



Washington State, known for its progressive politics, technological advancements, and environmental consciousness, faces a stark contrast in its Family Court system concerning women, mothers and children. The state's ranking, comparable to Oklahoma and Kentucky, places it among the top ten worst states for domestic violence-related fatalities. In 2020, domestic violence crimes accounted for nearly half (49.7%) of all crimes against individuals in the state. Moreover, 20% of all homicides in Washington that year were domestic violence-related. These alarming statistics raise serious questions about the state's response to domestic violence, particularly within the Family Court system.

The cost of domestic violence in the United States is immense, with the financial toll of intimate partner violence reaching into the tens of billions. The repercussions affect employment and lead to job losses and workplace harassment for survivors. Forbes Magazine, in an article from December 13, 2023, titled "[Why doesn't the severe harm and cost of domestic violence result in more women going to court?](#)" highlights the reluctance of mothers to report abuse. The article cites significant factors contributing to this hesitance, including the absence of safe havens for victims and a documented judicial bias towards fathers in custody cases. This reluctance is further compounded by the challenges faced within the Family Court system.

Despite legal frameworks designed to ensure due process, mothers in these situations report that their civil rights have been undermined, if not outright gutted. This discrepancy suggests that individuals accused of serious crimes may receive more considerate treatment within the criminal justice system than survivors of abuse in family court. These mothers, who have not committed crimes, are often reprimanded and even punished like criminals for speaking the truth in Washington's family court. This issue is symptomatic of deeper problems within the Family Court system.

The realities within the Family Court system paint a concerning picture. A gap in services for victims appears more as a black hole for human rights violations. This includes issues like illegal gag orders, disability discrimination, aiding of child and battered women abuse, and the exploitation of homeless children. The involvement of privately paid court officials, operating without oversight and potentially engaging in corruption and racketeering, worsens the problem. Bandy X. Lee's 2023 article in Medium, "[Family Courts are Cannibalizing Children – For Profit](#)," highlights this troubling scenario, suggesting a system morphing into an organized crime cartel that impacts not only the victims but society at large. Such issues within the system indicate a failure to protect the most vulnerable.

Professionals in mental health, education, and medicine often avoid involvement if Family Courts are at play, further leaving victims vulnerable. Advocates for children, experts with advanced degrees in psychiatry and child development, are being dismissed via judicial discretion as "not credible", another tactic to silence the abused, and plunging the efforts of protective parents further down the black hole of Washington's family court.

The danger of overreaching judicial discretion is further evident in the courts' use of private pay court officials with judicial immunity, who operate without supervision or auditing. Surprisingly, there is no standardized third-party avenue for victims to complain about possible racketeering, corruption, or child trafficking by these court-appointed individuals. Many mothers and their children, trapped within this system, face prolonged exploitation, being re-victimized by the very institution that promised protection.

Washington state's family court system has no gatekeeping for the prioritization of profit over justice. This oversight begs the question of whether state institutions like the WA State Legislature, the WA State Bar Association, and state-supported domestic violence organizations are [un]intentionally fostering a system that prioritizes profit, with the ability to seal records, command gag orders, and avoid criminal accountability. A change in approach and priorities is urgent to address these systemic issues.

Signed,
Concerned Citizens of The Family Court Crisis

The Family Court Educational Series was formed from a community-led coalition of organizations, survivors, and professionals. This series aims to address the Family Court Crisis in Washington. The current system not only fails to protect mothers and children but perpetuates abuse and neglect.

Series Archive
[Domestic Violence in WA Family Court Series I](#)

