648, 53 Fed. Reg. 30637 (1988).
20. See Martin J. Bodzin, Comment, International Parental Child Abduction: The Need for Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign Custody Decrees, 3 Emory J. Int’l Dispute Res. 205, 212 (1989).
21. 42 U.S.C. 11601-11610 (1994).
22. Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction, Ch. I, art. 4.
23. Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction, Ch. I, art. 1, (a), (b); Merideth v. Merideth, 759 F. Supp. 1432, 1434 (D. Ariz. 1991).
24. In re Prevot, 59 F.3d 556, 560 (6th Cir. 1995).
25. Merideth v. Merideth, 759 F. Supp. 1432, 1434 (D. Ariz. 1991).
26. E.g., Rydder v. Rydder, 49 F.3d 369 (8th Cir. 1995).

## Contact Other CRC Members by E-mail

Send and receive e-mail from other CRC members around the country.

If you are a CRC member, e-mail the following message to Harry Prillaman, CRC Coordinator for Georgia, who is supervising the email for members. He can be reached at [ppilla@us.ibm.com](mailto:ppilla@us.ibm.com)

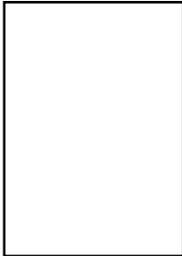
*Dear Harry. I am a national CRC member who would like to join the [crc-general@egroups.com](mailto:crc-general@egroups.com) distribution list.*

Call the CRC national office at 202-547-6227 or fax 202-546-4272 to make sure your national membership is current.

**We thank Bladen Lithography in Gaithersburg, MD for providing printing services to CRC.**

# National Child's Day June 4

## Join with Churches or Plan Your Own Children's Day Celebration



Graham

Senator Bob Graham (D-FL) is again introducing a resolution in the Senate to declare the first Sunday in June, as "National Child's Day." National Children's Day is observed by

many churches on the first Sunday in June. CRC and its chapters join in observing that date, which this year falls on June 4, because it is nestled between Mother's Day and Father's Day, where a Children's Day ought to be!

CRC urges children's advocates to join in church or synagogue celebrations, or have parties or other events for children. We will print several of your letters or reports on Children's Day activities in a future CRC newsletter.

This is the Senate resolution Sen. Graham is introducing, the same as last year's resolution.

### CRC Needs

- ✿ Free office space. Get a tax write-off as you help kids and CRC. 1,200 square feet or more anywhere in the Washington, D.C. area (Maryland, D.C. or Virginia).
- ✿ A new photocopy machine.
- ✿ Volunteers to help with filing, phone calls, and writing letters.
- ✿ Our chapters need computers.
- ✿ Lawyers to write CRC Amicus Briefs on appeal.

Our chapters around the country could use office space, photocopiers, and volunteers, too!

### RESOLUTION

Designating the first Sunday in June of each calendar year as "National Child's Day."

Whereas the first Sunday of June falls between Mother's Day and Father's Day;

Whereas each child is unique, a blessing, and holds a distinct place in the family unit;

Whereas the people of the United States should celebrate children as the most valuable asset of the United States;

Whereas the children represent the future, hope, and inspiration of the United States;

Whereas the children of the United States should be allowed to feel that their ideas and dreams will be respected because adults in the United States take the time to listen;

Whereas many children of the United States face crises of grave proportions, especially as they enter adolescent years;

Whereas it is important for parents to spend time listening to their children on a daily basis;

Whereas modern societal and economic demands often pull the family apart;

Whereas, whenever practicable, it is important for both parents to be involved in their child's life;

Whereas encouragement should be given to families to set aside a special time for all family members to engage together in family activities;

Whereas adults in the United States should have an opportunity to reminisce on their youth to recapture some of the fresh insight, innocence, and dreams that they may have lost through the years;

Whereas the designation of a day to commemorate the children of the United States will provide an opportunity to emphasize to children the importance of developing an ability to make the choices necessary to distance themselves from impropriety and to contribute to their communities;

Whereas the people of the United States should emphasize to children the importance of family life, education, and spiritual qualities;

Whereas because children are the responsibility of all people of the United States, everyone should celebrate children, whose questions, laughter, and dreams are important to the existence of the United States; and

Whereas the designation of a day to commemorate the children will emphasize to the people of the United States the importance of the role of the child within the family and society; Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate

- (1) designates the first Sunday in June of each year as "National Child's Day"; and
- (2) requests the President to issue a proclamation calling on the people of the United States to observe the day with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

*Family Facts* is not in this issue; it will resume in the next issue.

# The Elian Gonzalez Case

CRC filed a Friend of the Court brief in the Elian Gonzalez case because of the concern over the thousands of children who have been kidnapped by a parent or who have problems obtaining access to a parent.

CRC asked that Elian Gonzalez be returned to his surviving parent—immediately. CRC filed a “Friend of the Court” brief with the Federal District Court in Miami stating that U.S. and international law requires that Elian be returned to his country of “habitual residence,” which in this case is Cuba.

That was the decision made by Federal District Court Judge Michael K. Moore on March 22. CRC said the appeal of the decision should be decided while the boy is in Cuba.

The CRC brief was written by CRC General Counsel Michael L. Oddenino and filed with the court in February.

Friend of the Court briefs are filed by organizations asking a judge to take a particular look at a case because it affects people beyond the reaches of the parties in the particular case before him.

CRC held two press conferences in February at the CRC office in Washington, in which CRC focused on the relationship between Elian and the thousands of other families in the U.S. whose children are being held in a foreign country by a parent. We also mentioned the many children who are being withheld from or alienated from their non-custodial parents.

It will be harder to obtain return of those children, or to improve access/visitation/parenting time for children and parents, if the U.S. does not return Elian

to his surviving parent, CRC President David L. Levy said.

The U.S. is a party to the Hague Convention against International Parental Abduction, which requires that a child be returned to the “country of habitual residence.” Also, the Parental Kidnapping Prevention Act, a U.S. law, requires return of the child to the home state or home country.

A hearing on Elian was held March 1 before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, chaired by Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-UT). Most of the invited testimony was focused against Castro and his dictatorship government, but Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-VT) asked that a representative of CRC testify about Elian and other families.

## Japan Does not Allow Access by Non-Custodial Parent



*Benda*

CRC recommended Walter Benda, head of CRC's Japan chapter, to testify because his two daughters have been held by the mother in Japan, who has allowed

Walter no contact with the children, Mari, now age 11 and Ema, now age 9, in five years.

But Walter and others are working to change the system in Japan. He told the Committee that the action the U.S. takes regarding Elian would have reper-

cussions on the thousand of cases involving American children retained or abducted to foreign countries.

Benda's appeal to the courts in Japan to allow him access to his children have gone unheeded.

Benda's heartfelt testimony, in which he talked of the thousands of other parents, like himself, who will be adversely affected if the U.S. does not follow a “return” policy for children, won praise from Hatch and Leahy. But there was no indication that Hatch, chairman of the committee, will change his belief that Elian should remain in the U.S.

Earlier in February, Benda represented CRC at a press conference on Capitol Hill organized by the National Council of Churches, the church group which visited Elian's father and grandparents in Cuba. Walter was the only parent with an international abduction case.

Members of Congress who spoke in favor of re-uniting Elian with his only surviving parent include Charles Rangel (D-NY) and Maxine Waters (D-CA).

## Danger for Elian

Psychiatrists have testified that Elian is suffering trauma and that after 4 months, the trauma may result in permanent personality disorders. The four months since Elian was found off the coast of Florida expired around March 25.

See Benda's testimony at [www.senate.gov/~judiciary](http://www.senate.gov/~judiciary)

### Beat the Tax Man: Contribute to CRC

Keep working for children. If you wish to consider leaving a bequest or property to CRC, please state the following in your will: “I hereby leave the following to the Children's Rights Council: — (state your bequest).”

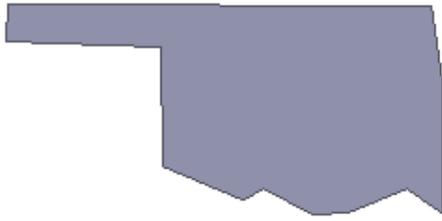
### CRC General Counsel

CRC General Counsel Michael L. Oddenino's email address is [kidfirst@msn.com](mailto:kidfirst@msn.com)  
His website is [www.oanglaw.com](http://www.oanglaw.com)

### CRC Info

**Fax:** 202-546-4272  
**Website:** [www.gocrc.com](http://www.gocrc.com)  
**E-mail:** [crcdc@erols.com](mailto:crcdc@erols.com)  
**Parenting Website:** [www.info4parents.com](http://www.info4parents.com)

## Around the Country



### Oklahomans Rally for Stronger Families

The Governor of Oklahoma, members of Congress, state legislators, and representatives of more than 40 organizations participated in the third annual Oklahoma Pro-Family Day Rally at the State Capitol in Oklahoma City on Valentine's Day.

The largest ever Pro-Family Day rally ever, focused on the consequences of family breakdown and of families that never form, said Dr. Gregory J. Palumbo, of Oklahomans for Families Alliance, an organizer of the rally. He said children, grandparents, and extended family members from communities from across Oklahoma and surrounding states participated in the rally..

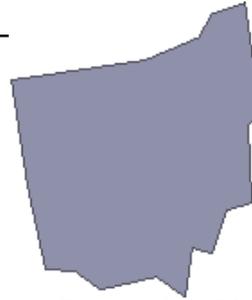
Speakers included Governor Frank Keating (R), Congressman Ernest Istook (R-OK), Jerry State cabinet Secretary of Human Services Jerry Regier, and Sanford L. Braver, Ph.D., of Arizona State University, author of "Divorced Dads, Shattering the Myths," who spoke about the results of his research.

Speakers emphasized how marriage, family stability, choices made by young adults to have children out-of-wedlock, and the adversarial nature of divorce and family breakdown can either increase the chances of children doing well or doing poorly, said Palumbo.

"The community of interests, goals, and roles of each organization in promoting and strengthening families in Oklahoma was also better conveyed than ever before," said Palumbo.

