

Tahoe Victims of CPS ask for community's support

To the community,

As some of you already know, I helped start the Tahoe Victims of CPS in 2007. We are a Child Protective Services (CPS) reform group. CPS is a good organization of good people but due to funding cuts and high case overloads, they have been unable to keep pace with their required "system improvements".

As a result, their system has become flawed and 90 percent of all the parents, grand parents, friends and relatives involved in dependency court cases are complaining.

Most of these complaints are about the errors in the CPS reports being entered into the court records. Because Judge Proud in Placerville and Commissioner Shepherd in Tahoe base their decisions on these erroneous reports their decisions are flawed. These flawed decisions end up devastating families, sending cases to the court of appeals and leaving El Dorado County vulnerable to lawsuits.

The purpose of this letter is to publicly ask our Presiding Judge Suzanne Kingsbury to remedy this situation. I have met with CPS managers Jan Walker Conroy, Mark Contois and their boss Director Daniel Nielson three times in the last nine months with zero progress. Our group has gone before the Board of Supervisors 20 times in the last year with zero progress. Now we are going up the chain-of-command to the Honorable Suzanne Kingsbury.

We will continue to exercise our constitutional right to picket in front of the courthouse at 495 Main St. in Placerville and on Highway 50 in Tahoe until "system improvements" are made. Our numbers continues to grow with each picketing event. We are now over 50 strong. This month we

joined forces with fathers-4-justice.us. This is a nationwide organization asking the state, local and Federal governments to focus on efforts to reunify families.

Here are some statistics:

43 percent of USA children live with one parent. (US Department of Census)

71 percent of pregnant teenagers live with one parent. (US Department of Health Human Services)

90 percent of homeless and runaways are from homes with one parent. (US Census)

85 percent of youths in prison grew up in homes with one parent. (Texas Department of Corrections)

71 percent of high school dropouts are from homes with one parent. (National Principals Association)

Each statistic by itself is not alarming, but when they are viewed together, a very ugly picture comes to light that says, "No one is hurt more than the children".

The solution is to counsel, train, teach and supervise the parents, without removing the children from the home, so the family can eventually reunify. More than nine states have adopted this in-home-reunification process. This process is financially beneficial; court costs, foster care costs, juvenile detention costs, jail costs, welfare costs, lawsuits against the County, court of appeals costs, the crime rate and law enforcement costs all go down when this process is employed.

Please help us Judge Kingsbury. Let us put an end to the pain these children suffer.

Respectfully,

Ernie Claudio, South Lake Tahoe