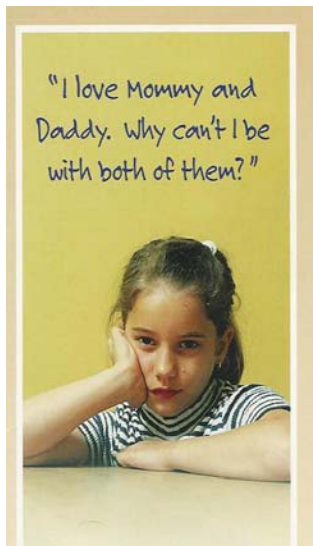


Capital e-News

The Electronic Newsletter of the Coalition of Fathers and Families NY, Inc.
Unbiased coverage of the actions of New York State Legislature,
Courts, Governor and State Agencies that is of interest to families.



What are you going to do about it?

When are you going to do it?

By Jim Hays

FaFNY has been fighting for years for equitable access to children by both parents regardless of the marital relationship. We have proposed shared parenting legislation, court restructure and reform, mediation, etc., etc., etc. The response from NY Government? "We don't like your ideas", "I support that but", "It's not me that's holding it up its this committee or that person", yada, yada, yada.

FaFNY say, the buck stops with the elected representatives. No more excuses, there are 518,000 children denied access to a parent in New York State. So Mr. and Ms. elected representative pray tell:

What are you going to do about it and when exactly do you plan to do it?

Capital e-News
Volume 1, Issue 1
February 2005
All rights reserved.

Published and distributed free of charge to counter the one sided biased media and bureaucratic double speak and inaction of the NYS Government.

Editor:
James Hays

Editorials:
Randall L.
Dickinson.

In This Issue:

1. What are you going to do about it?
2. Legislative News
3. Letter from R.L.D. to "I need help".
4. continued.
5. Action Items Including the NYS Courts Hold Matrimonial Commission Hearings
6. Ask Jim speaks out on Child Support and your trip through New York's Court System.
7. continued
8. continued.
9. Closing Statement

A Call To Arms! (County Coordinators)

By Jim Hays

Sound a little radical? To aggressive? Well what I consider radical and aggressive is when my own government comes into my family and takes my children for no reason and then applies a "child excise tax" (child support) on top of it. Mad, you bet I'm mad. And the time is now for radical action. But what I mean by being radical is NOT breaking the law or being mean and nasty to people. What I do mean is it's time for us to stand up and take back what is rightfully ours. Its time for us to DEMAND that our representative government *represent* us. It's time that those star chamber Judges treated us with the respect due us that they demand for themselves.

I'm a father and I'm not going to let them make me act otherwise. So my "arms" is my registering to vote, my "powder" is voting only for pro family legislators and my "mini ball" is my voice. Short of death I will not be silenced.

I'm a family person, I vote and I WILL speak out against tyranny and abuse of civil rights EVERY time I encounter it. I call all to join FaFNY as a County Coordinator in this fight for justice.

Legislative News

By Randall L. Dickinson, FaFNY VP and Legislative Committee Chair

1-15-2005

FaFNY, Inc., reps met with senior staff from the offices of Majority Leader Joe Bruno and Speaker Sheldon Silver in mid-Dec. Discussions centered on New York Bar Assoc'n.'s proposal for no-fault divorce and the need for reform of family and matrimonial law and statutory protections for non-custodial parents. Also appear to be getting closer to securing member item funding from Bruno.

Key legislative leaders and committee members have all been formally notified by written invitation of legislative lobby day (L.E.A.D.) on the 3rd of May, and speakers are currently being lined up.

Reps. from FaFny, Inc., and ACFC will be meeting with Rep. John Sweeney, 20th Congressional District, New York, on Tue., 18 Jan. Will be discussing shared parenting, tax relief for non-custodial parents, "Parental Rights and Responsibility Act".

Reps. from FaFny, Inc., will be meeting with the Governors staff and reps. from Commissioner Robert Doar's Office (OTDA, Child Support Enforcement Unit) on Tue., 1 Feb.