The rally received state-wide publicity from print, radio, and TV, prior to, during, and after the rally,

Palumbo's e-mail is [g.palumbo@worldnet.att.net](mailto:g.palumbo@worldnet.att.net)



### Groups Often on Opposite Sides of the Fence Join Together for Children

by Michael Munz  
St. Charles County Post

Groups that are often on the opposite side of the fence joined forces in March for a "Child Advocacy Day" in Jefferson City, Missouri, the state capital.

About 15 members from the local chapters of the Association for Children for Enforcement of Child Support (ACES), American Coalition for Fathers and Children (ACFC), and CRC thought they would be more effective if they joined forces.

"We were talking the same story from different perspectives," said Marty Witbeck, of ACFC, after meeting with Peggy Walker, the ACES coordinator, prior to the joint venture.

Walker said that she expected the groups to get a lot more attention by working together. "It's going to turn some heads," she said, "because we're normally at odds on how we want the system to change."

The changes the groups recommended at Jefferson City included:

- Open access to court records and data based on judges' rulings;
- Standardized summaries of judges' decisions detailing the responsibilities of both parents. The summaries should be maintained in the case files;
- Cameras and recordation should be allowed in Family Court in order to keep an accurate record of evidence and decisions;
- Having all judges elected instead of appointed;
- Setting up a lay review board to review complaints about judges' decisions.
- Having guardians ad litem (attorneys representing the children) chosen by a lottery system instead of appointed by a judge;
- Changing Missouri statutes covering divorce to include the phrase "rights of children" to help remind judges that children need shared parenting in the majority of cases.

Scott Field, chair, CRC of Eastern Missouri, and other CRC members, participated.

ACES can be contacted at 314/947-3922, ACFC at 314/963-5252, and CRC at 314/963-4668.

**Network with  
Other Organizations  
and Hold a Rally  
in Your State  
Like Those in  
Oklahoma and Missouri.**

### A Prayer Thy Kingdom

*Let the reign of Divine Truth,  
Life, and Love be established in me,  
and rule out of me all Evil, Sin, Dis-  
ease, and Death; may thy word en-  
rich the affections of all mankind,  
and govern them.*



## Equal Parents' Week 2000



**Hold a Vigil Sept. 27 at 8 P.M. EST  
Help Publicize "The Best Parent Is Both Parents"**

Equal Parents' Week will be held September 25 to October 1, 2000.

Candlelight Vigils will be held around the country and abroad on Wednesday, September 27, at 8 p.m. EST. The vigils will focus on "A Moment in Our Hearts, a Moment of Solidarity."

Last year, 17 organizations throughout the U.S. and three organizations in foreign countries joined CRC in observing Equal Parents' Week, a number that is expected to grow this year, said Patti Diroff, CRC's Equal Parents' Week national coordinator.

Diroff said it is important to establish a national priority which requires a 2-parent focus as the national policy governing all legislation affecting families, both intact and non-intact. "Requiring that legislation be scrutinized against a 2-parent focus is the most effective way to implement a framework that will be positive for children," she said.

"Just Say Yes to Joint Custody" will soon be available as a new button. "Statutes and judges should require parents to 'just say yes' to making a commitment to doing what is truly in children's best interests."

Equal Parents' Week packages will be mailed soon to CRC chapter heads and other groups so they can begin organizing their efforts as well as spread the word to family, friends, and other organizations.

**Comments and participation are always welcome. Phone Patti at 909/591-3689. email her at [pattidiroff@worldnet.att.net](mailto:pattidiroff@worldnet.att.net), or see her webpage at <http://members.tripod.com/epweek>**

### New National Organization to Educate on Parental Alienation



*Stuart-Mills*

A new national organization has been founded to promote research and education on the Parental Alienation Syndrome.

The non-profit organization, called the Parental Alienation Syndrome Research Foundation,

is based in Washington, D.C., just a few blocks from the White House.

The PASRF boasts a high-powered Scientific Advisory Committee, including many of the world's best-known experts and authors on PAS. These include, among others, Stanley Clawar and Brynne Ruvlin, Richard A. Gardner, Deirdre Conway Rand, Richard Warshak, Douglas Darnall, as well as Judge Vernon Nakahara, California Attorney Patrick Clancy, and Pamela Freyd of the False

Memory Syndrome Foundation.

Parental Alienation Syndrome is a well-identified group of symptoms that may occur when a child is taught to denigrate a parent, often in the context of a high-conflict divorce or child abduction. Observers credit Richard Gardner with first identifying and defining the Syndrome.

The Foundation will work to foster and promote research and educate judges, professionals and the public on how to recognize and treat PAS, said the Foundation's Executive Director, Pamela Stuart-Mills. Particular emphasis will be placed on developing protocols for treatment, especially reintegration of children with the "hated" parent, an area where little research exists, treatment protocols are at best ineffective, and can even worsen the situation, said Stuart-Mills.

Stuart-Mills is well-known in this field as the founder of PAIN (Parental Alien-

ation Info. Network, 1991). She is joined by Heidi Griffin, J.D., Director of Legal Research; and Ingrid Horton, administrator, as well as volunteers and interns.

A reception was held in late February to introduce the Foundation to individuals and groups interest in the PAS. "There is widespread positive response to this new national organization devoted to scientific research and reintegration of alienated children and families," said Stuart-Mills.

For more information, contact the PAS Research Foundation, at 816 Connecticut Avenue N.W., 9th floor, Washington, D.C. 20006, phone 202/466-7778, fax 202/466-7779, e-mail: [info@npafoundation.org](mailto:info@npafoundation.org).

Parental alienation must be distinguished from parents who are protecting their children from harmful conduct by the other parent.

## Please Help!

An anti-joint custody provision originally appeared in Section 241 of H.R. 3514, the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) II and a 1998 House Joint Resolution (HJR 182), which thanks in part to efforts of CRC members was not adopted. A similar anti shared parenting provision was re-inserted in the 1999 version of the Violence Against Women Act, H.R. 357, introduced by Rep. John Conyers (D-Mich) and supported by 178 co-sponsors. CRC members were urged to write to Congress opposing the “primary caretaker” parent language in Section 241.

So many of you wrote in opposition to that anti-joint resolution, that opponents of shared parenting have now “watered down” the anti-joint custody resolution. We must oppose that resolution, also, but first let us explain that CRC is very concerned about family violence, and the need to prevent it and treat it. Family violence is not acceptable. CRC works with advocates to prevent and reduce family violence. Researchers have found, however, that there is no link between shared parenting and family violence. Quite the reverse. Family violence, as well as other societal problems, including high crime and drug rates, lower academic performance, teenage suicide, promiscuity, and other society problems, are linked to a different kind of family structure—the single parent family.

Many children of single-parent households turn out fine, but statistically, anti-social behaviors have been linked for the past 30 by all researchers to a lack of two parents in a child’s life. As just one example, the 6 year old boy who shot and killed a 6 year old girl in a school in Michigan was growing up a crack house without either his father or his mother.

The watered down version of the anti-joint custody resolution in H.R. 3315 states:

It is the sense of Congress that for the purpose of determining child custody, it is not in the best of children to:

- 1) force parents to share custody over the objection of one or both parents where there is a history of domestic violence; or
- 2) make “friendly parent” provisions a factor when there is abuse of one parent against another or a child.

**Please photocopy or retype this letter  
and send to your House member.  
Get your friends to write, also!**

Date

Your address

Congressman (add name)  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear —

I ask you to please oppose Title VI, Sec. 601 of H.R. 3315 (The Ready Act—reducing the Effects of Abuse and Domestic Violence on Youth). **I am concerned that the language of the resolution might mistakenly convey an impression to federal, state, or local policymakers that domestic violence shares a link in some manner with shared custody.**

This would be a terrible disservice to all children at risk from family violence. There is abundant evidence that the great majority of child victims of physical abuse and neglect live in single parent homes. By contrast, the incidence of child abuse and neglect of children in shared legal and physical custody arrangements is very low. Children raised without their fathers as well as mothers are twice as likely to be victims of abuse and five times as likely to live in poverty compared to children both of whose parents, dads and moms, participate in the parenting process.

The language of the resolution is over-broad.

The use of the terms “history of domestic violence” and “abuse” might be subject to overly-expansive interpretation. States should design their own specific, detailed statutory criteria narrowly tailored to those limited instances in which shared or joint custody would be inappropriate.

For example, although the District of Columbia starts with a presumption for joint custody, there is an exception in those instances where a judicial officer finds by a preponderance of the evidence that an intra-family offense as defined in the D.C. Code has taken place.

Most parents are loving and fit, and thus shared parenting should not be discouraged, even through a well-intended resolution.

Sign your name

### Get a 3.9 percent CRC Credit Card

Get the CRC VISA Credit Card, and obtain a low 3.9 percent introductory rate. The credit card displays the CRC logo, and CRC receives a small contribution every time you use the card. CRC receives more if you break up a large purchase into several small purchases. For an application, contact CRC, or call MBNA at 1-800-523-7666. If you have trouble obtaining approval, contact CRC; we can’t guarantee approval, but we will gladly try.

## Catherine Meyer Receives Award



Meyer

CRC's Honorary President Catherine Meyer has received the Adam Walsh Rainbow Award from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children and the Adam

Walsh Children's Fund.

The Rainbow Award ceremony each year recognizes distinguished leaders whose efforts have made a difference for children.

The rainbow is a symbol of hope, and was a prominent feature of Adam Walsh's last drawing. Adam was 6 years old in 1981 when he was abducted by a stranger outside a shopping center in Hollywood, Florida; his body was found 2 weeks later.

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*Meyer is Honored for  
Her Work on Behalf of  
Missing and Exploited Children*

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The Adam Walsh Children's Fund is part of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

Catherine Meyer was one of eight people, public and private sector leaders, local, national, and international, who were honored at the awards ceremony in Florida on February 25.

Lady Meyer, whose two children are being held in Germany by the children's father, has not been allowed by the father to have contact with the children for the past 5 years. She has publicized the plight of internationally abducted children in Congressional testimony and in appearances around the country.

She authored the book "They Are My Children, Too," and is the wife of the British Ambassador to the U.S.

## Teresa Kaiser New CRC Board Member



Kaiser

CRC is pleased to announce that Teresa L. Kaiser, the head of the Maryland Child Support Office, has been elected as a member of CRC's Board of Directors.

