

Mom # 23
La Crosse WI
54603

RE: Wisconsin Bias Against Mothers and Children Surviving Abuse

Dear La Crosse and Wisconsin Representatives & Officials,

My abusive ex-husband and I got married on May 25th, 2012. We had our first daughter in 2012, and then our son in 2015. Some of those years were good. Some things got under my skin, but I was happy with my babies and the man I married. In 2017, we found out we were going to have another baby. I was so happy. I couldn't wait to have another girl, but things started to go downhill after our second daughter was born. My husband decided to scare the infant every chance he got, and he would just let her sit there and cry. He emotionally abused and neglected her. He then cheated on me, tried to intimidate me into having an open marriage, and controlled information so that I would only learn the truth about his other behaviors when he would be absent from the house for a week, for work as a forklift driver.

Unable to trust him, I decided to go to my mom's place in 2018, to stay the weekend and consider my marriage. To get settled with my mother, and because he had mostly been inappropriate with the baby, I had just taken the baby with me. My erratic ex-husband told me that he would take care of the other two children for the weekend, so that I could have time to think. When I was at my mother's with the baby, my ex-husband texted me to tell me not to worry about coming home: that I was "just a burden on his shoulders" and he ordered me to come to get the rest of my stuff.

I went up to our trailer home to find it empty except for a bag of clothes for me, and a bag for my one year old. Our pictures were ripped up and I was cut out of them, so I got our stuff and left, fearing what else he would do with such anger. He then held my other two kids away from me for thirteen days as I tried everything to see them. Needing to make a motion in order to have my rights with my children enforced, I filed for divorce on the 12th of July 2018. My 1 year old were considered homeless at this time with nothing, denied access to all of our other belongings and shared family space and things.

At every court hearing we went to in Monroe County, he stood up and said that he wanted nothing to do with our youngest daughter, said he didn't love her, and that she was not his daughter. We had to have a paternity test done, and she came back as his child, just as I had said. Nothing he said about me was true.

Then I relocated to La Crosse and so everything started over down here, and I had to redo all the paperwork. Our first day of court was one I will never forget. FCC Wright told me that I could not get my children, due to my medical condition of intense visual migraines that preclude driving. I then got a lawyer to see if he could help me in any way but that was not possible I feel like my lawyer worked against me instead of with me. My unpredictable, controlling, intimidating ex-husband ended up with our 8yo and 5yo 77% of the time, and me only 22% of the time. I was ordered to pay child support because he had the children more, and was therefore financially motivated to keep the children from me.

FCC Wright said it was because of a medical problem that I have that means I can't drive. The Guardian Ad Litem assigned to the case never listened to me on what I had to say about how my ex-husband treated me and my children, while listening to everything my ex said about me, even though he had said he didn't love them in court in Monroe County. There were times when we lived together that we had no heat, and no hot water to take a shower, because my ex-husband controlled all of the money, utilities and basic needs. I had to call my aunt and uncle for meat to put food on the table. My ex was more worried about racing than his own family. He showed no ability to care for himself or others, but all of his statements about me were preferred.

My oldest daughter has to wear glasses and he doesn't send them with her when they come here. My kids have said they don't want to go back to their dad's. They plead with me that they want to stay with me all the time. They say their dad and his girlfriend are "really mean" to them and "call them names." And I can do nothing to protect them, because Family Court Commissioner Wright and the county look down on me already. Still to this day, I worry about my children and how they are being treated by him and his new fiance. They tell me that they are being mistreated, just as I was by him, and I just have to keep sending them back to him.

Sincerely,
Mom #23