

Purchasing Power. Our Children Are Not Exempt



In a startling development in Washington's education system, principals can now purchase test results amidst plummeting student scores. When parents and educators expressed outrage over this new policy, the principals told them to sit down and be quiet, or else. One father expressed:

"We want to know where the money is coming from. What unknown third party pays for a child's outcomes? It's a little weird, and if I'm being honest, creepy."

Is this real? No.

But there is a real life similar move in The Washington State Legislature, and court watchers are concerned. Bill 2237 is being rammed through the door, under the guise of 'don't be suspicious.' This bill dissolves 35+ years of protective laws for survivors of domestic violence and their children. HB 2237 opens the door to unending litigation against survivors, for purposes of placing children with abusers.

Just as parents would question the integrity of an educational system purchasing outcomes for children, we must scrutinize a system where judges can be influenced by private funds. Funds used to pass family court laws waiving judicial accountability. Organizations like state Judges Associations can be backed by lobbyists, which compromises the very process meant to protect our most vulnerable – our children. Judiciary involvement in legislation has its place, but it's not in a specialized setting such as Family Courts.

The same principles of purchasing test results for schools are mirrored in judges purchasing laws. Laws that due away with already minimal accountability for judgements involving abuse and children. Laws intended to protect our children will be dissolved by HB 2237, marking a regression in our duty to uphold basic human rights.

In fact, thirty-five years of laws established to protect survivors of domestic violence and their children will be waived by the legislature. With the backing of a Judges Association and other organizations who dance with the private pay money from lobbyists.

The intent of HB2237 / SB 5205 is to give a face lift to the statutory RCW 26.09.191, Washington's legal backbone to protecting survivor parents of Domestic Violence. But what's concerning in HB2237 is that not only is there a tremendous lobbying effort by the judiciary for sweeping changes, but also the judges request to expand their own discretion, and thus their immunity. [This is not the first time that courts intended to protect survivors in WA, have failed.](#)

Our grassroots coalition has taken time- decades of expert experience, and community feedback to proceed with caution as we know what is already happening. Family law attorneys are advising that survivors not raise allegations of abuse, because allegations of abuse *even if there's credible evidence* will more often result in a discretionary finding (judges choice) against the victim. This leads to the reversal of custody to the abuser. *This is one of the many reasons why, despite a progressive face, Washington is in the top ten worst states in the nation for victims of domestic violence.*

On the passage of HB2237, the court will have absolute power to take your children away for as little as filing a disputed CPS report or having PTSD. This will also eliminate the ability to appeal, and judges will have no accountability to show how their decision was made.

This community-led coalition, representing over 1,000 protective parents and several organizations in Washington, stands united in opposition to this bill. Not one member of the coalition supports this legislation. In fact, we find it deeply troubling that the groups and state-sponsored organizations charged with protecting our children are being influenced to erode their rights.

This is not just a legislative overhaul; it's a dangerous shift in our societal values and judicial ethics, where the rights and protections of survivors of domestic violence and their children are at risk of being traded away for political gains. This increase in judicial discretion also directly harms people of color.

This is an established truth from [University of Chicago Law School](#), "...Using comprehensive data on federal defendants sentenced from 1994-2009, I find evidence that increased judicial discretions via a booker has led to large and robust increase in radical disparities in sentencing, particularly after periods of reduced appellate scrutiny". The same principles apply to family law. HB2237 is inherently racist.

As concerned citizens, we must rally against Bill 2237 and demand a judicial system that prioritizes integrity, accountability, and the well-being of children above all else. HB2237 is not a law, it's a guidebook that transforms laws into mere suggestions without recourse. **Is a law really a law if it's optional?**

Join us in this fight for justice and to safeguard the future of our children from a system willing to compromise their rights for private interests.

Signed,

Concerned Citizens of The Family Court Crisis

This 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.

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

[Series I. The Issue.](#)

[Series II. Who Gains Financially?](#)

[Series III. Mothers Homeless by Family Courts](#)

[Series IV. Fox Guarding the Henhouse](#)

[Series V. 5 Ways WA FC Hates Mothers](#)