Teresa has long fought for emotional as well as financial support for children. Some of her accomplishments:

- When she was head of the Idaho Child Support Office, and Idaho was considering license revocation, she recommended that Idaho also suspend licenses for interference with access visitation, and the balanced law was passed. (Iowa became the second state to provide for license revocation for access interference). Teresa also headed the Missouri child support office before being tapped for the Maryland director's job.
- She is one of the first state child support directors to implement "forgiveness" for past due child support in exchange for participation in a targeted program, such as employment search program, substance abuse treatment, or other programs to help parents get a job, pay their

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*First Child Support Director  
Elected to CRC Board*

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financial support, and get connected to their children.

This "forgiveness" program was authorized by Federal Child Support Commissioner David Gray Ross;

- She helped lead the way among

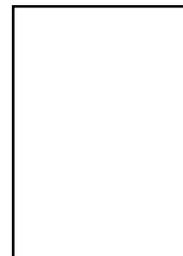
child support directors in recommending that Congress focus on cases with collections, not the previous requirement that the state collect the highest amount possible, even if it meant impoverishment for the payor. Now, if a state can collect current support owed plus \$1, this case satisfies requirements for the states' performance-based incentive payments from the federal government.

Kaiser has spoken at past CRC conferences. Her office sponsored a display from her Child Support Office at CRC's 1999 conference that showed a father and mother both involved in a child's life.'

"The best possible result for children is the involvement of both parents in their lives," she said. "I am honored to be a board member of CRC in order to promote parental involvement in children's lives.

Kaiser, an attorney, is the mother of three daughters, and the sister to five brothers. Her children are Bridget, who is also an attorney, Rosemary, and Micaela.

## Eloise Anderson Newest CRC Advisor



Anderson

California Department of Social Services, who is now Director of the Program for the American Family, Claremont Institute, Sacramento, California, is the newest member of

CRC's Family Advisory Board.

Advisors make recommendations to CRC from time to time on what they think the direction of CRC should be.

When she was Director of Social Services in California, she would often talk to mothers in welfare offices, and if they seemed able-bodied, she would ask

them why they were applying for welfare. Why don't you have a job?, why aren't you working to become self-sufficient? Where is the child's father?

*Favors Self-Sufficient Two-Parent Families*

Eloise's bold, pro 2-family approach drew national attention, including an appearance on CBS's "60 Minutes" where she was shown asking mothers the above questions.

Eloise spoke at a past CRC conference.

She is an advisor to the Bush campaign on family issues. Eloise is the mother of two grown children, a son and a daughter.



**The Year 2000 is CRC's 15th Anniversary**

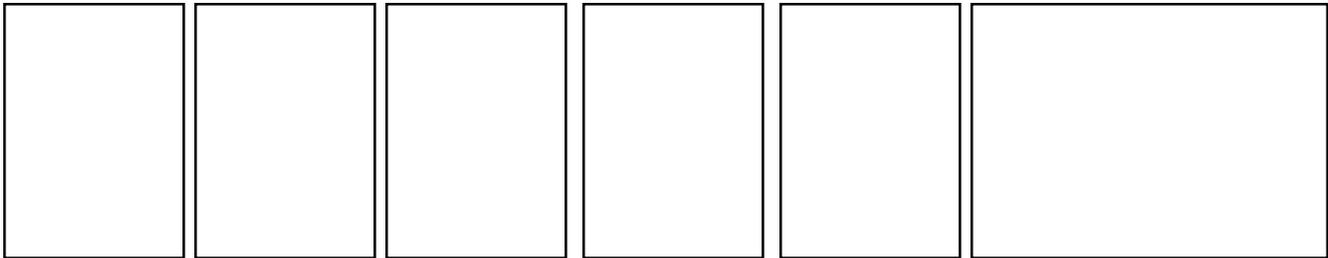
We appreciate everyone who has worked for children and CRC. We thank all those who have enabled CRC to improve the lives of children and families. So many have given so much, of their time, efforts, and financial contributions.

For the year 2000, CRC has three new levels of support of CRC. They are:

- \* A PLATINUM LIFE MEMBER is one who donates \$5,000 or more
- \* A GOLD LIFE MEMBER is one who donates \$2,500 to \$4,999.
- \* A SILVER LIFE MEMBER is one who donates \$1,000 to \$2,499.
- \* A LIFE MEMBER is one who donates CRC \$500 to \$999.

Anyone who has contributed to CRC in the past may increase the donation to reach any of the life member levels. If you are unsure about your previous donation level, contact CRC, and we would be glad to let you know. Thank you.

**Meet the CRC Staff**



*Al*

*Lonnie*

*LaShahn (left) and LaJuan*

*Mattie*

*Julie*

*ChiChi(left) and Caroline*

Alfred L. Ellis is CRC's Director of Child Access Services. He supervises the six child access centers CRC has established in Prince George's, Anne Arundel and Montgomery Counties in Maryland, and Fairfax County, Virginia. Al has 3 children and 3 stepchildren with his wife Mary.

Lonnie Perrin, who has worked for 15 years with young parents in the Washington, D.C. area, is supervising CRC's new website, www.Info4Parents, which is primarily to provide information, resources and referrals for never-married parents; but the site is, of

course, open to anyone for viewing. Lonnie has something in common with CRC Board member Sam Brunelli—he is a former football player for the Denver Broncos. But Lonnie was also a running back for the Chicago Bears and the Washington Redskins. He is married and has 5 children.

LaJuan Ayers has been CRC's book-keeper for almost two years. She has two sons, Antonio and Robert.

LaShahn Ayers, LaJuan's identical twin sister (they even dress alike) is a part-time administrative assistant.

Rev. Mattie Nance is a part-time ad-

ministrative assistant, who runs a small ministry that helps feed the homeless on Capitol Hill, in Washington, D.C.

Julie Maggiasco is a long-time CRC volunteer. She works from her home.

Lenora Williams is a volunteer in the CRC office two days a week; Kamilah, the daughter of Lenora and her late husband, is in her second year of law school.

Caroline Cohen, ChiChi Nwoko, and Tiffany Adkins are Spring, 2000 college student interns.

**Children's Rights Council**  
**2000 CATALOG OF RESOURCES**  
**for parents and professionals**

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**BOOKS FOR KIDS**

**NEW!**

**A Heart Full of Love**, written by Bette S. Margolis, illustrated by Christie L. Kline. A wonderful book for that special 7- to 9-year-old in your life who is undergoing parental divorce.

**SB-101 ----- \$15.00**

**I Love You More Than...**, by Elizabeth Hickey and James Cohen. Illustrated by Lynda Smart Brown, 1998.

**HB-102 ----- \$16.95**

**Daddy Day, Daughter Day**, by CNN's Larry King and Chaia King, 1997. A true story of divorce told through both a child's and a father's perspective.

**SB-103 ----- \$12.95**

**How to Survive Your Parent's Divorce: Kids Advice to Kids**, by Gayle Kimball, 1994. Easy-to-read one-of-a-kind guide for young people and their parents as they reshape their lives post-divorce.

**SB-104 ----- Reg. \$9.95 \*Discount Price \$4.00**

**I Think Divorce Stinks**, by Marcia Lebowitz, 1992. Helps children recognize that it is appropriate to have negative feelings about divorce and to express those feelings.

**SB-105 ----- \$4.95**

**What am I Doing in a Stepfamily?**, by Claire Berman, 1994. A children's book explaining how two families can be better than one.

**SB-106 ----- \$12.00**



**It's Not Your Fault, Koko Bear**, by Vicki Lansky, 1998. Koko Bear can help children understand divorce and sends a good message.

**SB-107 ----- \$5.99**

**The Divorce Workbook**, by Sally Ives, David Fassler & Michelle Lasch, 1985 How to facilitate honest and open communication between adults and children at the traumatic time of separation and divorce. Q and A for kids.

**SB-108 ----- \$15.95**

**My Book, My Self for Boys**, by Linda Madaras and Area Madaras, 1995. The "What's Happening to My Body for Boys."

**SB-109 ----- Reg. \$11.95 \*Discount Price \$6.00**

**BOOKS FOR PARENTS**

**50/50 Parenting**, by Gayle Kimball, Ph.D. Almost 300 co-parents and 83 children report on life in Married, Divorced, and Step-family situations.

**SB-201 ----- \$9.95**

**Divorce Book for Parents**, by Vicki Lansky, 1987. Warmly supportive and reassuring, this comprehensive guide speaks to all divorced and divorcing parents.

**HB-203 ----- \$6.00**

**The Divorce Help Source Book**, by Margorie Engel, 1994. Combines sound advice with hundreds of potential sources of help to assist you in getting the results you deserve.

**SB-204 ----- Reg. \$17.95 \*Discount Price \$7.00**

**Divorced Dads, Shattering the Myths**, by Sanford L. Braver, Ph.D., 1998. The surprising truth about fathers, children and divorce.

**HB-205 ----- \$24.95**

**For the Sake of the Children**, by Kris Kline and Stephen Pew, 1992. Discusses how to share your children with your ex-spouse despite your anger. Kline is CRC's Florida coordinator. **PHOTOCOPIES ONLY!**

**HB-206 ----- Reg. \$18.95 \*Discount Price \$9.00**

**Divorce: Crisis, Challenge, or Relief?**, by David A. Chiriboga and Linda S. Catron, 1991. Addresses the impact of divorce on children through different stages of their lives.

**SB-207 ----- Reg. \$22.50 \*Discount Price \$5.00**

**Why Parents Disagree: How Women and Men Parent Differently and How We Can Work Together**, by Dr. Ron Taffel, 1994. An explanation of why parents begin to lead different lives and how parents can raise kids as partners, not enemies.

**SB-208 ----- \$23.00**

**The Good Divorce**, by Constance R. Ahrons, Ph.D., 1994. An outstanding book with a powerful message: while divorce is not 'good,' there is a path to a 'good divorce' where parents cooperate fully for the sake of their children.

