

I am just one example of what is really going on with children in Kansas. This is hard to share but important to understand. Today marks 290 days since I've seen my 5 children. This is not just one isolated struggle—it's part of an 11-year journey through a family court system that has deeply failed us.

My daughter became involved with a court-appointed therapist who blocked my attempts to get her further help, even as she struggled with self-harm and four attempts to take her own life. Her father, despite his wealth, refused to pay for inpatient treatment, leaving her dependent on state assistance through a Kansas program. To get her the help she needed, I had to make the heartbreaking choice to place her in state care. I'll never forget signing those papers; it was devastating, and I couldn't stop crying, even with my mother there beside me. The social worker from KVC said many parents end up surrendering their kids to the state because they simply can't afford the care they need.

After signing my rights away, I was assured that I'd be able to see my daughter weekly and visit with her siblings. However, instead of going to a treatment center, she was placed in a home hours away with 7 other foster kids. When they couldn't find a stable placement for her, she ended up spending her days in the KVC office while her

friends were in school, shuffled to a new place to sleep each night.

When I spoke with a state committee member who knew me, she was shocked at how I've been treated. After I lost contact with my daughter, I lost custody of all my children on January 29, 2024. The Guardian ad Litem filed an emergency custody hearing all under horrible false accusation. No one, not even the GAL asked me if the accusations against me were true; I had a wonderful weekend with my kids, dropped them off at school, I was notified about the emergency hearing and then my children were gone.

Since then, I've spent thousands on a reunification therapist but still haven't spoken to my kids. Despite a Missouri court granting me 80% custody after a lengthy, costly battle, Kansas refuses to honor that decree. Now, I'm left without my children or the financial means to continue the fight, yet I am still required to pay for their legal and therapy expenses. Even though DCF confirmed no wrongdoing, the GAL in Kansas family court system has taken my children based on false claims.

This isn't just my loss, it's my children's and also hundreds of other parents I have personally met, that are going through the same thing here in Kansas.. They're without

their mother, pets, and the home we shared, forced into a system that has ignored their needs. It's traumatic to keep us apart without cause, yet the courts continue to act as if this is in their best interests. Every day apart is time we will never get back, a loss for all of us.

Every day, I wake up fighting for my children, but this isn't just about me—it's about every parent and child who's been torn apart by a system that should protect families, not fracture them. We deserve a system that values truth, one that honors established custody agreements, prioritizes children's mental health, and respects the bond between parent and child.

Today, I am asking this committee to bring accountability and reform to the family court system. Families like mine shouldn't have to endure years of hardship and heartache just to remain together. I am here to be a voice for my children and for every child denied their mother or father without just cause.

Thank you for your time, and for considering the real impact of these policies on our families. I hope you'll work with us to make meaningful changes that restore justice, empathy, and hope to this system.