

## Full testimonial

### Opening – credibility & mission contrast

For nearly two decades I served as a Paramedic Firefighter. I saw DHS and the courts step in during crises, and I believed their mission was clear: to protect children and ensure justice and safety. CPS itself says its purpose is to identify unsafe children and protect them when abuse is reported.

But in 2017, I watched my faith in that mission collapse. I saw the lives of two little boys — my stepsons — and our family destroyed by a system that failed to protect them.”

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### Personal story – CPS failures & avoidable harm

“My stepsons bravely disclosed abuse and safety concerns involving their father. One described being forced to fondle his father and being fondled in return. Instead of acting to protect him, the CPS caseworker dismissed it under their so-called ‘higher standard’ — literally evaluating whether a young child had detected his father’s sexual arousal. That is not protection. That is retraumatization.

Rather than being safeguarded, the boys’ voices were discredited as ‘divorce conflict.’ CPS records contained errors that were never corrected. Teachers’ reports of abuse concerns were ignored. Protective orders lapsed without follow-up. Outside attorneys influenced the investigation. The boys were interviewed in ways that embarrassed, steered, misled, and pressured them — not in trauma-informed environments or with proper forensic interview techniques.

Family Court then relied on these flawed reports, along with treatment and diagnostic plans from an expensive but unlicensed professional, to impose a 204-day no-contact order against their protective mother. During that time, the boys missed the birth of a sibling, family milestones, and church and community ties. Instead of feeling heard, they learned that adults will tell children they’re safe — and then return them to the very person they fear.”

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### Transition – data & professional expertise

In 2019, I transitioned out of EMS and into data analytics. And the numbers tell a story that mirrors what I witnessed firsthand.

- Nationally, research shows only about **4%** of child sexual abuse claims are deliberately false. Yet courts believe children’s disclosures of sexual abuse just **15%** of the time — and only **2%** when the other parent raises ‘alienation.’
- In Oregon, only about **1 in 5 CPS assessments** are substantiated each year, with the majority dismissed or labeled simply as ‘threat of harm.’

These statistics confirm what my family lived: disclosures aren’t being discredited because children are lying — they’re being dismissed because the system is structurally designed to minimize and reframe them.”

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## **Advocacy – why you’re testifying & broader context**

This experience has made me an advocate for children. I am here today not just for my family, but because I know of families up and down the I-5 corridor and into eastern Oregon who have endured the same nightmare. Protective parents — mothers and fathers — punished for believing their children. Kids returned to their abusers, silenced well into adulthood, more likely to become victims again or perpetuate abuse themselves.

These are not isolated cases. They are systemic failures.

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## **Closing ask – reform needed**

We need a statewide CPS Task Force, and we need a statewide taskforce for Family Court Reform that includes CPS/DHS in the reform process as well — joining other states in fully enacting Kayden’s Law. We must examine how CPS and Family Court interact, fix record integrity failures, enforce accountability, and require trauma-informed, domestic-violence-trained professionals. We must stop punishing protective parents when children disclose abuse

Until then, children will remain at risk, and families will continue to suffer avoidable, preventable harm. Oregon must be a state that stands between children and abuse — not one that sends them back to it.