**HB-209 ----- \$23.00**

**A Hole in My Heart**, by Claire Berman, 1991. A book that will enable adult children of divorce to recognize the role they play in changing patterns in their lives.  
SB-210 ----- Reg. \$10.00 \*Discount Price \$5.00

**Families Apart**, by Melinda Blau, 1993. 10 Keys to Successful Co-Parenting. A blend of the author's own research, and that of other experts, and rich in anecdotal information.  
SB-211 ----- Reg. \$22.95 \*Discount Price \$10.00

**REVISED!**

**Mom's House, Dad's House**, by Isolina Ricci, Ph.D., 1998. Making shared custody work: How parents can make two homes for their children after divorce. 100 New pages to this classic book!  
SB-212 ----- \$20.00

**Negotiating Love: How Women and Men Can Resolve Their Differences**, by Riki Robbins Jones, 1995. Points out destructive habits by both genders which, when realized, strengthen families and relationships.  
SB-213 ----- \$14.00

**The Complete Idiot's Guide to Surviving Divorce**, by Paula Weintraub and Terry Hillman, 1996.  
SB-214 ----- Reg. \$16.95 \*Discount Price \$7.00

**Putting Kids First**, by Michael Oddenino. A must read for caring parents and professionals, by CRC's General Counsel. Includes a children's bill of rights.  
SB-215 ----- \$9.95

**Second Chances**, by Judith Wallerstein and Sandra Blakeslee, 1989.

Based on ten year longitudinal study of the effects of divorce on adults and children.  
HB-216 ----- Reg. \$14.95 \*Discount Price \$5.00

**Surviving the Break-Up, How Children and Parents Cope with Divorce**, by Judith Wallerstein, Ph.D. and Joan Kelly, Ph.D., 1980. A classic that is still valid in discussing the problems of children being raised by single parents.  
SB-217 ----- Reg. \$14.00 \*Discount Price \$10.00

**REVISED!**

**Creating a Successful Parenting Plan**, by Dr. A. Jayne Major. Nationally acclaimed author of "Breakthrough Parenting" and "Winning the Custody War Without Casualties"  
SB-218 ----- \$24.95

**3 Steps to a Strong Family**, by Linda and Richard Eyre, 1994. A 3-step program that can make your family life happier, less stressful, and more rewarding.  
HB-219 ----- \$19.50

**Familyhood: Nurturing the Values that Matter**, by Dr. Lee Salk, 1992. A practical, inspiring guide to communicating values.  
HB-220 ----- Reg. \$21.00 \*Discount Price \$10.00

**The Best Parent is Both Parents: A Guide to Shared Parenting in the 21st Century**, the CRC book edited by David L. Levy. Order bulk copies (10 or more) for only \$4 a copy, resell the copies for the list price of \$10 each, and make a profit for you or your organization! Individual copies will continue to be available from CRC for \$10 each, plus \$4 for postage, as long as supplies last. If you would like copies (individual or bulk order) autographed by David L. Levy, just state to whom you would like it autographed (yourself, perhaps your children—give their names).  
SB-221 ----- Order 10 copies or more each only \$4.00  
----- Individual copies \$10.00

**Helping Your Kids Cope With Divorce**, by M. Gary Neuman, L.M.H.C. 1996. This book is based on the nationally renowned "Sandcastles" workshop.  
HB-222 ----- \$25.00

**The Sibling Society**, by Robert Bly, 1996, author of "Iron John." Describes our culture as one where adults remain children, and children have no desire to become adults—a nation of squabbling siblings.  
HB-223 ----- Reg. \$25.00 \*Discount Price \$12.00

**NEW!**

**Ceasefire**, by Cathy Young, 1999, syndicated columnist. Why women and men must join forces to achieve true equality; how that will help children, too.  
HB-224 ----- \$25.00

**Saying No Is Not Enough**, by Richard Schwebel, Ph.D., 1989. Raising children who make wise decisions about drugs and alcohol.

hol.  
SB-225 ----- \$11.00

**Abolition of Marriage**, by Maggie Gallagher, 1996, syndicated columnist. How we destroy lasting love.  
HB-226 ----- \$25.00

**Friends for Life**, by Susan Jonas and Marilyn Nissenson, 1997. Enriching the bond between mothers and their adult daughters.  
HB-227 ----- \$29.00

**Talking Back to Ritalin**, by Peter R. Breggin, M.D., 1998, 4-time guest on Oprah. What doctors aren't telling you about the dangers of stimulants.  
HB-228 ----- \$25.00

## BOOKS FOR STEPPARENTS

**How to Win as a Stepfamily**, by Emily Visher, Ph.D. and John Visher, M.D., 1982. The co-founders of the Stepfamily Association of America answer questions and give suggestions on how to make stepfamilies work.  
HB-301 ----- \$13.95

**Making it as a Stepparent, New Roles/ New Rules**, by Claire Berman, 1986. Former president of the Stepfamily Association of America provides practical help and insights.  
SB-302 ----- \$7.95

**Stepfamilies Stepping Ahead**, edited by Mala Burt for the Stepfamily Association of America.  
SB-303 ----- \$9.95

## BOOKS FOR GRANDPARENTS

**Grandparenting in a Changing World**, by Edna LeShan, 1997. "Common sense presented with uncommon grace." —Kirkus Reviews.  
SB-401 ----- Reg. \$12.00 \*Discount Price \$6.00

## BOOKS FOR SINGLE PARENTS

**Still a Dad, The Divorced Father's Journey**, by CRC's own Serge Prengel, 1998. Published with praise from Warren Farrell, Karen DeCrow, and James A. Cook.  
SB-2501 ----- \$13.95

**Surviving Divorce—Women's Resources After Separation**, by Mavis Maclean, 1991. Women coping with earnings, maintenance and welfare in the U.S., France, and Great Britain.  
HB-502 ----- \$5.00

**Another Way Home: A Single Father's Story**, by John Thorndike, 1996. A memoir of Thorndike's life with his wife and the difficult decisions he has had to make regarding their son's life.  
HB-503 ----- Reg. \$24.00 \*Discount Price \$12.00

**Fatherless America**, by David Blankenhorn, 1995. Shows the devastating consequences of fatherlessness in both individual families and in our society.  
HB-504 ----- Reg. \$23.00 \*Discount Price \$10.00

**The Masculine Mystique: The Politics of Masculinity**, by Andrew Kimbrell, 1995. Presents the argument that American men are in crisis and includes what lead to this phenomenon.  
HB-505 ----- Reg. \$23.00 \*Discount Price \$10.00

**The Daddy Track and the Single Father**, by Geoffery L. Greif, 1990. A book about successfully coping with kids, housework, a job, an ex-wife, a social life, and the courts.  
HB-506 ----- \$19.95

**Money-Smart Divorce. What Women Need to Know about Money and Divorce**, by Esther M. Berger, 1996.  
SB-507 ----- \$22.00

**Why Men Are the Way They Are**, by Warren Farrell, 1986. Provides insights into loved one's secret insights and desires.  
SB-509 ----- Reg. \$5.99 \*Discount Price \$3.00



**Fathers' Rights**, by Jeffrey Leving. A best-selling book for fathers who want to maintain contact with their children.  
SB-510 ----- \$12.50

**The Divorced Parent: Success Strategies for Raising Your Children After Separation**, by Stephanie Marston, 1994. Provides practical advice and specific tools for raising well-adjusted children.  
HB-511 ----- \$21.00

**Father's Day**, by Bill McCoy, 1995. Witty and wise notes from a new dad in the real world.  
HB-512 ----- Reg. \$22.00 \*Discount Price \$11.00

**Like Father, Like Son**, by Hunter S. Fulghum, 1996. A collection of stories on being a man at midlife in America, with introduction by Robert Fulghum.  
HB-513 ----- Reg. \$21.95 \*Discount Price \$11.00



**Child Custody Made Simple**, by Webster Watnik, 1997. Answers all your questions about child custody and child support for a single parent.  
SB-514 ----- \$21.95

**The Single Parent's Money Guide**, by Emily Card, 1996. A plan for managing your money when you are the only one your family can count on.  
SB-515 ----- Reg. \$14.95 \*Discount Price \$6.00

**Questions from Dad**, by CRC Spokesperson and pop singer Dwight Twilley, 1994. A very cool way to communicate with your child. Introduced by Dr. Susan Forward.  
SB-516 ----- \$17.00

**I Am the Mother of Sons**. Poems by Jayne Jaudon Ferrer, 1996. Illustrated by Lina Levy.  
HB-517 ----- \$10.00

**Men on Divorce—The Other Side of the Story**, edited by Penny Kaganoff and Susan Spano, 1997.  
SB-518 ----- Reg. \$12.00 \*Discount Price \$6.00

**One Swell Dad**, by Pat Ross, 1992. The book of memories and expressions of fatherly endearment from the past.  
HB-519 ----- \$9.00

## MEDIATION & CONFLICT RESOLUTION

**Family Evaluations in Child Custody, Mediation, Arbitration and Litigation**, by Richard Gardner, M.D., 1989. In this update, Gardner proposes a three-phase system to remove child custody evaluations from courtroom litigation.

HB-601 ----- \$45.00

### Healing Hearts, Helping Children and Adults

**Recover from Divorce**, by Elizabeth Hickey, M.S.W., CRC's National Parent Education Director, and Elizabeth Dalton, attorney and mediator

HB-602 ----- \$15.00

**Parent Vs. Parent: How You and Your Child Can Survive the Custody Battle**, by Stephen P. Herman, M.D., 1990. Expert advice for parents through all stages of the divorce process.

HB-603 ----- \$20.95

**Between Love and Hate, A Guide to Civilized Divorce**, by Lois Gold, M.S.W., 1992. Learn the fundamental skills of negotiation conflict resolution and mediation, for everyone's good.

SB-604 ----- Reg. \$13.95 \*Discount Price \$6.00

## LEGAL ISSUES

### NEW!

**From Courtship to Courtroom: What Divorce Law Is Doing to Marriage**, by Jed H. Abraham, 2000. Abraham, a lawyer, mediator, and joint custody advocate, writes a chilling picture of how today's divorce laws make life miserable for families.

SB-701 ----- \$15.00

**A Family Divided**, by Robert Mendelson, 1997. A discussion of a divorced father's struggle with the child custody industry.

HB-703 ----- Reg. \$21.00

\*Discount Price \$10.00

**The Custody Revolution**, by Richard Warshak, 1992. The Father Factor and the Motherhood Mystique.

HB-604 ----- Reg. \$21.00 \*Discount Price \$15.00

**Custody for Fathers**, by Carleen and Michael Brennan, 1994. Includes more than 100 strategies that have helped fathers win (share) custody of their children in a mom-biased system.

