



Championing Children's Rights: Our Top 11 in 11 Years

The Center for Judicial Excellence (CJE) was established in 2006. Our mission is to protect vulnerable children in the family court system and strengthen the integrity of all courts by creating judicial accountability. CJE has been in the forefront of exposing a national and international crisis in the family court system that is harming millions of innocent children and their parents. Our strength is rooted in our unique mix of public education, media relations and legislative advocacy work.

- 1) **Judicial Transparency.** In 2016, we co-led the successful campaign to secure an audit of the California Commission on Judicial Performance (CJP), the state's only judicial discipline agency, for the first time in 55 years. The CJP sued the State Auditor in an attempt to block the audit, and it remains in legal limbo.
- 2) **Child Murder Research.** Our data which tracks more than 560 child murders by a parent during a divorce, separation or custody dispute in the U.S. has been cited by journalists here and abroad.
- 3) **Congressional Resolution.** CJE is actively involved in a national effort to better protect kids in family courts. [H. Con. Resolution 150](#) will be re-introduced (under a new number) in the U.S. Congress in the coming months.
- 4) **Investigative News.** We are currently working closely with many investigative news teams across the U.S. to expose the judicial child trafficking crisis, including the Center for Investigative Reporting, Pro Publica, [100Reporters.org](#), and ABC 10 in the greater Sacramento, CA region.
- 5) **Mobilizing the Public, Educating the Judicial Council.** CJE has brought parents who've lost everything from up and down the state to speak at Judicial Council of California meetings for more than 2 years, empowering them to reclaim their voices by educating the Chief Justice and judges who set court policy.
- 6) **Giving Kids a Voice in Family Court.** AB 1050 was signed into law by CA Governor Schwarzenegger in 2010. Then-Asm. Fiona Ma worked with us to pass historic, first-in-the-nation legislation that grants CA children 14 and older the right to testify in family court (Fam. Code Section 3042). This year, **Sen. Connie Leyva (D-Chino)** introduced [SB 170](#) to lower the age from 14 down to age 10.
- 7) **First White House Briefing:** Executive Director Kathleen Russell organized and facilitated the first briefing on the family court crisis for the White House and U.S. Dept. of Justice officials in May 2010.
- 8) **California Senate Bill 594:** Signed into law by Gov. Jerry Brown in 2015, this law mandates that custody evaluators must follow state laws and rules of court when preparing their reports, and if they do not, then the court can refuse to accept their reports. Sen. Bob Wieckowski (D-Fremont) authored this important bill.
- 9) **Audit of the Marin & Sacramento Family Courts:** In 2009, Sen. Mark Leno pushed our audit request through the Joint Legislative Audit Committee. The California State Auditor issued an alarming 2011 report about the significant lack of domestic violence and child abuse training, and the lack of accountability for family court mediators and minors' attorneys working in Marin and Sacramento County Family Courts.
- 10) **Award-Winning Documentary Film:** In 2008, we produced a provocative film, [Family Court Crisis: Our Children At Risk](#), which exposes the life-altering events of five protective parents in Marin County who survived traumatic family court ordeals.
- 11) **Fox11 News (Los Angeles) Lost in the System Series:** Our Director worked tirelessly with veteran television producer Martin Burns to develop 12 different stories about the family court crisis that captivated TV news viewers throughout the Los Angeles region before his untimely death in 2013.