Assemblyman Harvey Weisenber, D, District 20, Nassau Cnty., has re-introduced shared parenting bill.

Senator Owen Johnson, R, District 4, Suffolk Cnty., has re-introduced Senate version of shared parenting bill.

FaFNY, Inc., currently looking for sponsor to re-introduce Assemblyman Bob Prentiss's Family Court Reform Bill.

Assembly Children and Families Committee has a new chair, Assemblyman William Scarborough, D, District 29, Queens Cnty. Down state FaFNY, Inc., reps. currently attempting to make arrangements to meet with him. Albany Address: LOB, Rm. 602, Albany, N.Y. 12248. District Office Address: 114-52A Merrick Blvd., St. Albans, N.Y. 11434. Telephone: (718) 657-5317; (518) 455-4451. Fax: (718) 657-5317; (518) 455-5522. E-mail: scarbow@assembly.state.ny.us

FaFNY, Inc., finalizing formal grant application, and will be submitting to approximately 100 corporations, foundations, etc. to fund future activities/events, initiatives, programs, etc.

12-20-2004

Representatives of the Coalition of Fathers and Families New York, Inc., met once again with the leadership of the Senate and Assembly this past Thurs. and Fri., 16 and 17 Dec., to continue dialogue regarding proposals for the reform of family and matrimonial law in the State of New York. The top agenda item at these meetings was the New York Bar Association's proposal for no-fault divorce. A strong case was made that, without corresponding reforms in family and matrimonial law, no-fault divorce would constitute a disaster for non-custodial parents, and FaFNY, Inc., indicated that it intends to vigorously oppose the Bar Association's proposal, unless such reforms are made part of the deal.

The legislative reps. grasped intuitively the implications, and the meetings seemed to go very well. They appeared intrigued with the prospect of the horse trade, and we are encouraged that the no-fault divorce proposal may have provided the leverage necessary to achieve real progress during the next legislative session. Indeed, the Assembly reps. indicated that the entire body of Domestic Relations Law is scheduled for review during the session set to begin in late Jan. '05.

Sample letter sent to those seeking help in this biased and broken system:

www.FaFNY.org

The Coalition of Fathers and Families NY, Inc., the NY affiliate of the American Coalition of Fathers and Children

“Working to Keep Fathers and Families Together”

FaFNY.org (518) 383-8202 PO Box 782 Clifton Park, NY 12065 DaDLobby@localnet.com
ACFC.org (800) 978-DADS 22365 El Toro Rd., #335, Lake Forest, CA 92630

12 Dec. '04

Mr. _____
East 17th Street,
Brooklyn, New York 11226

Dear Mr. _____:

Thank you for contacting the Coalition of Fathers and Families New York, Inc., regarding your struggle with issues involving child custody and support. As I noted in our telephone conversation last week, FaFNY, Inc., is primarily a public information, education, and lobbying organization dedicated to the advocacy of family related issues and to preserving the relationships between children and their fathers. We are not a legal services organization, and do not provide case management on an individualized basis. Indeed, the situation for fathers and other non-custodial parents in the State of New York has become so desperate that what little advice and/or guidance we might be able to offer in that regard would be virtually worthless. Regrettably, there is simply little or nothing we can do for you that might hold any reasonable promise of producing tangible results with respect to your immediate personal circumstances.

Currently there are approximately 2.5 million non-custodial parents - plus their families - residing in the State of New York who are also struggling with similar and/or related issues. Tragically, you are only one of literally hundreds of men/fathers and their family members that we hear from almost daily who are looking for help, but who have nowhere to turn, because the New York State Legislature has failed to address these important family related issues.