HB-705 ----- Reg. \$24.95 \*Discount Price \$12.00

**Divorce and the Myth of Lawyers**, by Lenard Marlow, J.D., 1992. The exposition of myths regarding the legal system and its effects on divorcing couples.

HB-706 ----- \$10.95

**The Father's Emergency Guide to Divorce/Custody Battle**, A Tour Through the Predatory World of Judges, Lawyers, Psychologists and Social Workers in the Subculture of Divorce, by Robert Seidenberg, with the legal insights of Williams Dawes, Esq., 1997.

SB-707 ----- \$15.00

**Every Parent's Guide to the Law**, by Deborah L. Forman. Everything you need to know about legal issues affecting parents and children pre-birth through the child-rearing years.

SB-708 ----- \$18.00

## PARENTAL KIDNAPPING

### NEW! Autographed Copies!

**They Are My Children, Too**, by Catherine Meyer, 1999. Powerful account of a mother's loss of her children. A case of international parental kidnapping. Written by CRC's new Honorary President.

HB-801 ----- \$23.00

**When Parents Kidnap**, by Geoffrey Greif and Rebecca Hegar, 1993. This book captures the experiences of parents searching for their children and abductors who have taken them; also makes public policy recommendations.

HB-902 ----- \$22.95

## CHILD ABUSE

**Ashes to Ashes...Families to Dust**, by Dean Tong, 1996. False accusations of child abuse: A road map for survivors that helps to answer their questions.

SB-901 ----- \$15.95

**The Parental Alienation Syndrome**, A guide for mental health and legal professionals, by Richard Gardner, M.D., 1995. An authoritative work on the Parental Alienation Syndrome.

SB-903 ----- \$35.00

### Children Held Hostage, Dealing with Programmed and Brainwashed Children

, by Stanley S. Clawar, Ph.D., C.C.S. and Brynne Rivlin, M.S.S., 1991. This book is approved by the American Bar Association.

SB-904 ----- \$50.00

**Recognizing Child Abuse**, by Douglas Besharov, Ph.D., a resident scholar of the American Enterprise Institute. A comprehensive guide to recognizing, preventing, and handling child abuse and neglect.

SB-905 ----- \$12.00

**The Book of David, How Preserving Families Can Cost Children's Lives**, by Richard Gelles, 1996. A convincing and dramatic book about the flaws of the child welfare system.

HB-906 ----- \$23.00

**The Abuse Excuse—And Other Cop-Outs**, by noted lawyer Alan Dershowitz, 1994. Sob stories and evasions of responsibility.

HB-908 ----- Reg. \$23.00 \*Discount Price \$10.00

**VIDEOS**

**Children: The Experts on Divorce**, by Elizabeth Hickey, MSW 1994. The children speak from their own experience of going through their parents' divorce. A CRC-award winning video prepared by CRC's National Parent Education Director.

V101 ----- \$25.00

**Don't Forget The Children**, by the Dallas, Texas Association of Young Lawyers. A CRC award-winning video that provides information on co-parenting in the event of divorce.

V102 ----- \$20.00

**Psychotherapeutic & Legal Approaches To Parental Alienation Syndrome (PAS)**, by Richard A. Gardner, M.D. An in-depth discussion of ways that parents can alienate the child against the other parent.

V103 ----- \$25.00

**REPORTS**

**UPDATED 1997**, Interference with Access (Visitation) as a Tort. Not a frequent remedy, but one that may be available.

R101 ----- \$10.00

Send for a list of other reports.

**PINS AND BUTTONS**

The famous "Children First" pin. 8 colors, with figures of seven children standing on a field of green with logo "Children First." Two

prongs. 3/4" high, 1-1/2" wide.

P101 ----- \$8.00

Button created by Patti Diroff that says "Child support is more than a check, it's being a parent." With CRC logo, including children's faces. 4 colors, round, 2-1/4" diameter.

B202 ----- \$2.00

**T-SHIRTS**

CRC 4-color t-shirts say "Help Stop Crime, Give Children 2 Parents" Specify size: child S, M, L; Adult S, M, L, XL. Specify color: white or blue.

----- \$10 adults, \$8 children

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## Some Major CRC Accomplishments

**CRC was founded in 1985. This is CRC's 15th year (2000), so perhaps it is time to reflect on CRC's accomplishments—none of which would be possible without our members and supporters, and a little help from the Almighty.**

**1985.** Under our original name, National Council for Children's Rights, formed a nationally prominent Advisory Panel, including "Dear Abby," U.S. Senators and Representatives, representatives of Mothers Without Custody, Stepfamily and Grandparents groups, researchers and writers on family issues.

**1985.** Sought Congressional authorization for the establishment of access (visitation) staff throughout the country to informally help children gain access to their non-custodial parents.

**1986.** First of 12 CRC national conferences, which bring together researchers and writers, CRC members, and policymakers from the U.S. and abroad.

**1986.** CRC testified orally for the first of 20 times before Congressional committees. Submitted the first of 40 written statements for the record in other Congressional hearings in favor of access (visitation) policies and programs, joint custody (shared parenting), welfare reform that would encourage 2-parent families, mediation, and implementation of the Hague Convention Against International Parental Kidnapping.

**1987.** CRC held a rally in front of the Capital, the first of various rallies, Candlelight Vigils, award breakfasts, and awards for "Best in Media," "Healer Awards" and "Parenting Awards" given over the years.

**1988.** Filed the first of 20 amicus curiae (friend of the court briefs) in support of a child's right to two parents. The first brief, filed before the U.S. Supreme Court, asked the court to uphold—which it did, by a narrow 5-4 majority, the right of an unwed biological father of a child to a hearing to determine if he should have visitation rights.

**1988.** After 3 years of advocacy by CRC on Capitol Hill, Congress provided in the Family Support Act of 1988 for access (visitation) demonstration grants in 6 states—Indiana, Florida, Idaho, Iowa, Massachusetts, Arizona. Mediation, counseling, and telephone monitoring were tried.

**1989.** Published the first of more than 75 evaluations of research reports over the years. The first report showed that fathers were paying up to 35% more in child support than federal figures had previously reported.

**1990.** Welcomed the first of 38 chapters in 32 states, Washington, D.C. and Japan.

**1991.** Published first annual edition of Parenting Directory, listing more than 1,000 groups across the country that can help parents.

**1993.** Changed our name to "Children's Rights Council" to put children first. Published CRC book "The Best Parent is Both Parents" (Hampton Roads Publishing Co.)

**1994.** The federal government published the CRC Model Child Support Guideline authored by CRC member Don Bieniewicz in its publication called "Child Support Guidelines: The Next Generation."

**1995.** Published first annual "Top 10 States to Raise a Child" report, which has received increasing national media attention over the years.

**1995.** Helped with Congressional establishment of National Commission on Child and Family Welfare, which after deliberations, recommended more mediation, unified courts, parenting plans.

**1996.** Results of 1988 access demonstration grants were so positive that Congress, in the 1996 Welfare Reform Act, provided \$10 million a year in access grants for all 50 states and territories to share in.

**1996.** Helped obtain passage of presumption for joint legal and physical custody in the Nation's Capital, as chapters made strides in changing laws and attitudes in their respective states.

**1997.** CRC and its chapters started receiving access grants, which total \$355,000 in four states (Illinois, Nebraska, New York, Maryland) and Washington, D.C. providing mediation, parenting education, parenting plans, neutral drop-off and pick-up of children, supervised access, hotlines. Some parents are seeing their children for the first time in these programs.

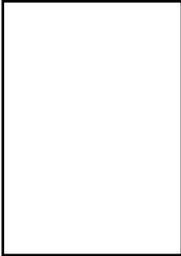
**1998.** Located data from the Census Bureau and National Center for Health Statistics that the states with the highest amount of physical joint custody in 1989 and 1990 had subsequently the greatest decline in the divorce rate. The reason seems to be that when parents know they will have to interact with the other parent, there is less incentive to divorce.

**1999.** Led successful effort for a second year in a row to defeat an anti-joint custody (shared parenting) resolution in the House.

**1999.** Assisted in advocating for passage of the "Fathers Count" bill in the House.

## Chapter News

### Ohio Opens Child Exchange Center in Toledo



Wuwert

"The Gift Exchange" is the name of the brand-new child transfer center recently opened by CRC of Ohio.

The center, located at St. James Lutheran Church in Toledo, will provide for neutral drop-off and pick-up of children every Friday and Sunday evening, and possibly Wednesday night.

Judges and mediators in Toledo have agreed to refer parents to use the site, said Margaret Wuwert, CRC Ohio coordinator, whose chapter worked for a long time to convince local officials that an exchange site would be helpful to children and families.

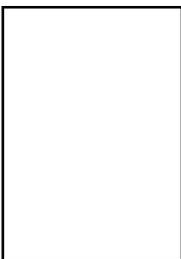
Parent A will bring his or her child to the Sunday school child-friendly room in the church at, say, 7 p.m. on Friday, and wait until Parent B picks up the child 15 minutes later. On Sunday, the situation will be reversed, with Parent B returning the child about 7 p.m., and waiting until Parent A comes to pick up the child. "In some situations, the CRC monitors at the site will have one parent leave before the other arrives," said Wuwert, "but monitors will be there at all times."

The monitors will file reports with the Court on which parents and children use the center.

"I am ecstatic that we finally got this center opened," said Wuwert, who spent months working with judges, mediators, and local officials in Toledo in the northwest section of Ohio discussing the proposed center. "Keeping children from being held hostage in the divorce situation is the true mission of CRC," she said. "We are getting great media coverage for the center, so people will know it exists."

**Note: Open a child access exchange center in your state. Call CRC for information.**

### CRC Holds Children of Divorce Rally at Connecticut State Capitol



Roseman

CRC of Connecticut held a rally in December at the state capitol in Hartford to inform people about the needs of children who are in the middle of divorce and separation.

Mark Roseman, coordinator of CRC of Connecticut led the rally, which was publicized in several newspapers.

Mark has been appointed as a member of the state Fatherhood Initiative, which will examine problems and offer solutions to improve fatherhood in Connecticut. "We want both moms and dads involved in children's lives," said Roseman.

