

November 16, 2022

JOINT COMMITTEE on CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM OVERSIGHT

Hello Committee Members,

My name is Lora Byers. I am the President and CEO of River of Life Ministries of Wichita Kansas. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to speak publically from a grandma's point of view of how the unethical practices of the Department of Human Services, Saint Francis Ministries, and the Wichita Police Department can impact the **entire** family. The mental toll and financial cost has left us drained. My husband's health is very poor and the life he has left to live is clearly limited. However, we are all living on borrowed time, and we would like to see our granddaughter. Our family nightmare began with the reckless mishandling of our case by Attorney Trip Shawver and advocate Jennifer Winn. These two individuals are the primary reason our granddaughter was removed from our custody. We have done nothing to deserve restrictions against seeing our granddaughter. And my daughter and I have never done anything to any child to warrant Social Worker Sarah Hoss-Riner putting us on the Kansas Child Abuse Registry in September of 2018. We requested an appeal of that decision and the appeal was also denied by Erin Sizemore, Staff Attorney; Tammy Orth, Unit Supervisor and Sarah Hoss-Riner Social Work Specialist. At this same time, we had a meeting at the E.M.C.U. with Detective Ribble and Sarah Hoss-Riner. I told Sarah, "Please don't send the baby back to the lion's den", Sarah grabbed my wrist and twisted it behind my back while Detective Ribble stood by. Sarah led me by the wrist into a private room and told me to never say that again. This incident was reported to the Behavioral Sciences Regulatory Board in February 2022 and in June 2022, David

B. Fye, J.D. sent me a letter saying the committee voted unanimously NOT to initiate disciplinary action against Sarah Hoss-Riner.

We sought relief through the expungement process from the Kansas Child Abuse Registry at the allotted waiting time, and made our requested in December 2021. Once again we were denied expungement by Social Worker, Sarah Hoss-Riner. No reports of verified allegations were presented to us to keep us on the registry.

I was ordered in the original CINC trial by Judge Kevin Smith through Attorney Grant Brazille that I was allowed a *minimum* of two visits with my granddaughter per month of two hours per visit with conditions. My visits are to be supervised and the FATHER has discretion to move visitation to monitored or unsupervised. I paid TFI Family Services \$30 an hour for supervision to visit my granddaughter. My granddaughter and I have a very close bond. I had the pleasure of being there to help raise her. She is my pride and joy. This was a very difficult time for her and I emotionally. We spent our time taking “selfies”, and talking about “old times”, but most of the time she cuddled up next to me and took a much needed nap in Grandma’s arms.

The judgements in our case against our family were based on allegations and not factual findings. They were admitted as fraudulent testimony and misdirection of the facts. To purposely and knowingly deceive the court. Our granddaughter was placed as a child in need of care in the custody of the State of Kansas in 2018. In August of 2019 a ruling was made by Judge Kevin Smith that our granddaughter was to be placed in the custody of the other parent who was also facing allegations that were being reported to the Department of Children and Families and that “The child in need of care court retains jurisdiction over custody and residency issues for 24

months. Any modifications sought within that time period shall be filed in the Juvenile department.”

As it stands now, since our last hearing with Judge Kirby, my husband and I get NO visitation time with our granddaughter only based on what she read in the CINC documents from 2019.

No new allegations have been reported on anyone in our family. Judge Kirby also failed to address my granddaughter’s poor school attendance, sixty-six tardies, and poor grades while she has been in the custody of her adopted father.

We are a family of faith, and pray someday this situation will be resolved and we can continue to be part of our granddaughter's life.

Thank you for listening to our experience. We pray someone can intervene and help us see our baby again very soon.

Respectfully,  
Lora Byers, President, CEO River of Life Ministries of Wichita