Acknowledging the legitimacy of the issues, but at the same time, the limits of their own authority, with respect to such matters, the courts have deferred to the legislature to act. Indeed, certain elected representatives have had the vision and the courage to introduce legislative proposals intended to provide desperately needed statutory protections for non-custodial parents and their families. Two examples of such proposals are Assembly Bill A1123, sponsored by Assemblyman Harvey Weisenberg, D, Nassau County, and its corresponding Senate proposal, S3220, sponsored by Senator Owen Johnson, R, Suffolk County, which would establish a rebuttable presumption that, absent a demonstrable showing of parental unfitness and/or potential harm, shared parenting following separation and/or divorce is, indeed, in the best interest of the child(ren). Assemblyman Weisenberg's bill has been assigned to the Children and

Families Committee, where it continues to be held hostage year after year, because of opposition from a small minority of special interests perceived by some to be all powerful and because elected representatives on the Committee lack the courage and political will to move this and other such proposals forward through the legislative processes.

You are invited and encouraged to join our organization and to become actively involved in a growing political and civil rights movement. Please take advantage of the vast amount of information and resource materials available on our web site at www.fafny.org, as well. While doing so, please take just a few moments to review our organizational structure and familiarize yourself with our network of county coordinators. If you are in a position to make yourself available, we invite you to consider becoming our Kings County Coordinator.

In the mean time, provided for you via e-mail are the names and contact information for your elected representatives and the political party operatives in Kings County. You are strongly encouraged to become actively involved on an individual basis by contacting each of these individuals, familiarizing them with the issues, and letting them know that, as your representative, you expect them to begin addressing the issues on your behalf. Perhaps the most important message you can deliver to them is that **you are a father, and that you vote! Let them know that you will be observing to see just how responsive they are – or, are not - and that you intend to cast future votes accordingly.**

Thank you once again for contacting us, and please know that our sincerest best wishes are with you in what we are all too painfully aware is a living Hell. Know also that were we able to provide more practical assistance, we would certain do so. Please stay in touch.

Sincerely,
Randall L. Dickinson
V.P., FaFNY, Inc.
(518) 899-3302

cc: The Honorable Sheldon Silver, Speaker, New York State Assembly
The Honorable Paul A. Tokasz, Majority Leader, New York State Assembly
The Honorable Charles H. Nesbitt, Minority Leader, New York State Assembly
The Honorable Rhoda S. Jacobs, Member, New York State Assembly
The Honorable Joseph L. Bruno, Majority Leader, New York State Senate
The Honorable David A. Paterson, Minority Leader, New York State Senate
The Honorable Kevin S. Parker, Member, New York State Senate
The Honorable Herman D. Farrell, Jr., Chairman, Democratic Party Committee, New York State
Mr. Stephen Minarik, Chairman, Republican Party Committee, New York State
Mr. Frank MacKay, Chairman, Independence Party Committee, New York State
Mr. Michael Long, Chairman, Conservative Party Committee, New York State
Mr. Clarence Norman, Jr., Chairman, Democratic Party Committee, Kings County
Mr. Hy Singer Reda, Chairman, Republican Party Committee, Kings County
Mr. Robert Conroy, Chairman, Independence Party Committee, Kings County
Mr. Gerald Kassar, Chairman, Conservative Party Committee, Kings County

ACTION ITEMS ARE BELOW:

1. Needed: testimony in support of Parental Rights and Responsibilities, False Allegation of DV/Child Abuse, Male Victims of DV, and Parental Alienation Syndrome at the NYS Matrimonial Commission Hearings <http://www.courts.state.ny.us/ip/matrimonial-commission/index.shtml>.

2. If you wish to send items of general interest in New York State please send to the list serve at www.silentmajority.info, e-mail address is on the cc. Most NY Groups (www.FaFNY.org, CRCNYC, etc) use this as a clearing house for information. Also consider www.ANCPR.org as a means of communication and submissions to www.ACFC.org for national distributions. STOP USING THE REPLY ALL ON YOUR E-MAIL SYSTEMS. DO NOT send information as spam, direct it to an individual as appropriate and needed.

3. If you need help look at the "self help" section of www.FaFNY.org. Stop preaching to the choir, stop pissin' and moaning and get to work. Do something. First, for yourself and then organizationally for others. I have been the victim of court bias, DV, False allegation, unlawful arrest, bankruptcy and even though the primary care giving parent lost custody suffered PAS and haven't seen my children in 7 years. For my horrors there are thousands of others with the same or similar story. Every man and woman in the movement for civil rights has a story. Let's work so we all have a SOLUTION!

