

Ann Samuelson  
80672 Hwy 202  
Seaside, OR 97138  
503-440-6233  
annsamuelson01@gmail.com

## **Testimony Submitted for the Record**

Senate Committee on Human Services  
Senator Sara Gelsler Blouin, Chair

Date: September 30, 2025

### **Testimony in Support of a Task Force for Family Court Reform and CPS Oversight**

Chair Gelsler Blouin and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I will not be discussing the details of my own family's case because we are still in litigation and appeals. Instead, I want to speak to the systemic patterns I have observed and experienced firsthand over nearly a decade in Oregon's family court system.

Too often, when CPS intersects with family court, the result is not safety for children but the opposite. Protective parents and grandparents are targeted with false findings, while known abusers are empowered. This pattern is not unique to me. Barry Goldstein, a nationally recognized expert, submitted testimony to this committee citing research that shows 75% of cases involving abuse allegations result in custody being given to the alleged abuser. He also emphasized that courts routinely fail to recognize coercive control, even though it is one of the strongest predictors of future harm. Training in coercive control for both child welfare and family court professionals is essential.

Another systemic issue is jurisdiction. In Washington County, for example, cases are held for years even after neither the child nor the parents live in that county. This practice forces children into unnecessary stress, repeatedly shuttled to court-appointed "professionals" and services that do not reflect their actual needs, but rather the inertia of a system that resists change.

At the beginning of our case—long before we fully understood the commerce that takes place in family court and what many now call judicial trafficking—a judge remarked: "We have well-to-do grandparents here." At the next hearing, when the judge handed out gold

coin chocolates to those present, my husband looked up and said, "I think we are up to about \$100,000 we have spent so far." The judge smiled and replied, "I don't doubt it." Another Judge stated to us as grandparents, "I have no doubt you are doing god's work with this child, but we do not live in god's world". These comments illustrate how children's lives and families' resources become entangled in a system that often seems more focused on generating fees than protecting children.

Other states have already recognized these systemic failures. Idaho and Arizona both have task forces for family court reform. In Idaho, the task force is even traveling to different areas of the state to make testimony accessible to families who cannot travel to the capital. Participation in both states has been very high, because these problems are widespread and deeply felt. Oregon must not fall behind.

This is why Oregon needs a Task Force for Family Court Reform, with oversight of CPS included in that reform. We need systemic accountability. We need child welfare and family courts trained in coercive control, trauma, and the patterns of post-separation abuse. And we need meaningful oversight to ensure that children are not further traumatized by the very systems intended to protect them.

Thank you for your time and for considering this urgent reform.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ann Samuelson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, flowing initial "A".

Ann Samuelson