Roseman has obtained 2,500 copies of recent CRC "Speak Out for Children" newsletters from the national CRC office to distribute to legislators, libraries, bookstores, and schools. He has appended one sheet telling about Connecticut CRC to all the copies of the national newsletter, so that people in Connecticut can get Connecticut family-oriented news, also.

### A Way to Adjust the Guideline

Ask a state agency working on child support guidelines in your state to invite Don Bieniewicz, CRC's expert on guidelines, to testify.

Asking Bieniewicz to testify could help convince your state to adopt portions of the only guideline we know of that is based on a child having two parents.

This CRC guideline, authored by Bieniewicz, was published by the federal government in a publication entitled "Child Support Guidelines: The Next Generation."

To obtain a copy of the federal publication, phone (202) 401-9383, which is the Office of Child Support Enforcement's Child Support Reference Center, located at 370 L'Enfant Promenade SW, Washington, D.C. 20447. There is no charge for the publication, as long as supplies last.

Copies of the guideline itself as published by the government are available from CRC for \$5.00 for CRC members, and \$10.00 for non-members, including shipping and handling.

Write to Bieniewicz at 10004 Fair Oaks Road, Vienna, VA 22181, contact him via email at DonBien@erols.com, or phone 703-255-0837 (evenings).



### Intellectual Property Protection

Charlie Ruggiero, who obtained trademark protection for the name and logo "Children's Rights Council" and the name and logo for our newsletter "Speak Out for Children" is a specialist in trademark, patent, copyright, and licensing law. He is a partner in the law firm of Ohlandt, Greeley, Ruggiero and Perle, 1 Landmark Square, Suite 903, Stamford, CT 06901, telephone (203) 327-6067.

## Amicus Briefs May be Available

CRC member Jeffrey Beal won a reversal on appeal on a child support order imposed by a New York Court. Beal's ex-wife has denied him access to his children for the past 9 years, yet a lower court refused Beal's request for a downward modification of his financial child support order. The appeals court granted the downward modification.

See *Beal vs. Beal*, Appellate Division, 2nd Department, Brooklyn, New York, decision published in the *New York Law Journal* on March 10, 2000. Beal's lawyer is Lewis Edelstein, 526-228-3355.

CRC filed a Friend of the Court brief in the case, but it was not a part of the outcome.

If your case is on appeal, and you would like CRC to consider writing an amicus brief, contact CRC. CRC cannot handle cases at the trial level, and we do not write the main appeal brief. An amicus brief is a supplemental brief, telling the court why this case is of significance not only to the parties in the case, but to other children and families as well. We generally need 30 to 60 days before the filing deadline.



## Mediation, Moveaway Help

Leslee Newman, J.D., who has been giving free consultations on move-away issues to CRC members, is available for mediation consultations (at a fee). Leslee, who is a trained mediator, can be reached at 714-282-1515. Her husband Don Smith, Ph.D., clinical psychologist, is available for child custody evaluations. Don's number is 714-939-6678.

Don and Leslee are both in Orange County, California, but can handle cases anywhere in the country.

## Upcoming Events

### National Child Support Enforcement Association (NCSEA)

NCSEA will hold its 49th annual conference July 30-August 3 at the Town and Country Resort and Convention Center, San Diego, CA. Early bird registration is \$395; one-day registration is \$175. NCSEA has been reaching out to non-custodial parents in recent years by including parenting topics at its annual conferences. To register for the conference, phone 202-624-8180; for hotel reservations, \$105 and up, call the hotel at 1-800-772-8527.

### Academy of Family Mediators (AFM)

AFM will hold its 17th annual conference July 11-15, at the Hilton Salt Lake City Hotel. The theme is "Values in Mediation." AFM is giving its "Peace Award" to Neve Shalom, the group working for peace in the Middle East. Keynote speaker is John Paul Lederach, author and mediator. Conference registration is \$365 and up; to register, phone 781-674-2663. For hotel reservations, \$110 a night, phone 1-800-HILTONS.

### National Center for Strategic Non-Profit Planning and Community Leadership (NPCL)

NPCL will hold its 2nd international Fatherhood conference May 29-31, at the New York Marriott Hotel Marquis, 1535 Broadway. Speakers will include an international panel of health and human services experts. Fee is \$300, phone 1-888-528-6725 for registrations. For information on conference scholarships, phone Charlene Meeks at the same number. Hotel reservations are \$169 per night, call hotel at 1-800-843-4898, and mention the International Fatherhood Conference.

### National Fatherhood Initiative (NFI)

NFI will hold its 3rd national Summit on fatherhood June 2-3 at the Hyatt Regency on Capitol Hill, Washington, D.C. Registration is \$195 for all events, including dinner June 2. \$125 for dinner only. Speakers include Robert Porcher, line defensive end, Detroit Lions; Tim McGraw, country music superstar; Kirk Cameron, TV and film actor; Ron Haskins, House Ways and Means Committee; Sara McClanahan, researcher; Ken Canfield, National Center for Fathering, and CRC spokespersons. For reservations, call NFI at 301-948-0599, for hotel reservations phone 202/737-1234, \$175 and mention NFI conference.



## Order CRC Book and Make Money!

Order bulk copies (10 or more) of the still popular 1993 publication, *The Best Parent is Both Parents*, for only \$4 a copy. Resell the copies for the list price of \$10 each, and make a profit for you or your organization! Individual copies are \$10.

### **Abduction and Shared Custody**

A parent with joint custody is not necessarily immune from criminal prosecution for abducting his or her child from the other parent, the Connecticut Supreme Court ruled on Dec. 21, 1999. In reaching the decision, the Supreme Court set aside its 1993 ruling in a civil custodial interference/abduction case that unlawful custody by one parent could not be found where parents shared custody. The 1999 case involved a man who was charged with conspiracy and custodial interference, in connection with his role in aiding his nephew in interfering with the custodial rights of the nephew's ex-wife. The mother had limited, supervised visitation with the child, and the uncle helped his nephew to flee with the child to Turkey. The Supreme Court over-ruled a lower court decision that the uncle was not liable because the mother was not the sole custodian at the time of the alleged interference with visitation.

[State v. Vahilzaden, Conn., 251 Conn. 656, 12/21/99]

### **Relocation Law's Application to Pre-Existing Agreement**

The Tennessee Court of Appeals held on Oct. 28, 1999, that a Tennessee state law governing parental relocation passes constitutional muster when applied to a pre-existing agreement. The Appeals Court was considering a case where the mother petitioned the trial court to be permitted to relocate with the child to Florida, where her new husband owned a business. The parties were divorced in 1996, and the marriage dissolution agreement stated that the mother "shall not remove child's residence from jurisdiction of Court without court approval." The trial court held that this agreement meant that a subsequent law on parental relocation did not apply, since application of the subsequent law would violate the prohibition against retrospective laws. However, the Appeals Court rejected the trial court's view, hold-

ing that the parental relocation law was remedial in nature and did not impair any vested right. The parental relocation law provides that, when parents spend substantially equal time with their child, and one parent wants to relocate with the child, a trial court must determine whether relocation is in the child's best interest. Where parents do not spend substantially equal time with the child, the law says, the court must permit relocation unless the parent does not have a reasonable purpose for moving, the child's interests would be harmed, or the relocating parent has a vindictive motive. The Appeals Court therefore concluded that the mother should be able to relocate with the child.

[Caudill (Foley) v. Foley, Tenn. Ct.App., No. 01A01-9903-CH-00187, 10/28/99]

### **Joint Custody for Father and Stepfather**

A trial court correctly decided that a stepfather should have joint custody of a 12 year-old boy, along with the boy's natural father, despite the objections of the mother, the Virginia Court of Appeals held Oct. 5, 1999. The stepfather received physical custody of the boy. The Appeals Court said exceptional circumstances justified awarding custody to the stepfather, because the boy had been in the stepfather's custody for over seven years, was well-adjusted, and wanted to remain with the stepfather.

[Brown v. Burch, Va. Ct. App., No. 1937-98-2, 10/5/99]

### **Immunity for Clinical Social Worker**

A clinical social worker is entitled to immunity in a parent's suit alleging negligent performance of a custody evaluation, the Kentucky Court of Appeals ruled Feb. 4. The case involved divorced parents who had joint custody of their children. Two years after the custody award, the mother sought sole custody, and asked a licensed clinical social worker to perform a custody evaluation. The father agreed to the selection of the

social worker, but the social worker said she would not perform the evaluation unless she was appointed by the court to do so. After court appointment, the social worker carried out the evaluation, and recommended that the father be given sole custody. The trial court awarded custody to the father and ordered the mother to pay child support. The mother then filed a malpractice action against the social worker. The trial court rejected the social worker's claim of immunity, saying that Kentucky case law did not address the issue of immunity for court-appointed social workers who provided custody evaluations. The Appeals Court, however, cited a 1995 case where immunity had been granted, and said that the social worker, who was "an integral part of the judicial process," was entitled to immunity.

[Stone v. Glass, Ky. Ct. App., Nos. 1998-CA-001973 & 1998-CA-002062, 2/4/00]

### **Stepfather Preferred to Father After Mother's Death**

The Pennsylvania Supreme Court decided Jan. 19 that a stepfather should have custody of a boy, following his mother's death. The Supreme Court said it made its decision on the basis that the best interest of a child could justify a non-parent getting custody, even though the biological parent had not been shown to be unfit. After the death of the mother, the father, who lived in New Jersey, sought custody of his son, then eight years old. However, the trial court found that the boy's life centered on his home with the stepfather, who had married the mother when the boy was one. The Appeals Court endorsed this view, saying that, although several jurisdictions had adopted a standard generally strongly favoring the natural parent over a third party, it had explicitly declined to do so. One justice dissented, expressing the view that natural parents had a constitutionally protected right to custody of their children, whenever there was no evidence that they were unfit.

[Charles v. Stehlik, Pa. No. J-118-1999, 1/19/00]

## Choice of Counselor in Parental Alienation

A judge attempting to resolve a long-running custody/visitation battle properly ordered the custodial mother to undergo counseling, but erred in requiring her to accept a therapist her ex-husband chose, the North Dakota Supreme Court held Jan. 3. The court said the judge correctly ruled that the mother's behavior in alienating the children from the father merited counseling. However, the Supreme Court said, father should not have been allowed to pick the counselor, despite the judge's concern that the mother would choose a counselor who would not help to end the alienation behavior. The court directed the judge to obtain a list of qualified counselors from both parties, and then make the choice from among those named.