4. FYI, In New York we have matrimonial commission hearings to present testimony at (which we are doing), we are lobbying the legislature and governors office and are submitting grants and applications for money to open a father center and have numerous public events planned. There is research to be done, reports and testimony to be given and unified actions to be coordinated. Work, NOT "discussion".

5. **CT LEAD is Monday March 21, 2005 in Hartford, CT.** 9-4 BE THERE (I will).

6. **NY LEAD is Tuesday May 3, 2004 in Albany, NY.** BE THERE (I will).

7. (I Testified!) **NY Matrimonial Commission** (<http://www.courts.state.ny.us/ip/matrimonial-commission/index.shtml>) meets (notice here <http://www.courts.state.ny.us/ip/matrimonial-commission/FinalNotice.pdf>) in **Buffalo, NY Thur. April 21, 2005** and those person(s) in neighboring states (PA, OH) could try to testify there. It meets in **NYC on May 9, 2005** and those in CT, NY could try to testify there. Registration form can be downloaded here <http://www.courts.state.ny.us/ip/matrimonial-commission/RegForm.pdf>.

8. IF YOU CAN NOT ATTEND YOU CAN SUBMIT WRITTEN TESTIMONY! An attorney from CA spoke in White Plains so there is no reason other outside organizations should be excluded. If you are excluded please let Jim Hays, DadLobby@localnet.com know and if you do testify or submit written testimony please cc me with it for inclusion in our files. THIS IS A GOOD OPPORTUNITY FOR SOMEONE TO REBUT THE DOMESTIVC VIOLENCE HYSTERIA.

9. Jim Hays, www.FaFNY.org President testified in White Plains and his testimony should be available from the OCA web site in a couple of weeks, the entire written testimony is available from me at DadLobby@localnet.com. Testimony of Randall L. Dickinson, www.FaFNY.org VP is available at

<http://www.courts.state.ny.us/ip/matrimonial-commission/albanyAM.pdf>
Pg. 86, Debby Fellows www.FaFNY.org County Coordinator Chairwoman is on
Pg. 83. Testimony of Renaldo DelGado, Berkshire Fatherhood Coalition
is at <http://www.courts.state.ny.us/ip/matrimonial-commission/RegForm.pdf> pg. 39 of the testimony.

10. Of special note is NYS Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance Commission Doar on pg. 68 and especially page 79, line 21 where he openly talks of the bias that fathers receive in our courts and also of the need for shared parenting!

For further contact info. on coordination of testimony contact Jim Hays at DadLobby@localnet.com.

www.FaFNY.org

The Coalition of Fathers and Families NY, Inc.,
the NY affiliate of the American Coalition of Fathers and Children

“Working to Keep Fathers and Families Together”

FaFNY.org (518) 383-8202 PO Box 782 Clifton Park, NY 12065 DaDLobby@localnet.com
ACFC.org (800) 978-DADS 22365 El Toro Rd., #335, Lake Forest, CA 92630

Ask Jim!

The unsolicited response of a New York State family activist to family policy problems expressed on the internet and otherwise.

Question:

ROGER @prodigy.net> wrote:

We also forgot about the woman in South Carolina who drove her two boys into a lake strapped into their car seats, because her new boyfriend didn't want her with the kids. And the Kansas City doctor who drugged her two older children, and then set the house on fire, because of a divorce custody battle. Of course at my age my mind may not remember all of the facts, but I do know that misandry is not in the dictionary or spell check, but misogyny is.

-----Original Message-----

From: michael [mailto:@yahoo.com]

Sent: Sunday, December 26, 2004 1:14 AM

To: familyrights@yahoogroups.com

Subject: [Silent Majority - NY Family Rights] Re: NATIONAL POST: COMMENTARY: GEORGE JONAS: "The myth of the gentle r sex"

I have supported my son for 10 years. If I make on paper 58,000 does she get 17% of my gross. That would be about 700 a month. i have other kids. Is that the way it is in NY or can you negotiate?

