



**Commission on Judicial Performance Testimony  
Assembly Budget Subcommittee #5  
March 28, 2016**

**Rama Diop**

My name is Rama Diop. I am from Senegal. I came to the US, graduated from NYU, and was proud, excited and ambitious. But then my life took a turn when I became pregnant and moved here to be with my son's father. He was abusive and bipolar, and we ended up in the Marin County family court.

I don't have time to describe how this court has treated me for the last 10 years, but it was like being in the Jim Crow south. The judge threatened to "chain me to my chair," and the rule of law and code of judicial ethics did not apply to our case. Why? Maybe because two of the judges in our case came from the law firm that first represented my wealthy, white ex, and their husbands were partners there. Maybe because that law firm was the top donor and campaign headquarters for many Marin judges. I fought back the best I could, without much money. I repeatedly reported to the CJP, but they took no action. I filed 170.1 challenges that were denied, usually by the judge I was challenging. Nothing could get me justice in Marin. The judge thought she could do anything and get away with it.

In June 2013, my attorney Barbara Kauffman worked without fees to help document a full year of judicial misconduct and violations of my due process rights, including ongoing insults, secret orders issued without our knowledge, hearings where my ex didn't show up and the judge argued the case for him, and the purposeful and illegal backdating of court records, among other things.

We made a detailed complaint to the CJP in June of 2014. Almost 2 years later, my complaint remains "under investigation," and meanwhile I'm stuck with the same corrupt judge.

I am not the only one, similar things are happening to your constituents all over California, because there is no effective judicial oversight here. Judicial accountability must become an immediate legislative priority.