[Hendrickson v. Hendrickson, N.D., No. 990123, 1/3/00]

## Divorced Parents' Liability for Child's Vandalism

A state law permitting school districts to recover damages from the parents of children who destroy school property applies only to the parent with whom the child is living at the time of the offense,

Florida's Third District Court of Appeal held Dec. 22, 1999. The Court of Appeal said that the law, drafted in 1956, "has not kept up with the changed reality of dissolution and child custody circumstances." However, the court said, the statute's intention was clear, and was directed at the parent with whom the child was living. The parent with primarily residential custody over the child had the immediate opportunity to exert parental control and discipline over the resident child, the Court of Appeal said. One judge dissented, saying that the court's ruling would "emasculate" the concept of shared parental responsibility.

[Canida v. Canida, Fla. Dist. Ct. App., Nos. 99-300 & 99-188, 12/22/99]

*The above cases are summarized from Family Law Reporter, published by The Bureau of National Affairs, Inc. They appear here by permission of the publisher.*

## Report Denial or Interference with Access (Visitation)

If you are a parent who has experienced repeated interference or denial of access/visitation/parenting time with your child, please provide basic information to CRC, such as relevant state statutes, published court decisions you relied on, and remedies the court may have implemented. If your case was interstate, include information on whether the full faith and credit provisions of the Visitation Order Enforcement Act of 1998, Title 28 U.S. Code, Section 1738A, was addressed in your case, or if a registered order from another state was complied with or ignored. We are gathering this information to evaluate possible legislative proposals and give advice to parents handling similar situations. Replies requested by June 30, 2000. Send information (no more than 2 pages, please) to P.O. Box 2265, Reston, VA 20195.

## CRC Wants Chapters in Every State

**CRC WANTS CHAPTERS IN EVERY STATE! GO CRC!!**

For development of chapters in states that do not yet have any CRC chapters:

Re: states out west, contact CRC Board Member from the chapters Terry Cady in Illinois.

Re: states in the south, contact Board Advisor from the chapters Fred Wall in North Carolina.

Re: states in the east, contact Board Advisor from the chapters Margaret Wuwert in Ohio.

See their names and numbers on page 30.

For states in the east, you may also contact Ron Pilcher, 513/755-2932.

Join CRC, then ask for a copy of the 100-page CRC booklet that explains everything you need to know about affiliation. The cost of the booklet is \$15.00.

## Patronize Our Advertisers

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**For information contact the CRC office or:**

Andrew Ross  
301/320-5960

Lawrence Peckmazian  
703/920-1451

# Congressional Update

**Here are some important bills and resolutions in Congress affecting families. Write to your House member or Senator to let them know what you think of a particular bill. They do not get enough mail on issues of concern to CRC members. So contact them! Let them know what sort of legislation you would like to see passed!**

Write

Senator (name)  
Washington, D.C. 20510

or

Representative (name)  
Washington, D.C. 20515

## House Bills

### Bills Affecting Child Custody

#### *Stalking Prevention*

**H.R. 1869**, the Stalking Prevention and Victim Protection Act, introduced by Rep. Sue Kelly (D-NY) in May 1999 was passed by the House in November 1999 and a companion Senate measure was introduced in January 2000 by Sen. John Ashcroft (S. 2011). A similar bill (S. 1660) sponsored by Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison was previously introduced. The bill would amend Title 18 of the U.S. Code and broaden the definition of stalking in interstate or foreign commerce to apply to those who act "with the intent to injure or harass" another person and engage in conduct "that places an individual, a member of their immediate family or intimate partner in reasonable fear" of death or bodily injury.

The bill would not take the place of state anti-stalking statutes but would provide for federal prosecution where a stalker threatens an individual by telephone, mail, or e-mail. The bill states that stalking includes "harassment," a term not defined in U.S. statutes. Because harassment is a charge frequently leveled by one parent against another during divorce, the bill will almost certainly lead to greater abuse of court restraining orders by vindictive parents.

Under the new bill, no clear guidelines are given for the removal of restraining orders.

The Ashcroft bill is being considered by the Constitutional Subcommittee of the Senate Judiciary Committee, (202-224-8081).

**S. 51, Title II**, Study of Child Custody Laws in Domestic Violence Cases, introduced by Sen. Joe Biden (D-DE), Authorizes the Attorney General to make grants to States and Indian tribal governments to enable them to enter into contracts and cooperative agreements to assist public or private non-profit entities in establishing and operating supervised visitation centers for purposes of facilitating supervised visitation and visitation exchange of children by and between parents. Requires that priority be given to States that consider domestic violence in making a custody decision and require findings on the record. Currently in the Senate Judiciary Committee.

**Write to Sen. Biden, Senate Judiciary Committee, and your Senator, stating that Congress has already provided for the exchange sites we seek, but in a more general, family-friendly way, in the 1996 Welfare Reform Law. CRC seeks an increase in funding for those access/visitation/parenting programs.**

**S. 51, Sec. 302.** Directs the Attorney General to study and report to Congress on Federal and State laws relating to child custody, including the Parental Kidnapping Prevention Act of 1980, and their effect on child custody cases in which domestic violence is a factor. Requires study to examine the burdens and risks encountered by victims of domestic violence arising from compliance with the full faith and credit (and judicial jurisdiction) requirements of that Act.

CRC recommends that you state that Sec. 302 of the proposed law should direct the Attorney General to also report on the frequency of use and effect of false allegations of abuse in the midst of custody or access/visitation battles, which have been noted by the American Bar Association and other organizations. We must deal with false abuse accusations

in order to more fully help children who really have been abused, as officials in Texas and other states have decided.

The Senate has two other VAWA measures. S. 245, was introduced in January 1999 by Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-UT) and referred to the Judiciary Committee. Another bill, S. 1321, was re-introduced by Sen. Paul Wellstone (D-WI) which did not pass in the earlier session of Congress. As part of that bill, supervised visitation centers would be established for children who witness domestic violence at home. The bill would also increase the role of schools in providing assistance.

### Bills Affecting Financial Child Support

#### *Denial of Passports*

**H.R. 521.** Denial of Passports to Noncustodial Parents in Cases of Non-payment of Child Support. Introduced by Rep. Robert Andrews (D-NJ). Referred to House International Relations Committee and the House Subcommittee for International Operations and Human Rights. It is a bill that would deny passports to noncustodial parents subject to State arrest warrants in cases of nonpayment of child support awards.

**Write to Chairman Benjamin A. Gilman, (R-NY), House International Relations Committee and Chairman Christopher Smith (R-NJ), House Subcommittee for International Operations and Human Rights, Washington, D.C. 20515, asking that passports should also be denied to individuals subject to state arrest warrants in violation of custody and access/visitation orders.**

#### *Bankruptcy Reform Act Provisions Would Prioritize Financial Child Support*

The Bankruptcy Reform Act of 1999, H.R. 833, introduced by Rep. George Gekas, passed in the House on May 5, 1999. A similar measure from Sen. Grassley (R-IA) was considered by

the Senate, S. 625. Senator Hatch (R-UT) in November, 1999, gave a speech on the Senate floor where he proposed strengthening the protection of domestic child support obligations during bankruptcy proceedings. The Senate voted to act on HR 833 which passed the Senate on February 2, 2000, and the bill went to a conference committee to reconcile differences between House and Senate versions.

The bill will probably be signed into law by President Clinton by sometime in the Spring of 2000. Overall, the bill gives greater protection to collect support obligations than current law provides. The new law would ensure that available assets first go to pay a support obligation, before credit card debt, tax obligation, or any other debt. Previously, certain obligations, such as taxes, were to be discharged prior to child support arrearages. The new law would change that priority, and if there are any assets, they would go first to child support. The new bill also toughens requirements that the bankruptcy trustee notify persons owed child support and government collection agencies of the pending bankruptcy proceeding.

For further information, contact House Subcommittee on Commercial and Administrative Law, 202/225-2835.

### **Bill Would Require IRS to Collect Support**

**H.R.1488.** Compassion for Children and Child Support Enforcement Act of 1999 was introduced by Rep. Henry Hyde (R-IL). This bill would require the Internal Revenue Service to collect and disburse child support payments. A hearing was held by the Human Resources subcommittee of the Ways and Means Committee (202/225-1025) on March 16, 2000. State child support administrators and other child support experts oppose federalizing child support, and the bill is not expected to be approved by the subcommittee.

### **Child Support Disbursement Unit**

**S.1033.** Child Support Penalty Fairness Act. introduced by Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-CA). Referred to Senate Fi-

nance Committee. It is a bill to amend Title IV of the Social Security Act to coordinate the penalty for the failure of a State to operate a State child support disbursement unit with the alternative penalty procedure for failures to meet data processing requirements.

**Write to Sen. Feinstein and your own U.S. senators urging that the penalty for failure to implement the full faith and credit interstate access/visitation law should result in financial penalties to the state.**

### **Bills to Strengthen Family Life and Marriage**



*Ehlers*

**H. Res. 280,** sponsored by Rep. Vernon J. Ehlers (R-MI), referred to House Education and Workforce Committee. Recognizes the importance of strong marriage in general, and

the Greater Grand Rapids Community Marriage Policy in particular. That policy outlines a menu for a successful marriage, including not marrying too young, finishing school, choosing a mate with similar values, dating at least a year before marriage, completing a premarital course, waiting to cohabit until after marriage, emphasizing the positive, sharing household duties, worshiping together, having fun together, and remembering that commitment is the foundation to successful marriage.



*Moynihan*

**S. 208** Enhancing Family Life Act, sponsored by Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan was referred to the Finance Committee. It would provide "second chance homes" to custodial

parents under age 19 and their children where they would have a supportive and supervised living arrangement and be required to learn parenting skills, including child development, family budgeting, health and nutrition, and other skills to

promote their long-term economic independence and well-being of their children.

**CRC recommends writing to Sen. Moynihan to ask that connecting children to both of the child's parents be part of the bill.**

### **Donors are Appreciated**

CRC thanks everyone who contributes to CRC in the charity drive that takes place in all federal government offices every Fall. CRC is part of Independent Charities of America. We also thank those who contribute to CRC in the Washington, D.C., and San Francisco (Bay Area) United Way campaigns.