Answer:

Dear Roger and Michael, et al:

First, feel free to check out the ten myth's of child support at http://fafny.org/Policy_MythsChildSupport.htm and other information and links of assistance.

Second, that's the way it is NATIONALLY. You will be labeled a "non custodial parent". You will be able to, at best, maintain a superficial "visitation" relationship with your child based on the whims and desires of the "custodial" parent. You pay the support, no matter how draconian, or you get destroyed. It's that simple. If you are lucky you can stay even with the payments, including the forced college payments, until the last kid is 21 then you will be doing good (yup, you pay to 21 contrary to the State of New York which paying for an orphan, only takes care of them until they are 18 then it's out the door). Non monetary support and time spent with your child does not matter.

The “child support” amount is set on gross leaving you the net (17% = about 35% of gross, 25% = about 48% of gross in NY plus unlimited medical and child care expenses). You will be left with a small percentage of what you earn and there is no provision to ensure that you have the means to care for you, your spouse or your other children or even your child during the times you have them. There is no offset for the time you have your child or for the expenses you pay for him/her. Additionally the Judge can “impute” income onto you; so for example if you receive housing for free or help in hard times from a family member (parent, sibling or spouse) or even if the Judge just thinks you can earn more (had a good business year last year or plenty of overtime) that can be added into your income. When the orders for support become high you might hit the maximum deduction threshold here is where the federal and state government steps in to “protect you”. If your support order is more than 65% of your income then the federal government says your pay can only be garnished at 65% of gross (60% for all garnishments but 65% if you owe child support). As the money is taken from your check they will leave you with 35% of your gross (about 17% of your income) and continuing arrearages. As the arrearages build you will be turned in as a bad credit risk and then all of your professional and drivers licenses will be suspended (hey, they even suspend your fishing license so you can't take your kid fishing). They will then bring you in front of the Judge. You will say, “How am I supposed to earn money after you took my license to drive and my car registration? He will tell you it's your own fault for that and will advise you these arrearages are a “problem” (please don't respond “no sh** Sherlock” to the Judge, he will almost definitely just immediately jail you) and he will tell you to go earn the money and pay the arrears or you will be thrown in jail. He will give you a short return date to do this. He means it.

Here is where you will leave the court and go to your safety net, your aging parents. No one else will loan you money (you're a bad credit risk) you don't have a pot to pi** in so you can't liquidate assets and you don't have the means to earn more so they are your last hope. Additionally, being good citizens and family supporters they don't want to see their child go to “Debtors Prison”. They have also suffered from the separation of them and their grand child, you see they are “non custodial grand parents” and they almost never get to see their grand child and if you go to jail they not only loose you but they loose their grand child as they have no right to access to him/her. They pony up even if it means having to take a part time job at McDonalds flipping burgers with teenagers as they spent a chunk of their retirement nest egg. The problem here is this is a “one shot” income source, you get to use it only once and they are broke, but the arrearages keep building.

Now, at this point your current marriage is probably on the rocks, with your wife at wits end on how she can support HER children. She has no protection from the government while married to you, in fact she is persecuted by them because she IS married to you. But wait; what if she divorces you? She is now a “custodial parent” and has the protection of the government. She can get her share for her kids; so now there goes the marriage. They take the measly assets you have left and split them between the women who own your children. You have no job, being fired because you can't make it to work without a car. Payments stop and you are tossed in jail for six months. You think, “thank God, at least the child support stops while I'm in jail”. Wrong again Roscoe, incarceration is considered a “voluntary reduction in income”. You did it on purpose and the support is still building, due when you get out. So for six months you guard you're a\$\$, both figuratively and literally, from the career criminals who would beat and violate you. And occasionally you have the time to ponder things and think, first, how am I gong to get out from under this debt, and second, I MISS MY KIDS. After six months you're released with a mound of child support debt and no prospects.

