



March 27, 2025

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**JOIN THE MARCH 29 WASHINGTON
SAFE CHILDHOOD NOW RALLY:
STOP FAMILY COURTS FROM ORDERING KIDS TO DOMESTIC ABUSERS.**

**A call to action for stronger child safety policies in family court
and a commitment to ending preventable child abuse.**

OLYMPIA, WASHINGTON - On Saturday, March 29 at 11:00 am in Olympia, [End Child Abuse Washington](#) and [National Safe Parents Organization \(NSPO\)](#), Washington chapter, will hold a [Safe Childhood Now Rally](#) at the [Temple of Justice Steps](#). The powerful gathering includes advocates, domestic abuse survivors and community members united in the fight to protect children and inspire meaningful change for victims in family court legislation. The rally is a call to action for legislators to pass stronger child safety laws in family court such as [ESHB 1620](#) (House Striker) which was introduced this legislative session.

“Policy reforms for family court are urgently needed to help improve courts handling of family violence allegations and evidence in contested child custody litigation. Survivors’, including children’s, allegations of abuse are too often invalidated and children are endangered. The first draft of HB 1620, aka the ‘judges bill’ leaves too much grey area where judges can overlook risks and harms to vulnerable children,” says Danielle Pollack, Policy Manager at the [National Family Violence Law Center](#) at George Washington School of Law, and a founder of [National Safe Parents Organization](#) (NSPO). “The amended House striker version offers a much improved, more survivor-centric alternative.”

The Issue is Confusing: HB 1620 vs. [ESHB 1620](#)

“In January, family court bill HB 1620 was introduced by state superior court judges and was written in such a way that it did not protect domestic abuse victims - women and

children - from continued risk of harm after they left their abuser. Survivors and advocates strongly opposed this first draft fearing that it would make it easier for courts to ignore their allegations and the impacts of domestic abuse,” said [Evangeline Stratton, JD.](#) former Senior Managing Attorney for the Washington [FVAP](#).

“The first draft of [HB 1620](#) introduced by state judges did not adhere to nearly any of the family court reform models we support such as the revised [Model Code \(NCJFCJ\)](#) and [The Keeping Children Safe From Family Violence Act “Kayden’s Law”](#) (enacted by Congress). It is essential survivors, including children, are not court ordered into further domestic abuse,” added Danielle.

A [similar bill](#) backed by judges introduced last year died before a vote on the House floor after facing strong opposition from protective parents and abuse experts who argued it would decrease protections for survivors and their children in family court cases.

Safe Childhood Now Rally

“We are holding this rally to raise awareness and ask legislators to listen to our legitimate concerns - over the judges’ agenda - to support the safer version of **ESHB 1620** also known as the House Striker amendment. This version has provisions to require courts to carefully evaluate the nature and context of domestic violence, consider its impacts on children, and implement protective measures in parenting plans,” Bailey Gonzales, a concerned mother.

“Now, the proposed HB 1620 has “ping-ponged” between the questionable first version and the protective amended version ESHB 1620 presented to the Senate. Our amended protective version with the House Striker Amendment is supported by academic research, language from the [Model Code on Domestic and Family Violence](#) and an outpouring of testimony from abuse survivors,” added Evangeline.

Washington Family Court Cases Gone Wrong: Mothers and Children Not Protected

Heidi Padilla, Kirkland

“My middle child Nicholaas would be 18 if he weren’t tragically killed trying to escape his abusive father. I represented myself in my divorce in 2017 and I was given full custody and decision-making... because my ex had mandatory restrictions on him for a long history of domestic violence, child abuse, coercive control, and sexual assault. In 2019, I modified the parenting plan to ask for supervised visits... instead of protecting us, a newly appointed King County judge switched custody... my son Nicholas would still be alive today, I truly believe, had ESHB 1620 been the law five years ago.”

Amber Rodriguez, Tri Cities

“... told judges and investigators she was scared of her ex-husband's potential for violence years before he killed her. Her estranged husband Elias Zuniga Huizar, a former Yakima police officer, was short tempered and controlling of her actions, and she was terrified of what he might be capable of, she told police and judges.”

Carissa Larkin, Vancouver

“...wrote in a declaration that she feared (her former fiancé) would retaliate. She wrote that, and he did exactly what she said to the court that he was going to do ... The fact that she was holding her 4-year-old and he still shot and killed her anyway just goes to the fact that he had no remorse and he was there to carry out a mission” — *a mission which she had asked the court for protection from many times* - but was utterly failed.

About End Child Abuse Washington

End Child Abuse Washington is a statewide network of advocates, attorneys, domestic abuse survivor parents, and concerned citizens dedicated to protecting children from harm in family court custody cases. The organization works to raise awareness and advance evidence-based reforms that place child safety at the center of custody decisions, while calling for greater responsibility and oversight within the legal system.

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About National Safe Parents Organization (NSPO)

NSPO is the leading grassroots organization working to advance evidence-based policies and laws to improve U.S. family court practices and ensure child safety is at the center of all child custody decision-making. NSPO engages decision-makers, builds community, and raises public awareness on these issues that affect children and safe parents. We work across the U.S. and in tandem with international partner organizations and leading research organizations.

NSPO Twitter/X
NSPO Facebook
NSPO Instagram

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Amber Rodriguez
05/17/92 - 04/22/24
West Richland, WA
Ex-husband killed Amber in children's school parking lot



Meshey Melendez & Layla Stewart
02/8/96 - 3/12/23 & 2015 - 3/12/23
Washougal, WA
Child was sexually abused & both mother and daughter murdered by Ex-Partner



Angelica Santos
12/22/06 - 04/22/24 West Richland, WA
Angelica Santos had a protection order against Elias Huizar, issued in February 2024 after he was charged with raping her and another minor.



Tiffany Hill
04/16/84 - 12/26/19
Vancouver, WA
Murdered by Ex-Husband in children's school parking lot.



Brittany Thuney
01/21/89 - 05/15/20 Kelso, WA
Ex-Father-in-Law Murdered her and Ex-Husband now has custody of their child.



Carissa Larkin
03/29/92 - 07/25/24
Vancouver, WA
Carissa Larkin was shot and killed by her ex-fiancé, while carrying her 4-year-old son, who survived.



Lisha Krier
1970 - 07/05/24
Bonney Lake, WA
Mother of three, Murdered by Ex-husband

CARRYING YOUR MEMORY FORWARD

www.endchildabuse.org

SAFE CHILDHOOD RALLY
Saturday 3/29/25, 11am at WA Capitol
 12th Ave SW, Temple of Justice Steps, Olympia WA
We say NO to HB1620 The Judges Bill!



END CHILD ABUSE



WASHINGTON



Join
THE SAFE CHILDHOOD RALLY
for Family Court Reform

Saturday, March 29
11am-1pm
WA State Capitol
Temple of Justice Steps, 12th Ave SW, Olympia