We also thank those who contribute to CRC through their United Way in some other part of the country, where we are not listed, but where employers may sometimes allow employees to designate CRC.

CRC depends on volunteer help and contributions for its existence. If you wish to make your tax-deductible contribution directly to CRC, send it to CRC, 300 I Street, Suite 401, Washington, D.C. 20002.

### **Change of Address**

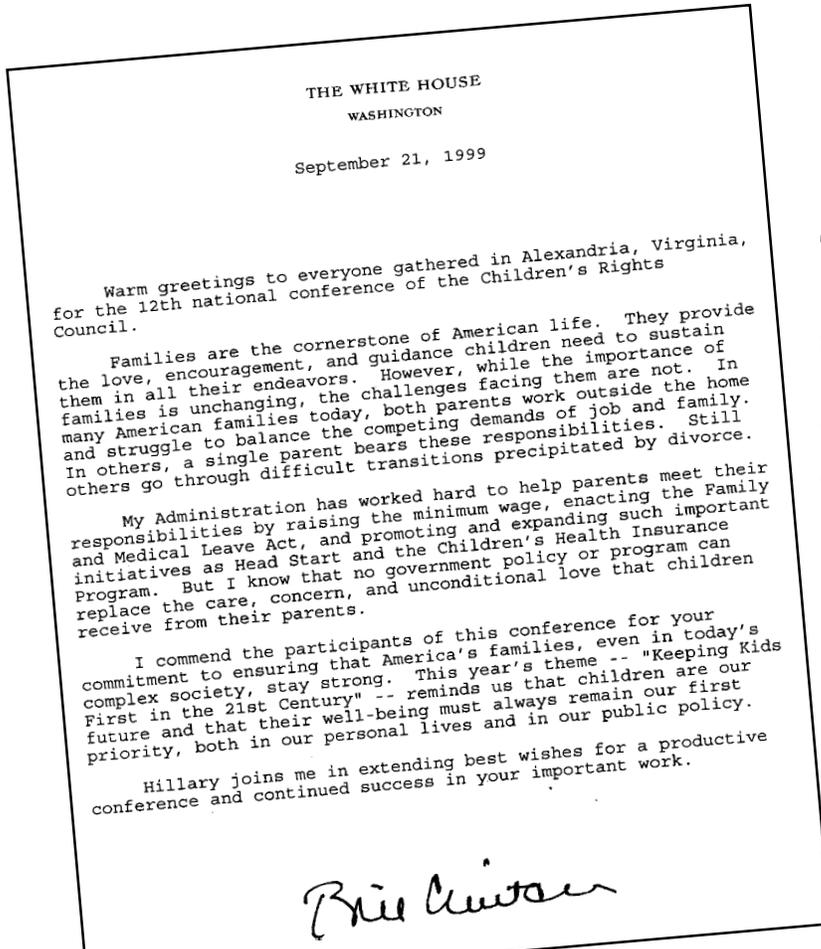
To keep newsletters and other materials coming, please notify CRC three weeks in advance of any address change. Send old and new addresses to CRC, 300 "I" Street N.E., Suite 401, Washington, DC 20002.

### **Important Phone Number**

The phone number for the Congressional switchboard, which will reach all offices and committees, is (202) 224-3121.

**CRC and our chapters need grant and proposal writers.**

# President Clinton Sends His Greetings to CRC



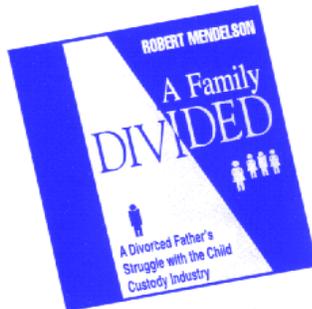
**This is the letter  
President Clinton  
sent to CRC's  
12<sup>th</sup> National  
Conference in  
September, 1999.**

## THIS RIVETING EXPOSÉ REVEALS HOW JUDGES, ATTORNEYS, PSYCHIATRISTS AND PSYCHOLOGISTS VIOLATE LAW & ETHICS IN THEIR MISGUIDED ZEAL TO IDENTIFY A "PRIMARY PARENT"

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Every Father's and  
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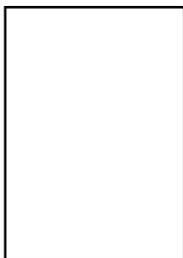
#### How to Purchase A FAMILY DIVIDED

Bookstores \* Internet: [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) \* Publisher: 1.800.421.0351 (Prometheus Books) \* CRC Catalog of Resources

# CRC Chapters Now in 3 Foreign Countries

CRC is expanding overseas. We already have a chapter in Japan; we now have chapters in the United Kingdom and Sierre Leone.

## United Kingdom Organizing Equal Parenting Party



*The Coes*

Tony and Christine Coe, who head the Equal Parenting Party, a political party dedicated to one issue, shared parenting after separation or divorce, are organizing the new CRC chapter.

The Coe's report that in the U.K. (England, Wales and Scotland):

- 50 percent of non-custodial parents lose **all** contact with their children within three years of separation;
- a custodial parent has in effect, all the power. The only right a non-custodial parent has is to apply to the court for access;
- if the custodial parent is hostile to the idea of access, it can take years of litigation with no guarantee of securing any access whatever;
- all family court proceedings are conducted in secret, and no one may talk about them; thus Tony is under a court order in London not to say anything about his children. As strange as it may sound, he is prohibited from even providing CRC with the names and ages of his children for publication in this newsletter article.

The new chapter is working on changing this system, and assuring that for children, "The Best Parent is Both Parents."

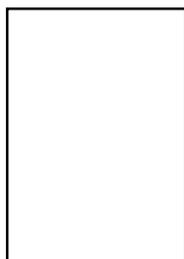
My "second, current, and final wife Christine, deals with women's issues within the Equal Parenting Party," says Tony.

The Party plans to run candidates in as many local elections as possible with a view to increasing public awareness of

children's issues in divorce.

Tony and Christine visited the CRC office on March 9.

## Sierra Leone



*Yotro Kargbo*

A mother and son team have started CRC's first-ever chapter in an African country, Sierra Leone. Yotro Kargbo, who lives in the U.S., and his mother Esther Kargbo, who lives in Sierra Leone, in

West Africa, are organizing this chapter.

Yotro reports that:

- In the past nine years, Sierra Leone has been torn apart by war. Families have been destroyed and separated. The greatest victims of these atrocities are children. Most of these kids ages 8 to 16 ended up being "child soldiers" and fought alongside grown men.
- Today, with a peace deal signed, most of these kids are returning their arms and look forward to start living like normal kids again. It is estimated that there are more

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### *CRC's First Chapter in Africa to Help Child Victims*

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than 10,000 "child soldiers" in Sierra Leone and 10,000 more who have lost their parents in one way or the other.

- Most kids will never step foot in a school or classroom, because there is no parent in their lives to provide these facilities for them. The chapter will work to ensure that education becomes a right for children, not a privilege.\*
- The chapter will work to find or locate lost parents and re-unite them with their children, provide counseling for parents and children to understand the

repercussions of war, and find families and homes for unfortunate kids whose parents cannot be found.

- the chapter will work to bring together divorced parents, to let them understand that "The Best Parent is Both Parents."

The Kargbo family business in Sierra Leone is a desk-top publishing office which will be partly used as a CRC office. Yotro has experience in running non-profit organizations.

## Chapter in Pennsylvania Capital

Kurt Krusen, a CRC member for the past four years, has organized a chapter in Harrisburg, the capital of Pennsylvania. He takes the place of Michael and Ann Poliakoff, who headed a chapter in Harrisburg, until they moved to Virginia a few months ago after adopting a baby from China.

Kruzen is working particularly on move-away issues. He believes that the emphasis should be against state courts allowing move-aways.

This is also CRC's position.

CRC's view is that when parents bring a child into the world, they owe the child an obligation to allow that child frequent and continuing contact with both parents, which is much easier to accomplish if both parents remain in the same geographic area as the child.

The parent who contemplates a move-away with the child should be required to give 60 days notice to the court and to the other parent, so that both parents can decide on a appropriate course of action.

If the parent is allowed to move away with the child, new arrangements, both financial and parenting, should be worked out so that the child can have the benefits of both parents continued involvement in the child's life.

It may be that both parents will have to share travel costs with the child, or even that the parent who is moving away should assume the increased financial obligations.

# National Affiliate Organizations and Chapters

## CRC INTERNATIONAL CHAPTERS

### CRC of Great Britain

Tony and Christine Coc, coordinators  
Children's Rights Council of the United Kingdom  
38-40 Gloucester Road  
London, SW7 4QU London, England  
phone: 011-44-20 7589 9003  
fax: 011-44-20 7584 4230  
email: tonyc@equalparenting.org  
website: www.equalparenting.org

### CRC of Japan

Walter Benda  
P.O. Box 583  
Max Meadows, VA 24360  
540/637-3576  
email: emari@earthlink.net  
and  
David Brian Thomas  
4-18-15-903 Kamiki Tazawa  
Setagaya-Ku  
Tokyo, Japan 156  
phone: 011-81-3-5317-6357

### CRC of Sierra Leone

Yotto Kargbo  
45565 Southland Avenue  
Alexandria, VA 22312  
phone and fax: 703/750-0494  
and Esther Kargbo  
7 Sanai Abacha Street  
Freetown, Sierra Leone  
phone: 011-23-2-2222-8682

## NATIONAL AFFILIATE ORGANIZATIONS

### Mothers Without Custody (MW/OC)

Jennifer Isham, coordinator  
website only: [http://www/motherswithoutcustody.org](http://www.motherswithoutcustody.org)

### Stepfamily Association of America (SAA)

Margorie Engel, president  
Larry Kallemyn, Executive Director  
650 J Street, Suite 205  
Lincoln, Nebraska 68508  
402/477-7837  
1-800/735-0329  
Joint membership in SAA and CRC: \$35.00 for the first year

## STATE CHAPTERS

### Alabama

Dr. Richard C. Weiss, coordinator  
CRC of Alabama  
514 Heritage Court S.  
Auburn, AL 36830  
phone: 334/826-1832 or 334/844-2666  
email: weissrl@vetmed.auburn.edu

### Alaska

Gary Maxwell, coordinator  
CRC of Alaska  
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