You go to see your kid; at least you can “visit”. Once there you will probably find that you have lost your “access rights” while you were in jail. If your ex does allow you to visit your child looks at you funny. You see, for six months when she said, “where's Daddy?” the response was, “in jail, he's a deadbeat who doesn't care for us”. Even if your child isn't alienated against you she sees what shows up at her door. It's not a strong father who can guide and protect her, it's a beat dead, dead broke, disenfranchised man with no hope or prospects. Visits will be strained and awkward, like they were when your parents came to see you in jail. With no parent-child bond left you stop going; after all it's not anyone's priority so why should it be yours, you just need

to get to work and PAY THAT SUPPORT. You have about six months to pay the arrearages or its back to hoosegow for you.

So here you sit, no support network or means to pay debt. Parents stretched thin, your family destroyed. It's here you think about running, you have nothing to live for now and no prospects for the future as the weight of oppression is ever present. Ah, but the federal government has not only made you a criminal for not paying financial debts, they have ensured you can't run or hide. A high ranking bureaucrat with the Federal Office of Child Support Enforcement once said, "we want to build a box around them, one from which they can't escape" in explaining the means they will take to "protect" your children by taking your money. So the Fed's have made it a Felony to go across state lines while you are in arrears on child support. Ah, I'll just flee the country! Nope, they got your passport when they took the other professional licenses and most countries have extradition treaties for "Felony" criminals. You now have two options, one is to live the life of a pauper oppressed at the whim of bureaucrats who get you in the sights about once or twice a year and jail you or just smack you around a little or you can take your own life. A life of misery or death? Many choose the latter with suicides among men post divorce about ten times that of women (Gee, I wonder why?).

Why you ask? Why would they do this? Well you see men, its simple. The Legislators and Judge's want to keep getting elected and paid for their "work". Follow the money. They pander men's chivalry to protect women and children and to the women's vote portraying themselves as protectors of women and children, sort of government chivalry, to get re-elected. After all, who can vote against protecting mom's and kids? "What", you say; it has no bearing on making it safe for children and in fact has negative consequences for them? It's the appearance that counts; and they will never figure it out unless they really look at the issues. And of course a lot of the blame sits with (they), us men. Us you say! Yeah US; We sit around on Sunday afternoons with our hand wrapped around a can of beer not paying attention to the destruction of families which is occurring around us. As long as each man's family is intact (appears to be anyway) he doesn't pay attention to the destruction occurring around him and even supports it, "I pay for MY kids, that DEADBEAT should pay for HIS! But we never popped our heads up from our gopher holes to see that those "deadbeats" were "beat dead" buck gophers who were caught in a trap. And when it happens to us, one at a time, the only thing we can do is run around looking for help simply for ourselves, "get me out of this trap". I know this because that was me.

When we are given the cold hard facts above we rally, not against our oppressors but, against the organizations that "did nothing for ME". We then individually do the best we can, barely keeping ourselves from jail and maintaining a marginal visiting relationship with our children and DO NOTHING TO CHANGE THE SYSTEM FOR THE NEXT POOR BAST*** who is safe and sound in his gopher hole (at least he thinks so). I volunteer at one of those organizations and my phone rings off the wall from people looking for help but sits mostly silent when the call to arms is rung. The blame is heaped upon ME and the organization for doing nothing to help the individual, never recognizing that no one can do anything, the die is cast.

So Michael, Roger and all you other Tom Dick and Harry's who are just learning of the injustices, and also those of you have felt the crack of the oppressors whip but moved on with scars healed over, you have two choices. The first is to accept things the way they are. The second is to do something about it. Its here I usually fall back on the advice of my own father (he lived through WWII, Korea and Vietnam and I think he had some wisdom about "doing something"); his response to me when I used to whine about life's injustices? "Nice sob story, that's really terrible but now that you're done whining, WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO ABOUT IT BOY?"

Well boys and girls, what ARE you going to do about it?

Jim Hays.

For further see www.FaFNY.org

Ask Jim is Mr. James H. Hays is a former Military Policeman with the US Army and a 20 year law enforcement veteran currently a NYS Environmental Conservation Police Officer. He is active with his union currently an Executive Board Member with the Agency Law Enforcement Service Unit of Council 82, AFSCME representing Agency State Police Officers and Executive Board Member with Local 1873 En-Con Police.

In 1994 he was a devoted primary care giving married father who railed against “those” deadbeats. In 1995 he was tossed into the “deadbeat” heap and for three years fought against the system to be a parent to his children. He went to “Father Rights” groups which were mostly “pity parties” where men whined about how bad they had it. They were no help. The die cast, he lost. In 1998, after seeing his career ruined and suspended from work, driven to bankruptcy with just \$20 in his pocket and no assets, and faced with the option of going to jail (and losing his kids) or losing his kids and paying the “child excise tax” he chose the latter, but with a simple vow. He vowed to never, ever, give up the fight to change the system.

He worked to salvage what was left of his career and went back to college, knowledge is power, to get his degree in men’s and families studies. He paid his (oppressive) bills and bought a couple of business suits. He took the motto, “Make It Happen”. He then went to work and began lobbying the Federal and NYS Government for change

In 2001, with a Board of men and women with over 50 years of combined father advocacy experience, he co-founded the Coalition of Fathers and Families NY, Inc. a non profit (with lobbying designation) organization. The organization, focused on social and political change, is making headway. It takes hard work, day in and day out. In 2005 he re-focused his energies to fight injustice. He figures he has about 20 years left on this earth to Make It Happen. He will listen to your story of woe, once. Then he will tell you to get to work.

www.FaFNY.org

Closing Statements

Here at FaFNY.org we receive tons of e-mails, letters and phone calls for “help”. The truth is the system is set up to force you to get an attorney and if it is going to trample your rights there is little that can be done about it unless you have millions of dollars, and even then it occurs often. We don’t sugar coat it here. The call for help is coming in because the person didn’t expect to be treated the way he, or she, was and they want to know about the “rights”. Well, even though the courts pretend that you have some parental rights left the truth is they have been stripped from you for no cause. As a “non custodial” parent or a non custodial family you have no rights. That is the cold hard fact that you need to accept. You also need to accept the fact that the court sees no value in your continued relationship with your children. You also need to accept that the court will place the “child support” (really a child excise tax) at levels that will drive you to the brink of poverty. Pay the child support or go to jail. You need to accept the fact that the rights you thought you had do not exist. **But you don’t have to live with it!**

Yes, that’s right. You have to accept the facts as they are put upon you. It is hard to ignore the lashing, or the scars it leaves. But you don’t have to live with it. You can fight injustice. You can make a difference, for yourself in the near future but more importantly for others, and especially your children! Ask yourself this question, “is what happened to me right?”. If your answer is NO then you need to step up and work to change things.

First, register to vote and register in a party also.

Second let your VOICE be heard. Not once, but on a weekly basis. Phone, fax, e-mail and visit your elected representatives and ask them what they are going to do about it. When they run for re-election get them at public meetings and ask them why they did nothing to help you or your children.

Third, regardless of party or any other issue vote only for candidates which are pro family! Let them know being the lesser of two evils is not enough to gain your vote. They have to sponsor, support and PASS pro family legislation here in New York and Nationally!

Fourth, join a father, mother or family organization that is working for CHANGE. I’m not talking about one of these groups that holds monthly “pity parties” where the men all get together and whine about how bad their case is and how they got screwed by “women”. I’m talking about a group such as FaFNY (and ACFC Nationally) which recognizes that this is a family civil rights issue and is working to change the broken system, not teach you how to accept the family raping or make it “less painful”. Groups that are lobbying legislatures, preparing and giving testimony on behalf of families, writing letters to editors, producing TV shows, attending protest events, in other words those that are working to change the biased and broken system not “fix” your individual case.

Fifth, get active. I know its hard. You have little time left with your children and prioritize that. Then you have to work like a dog to pay that draconian “child excise tax”. But you can do SOMETHING. If you look you can find a few hours. Get active in an organization. Pick ONE event that you will help with and do it each and every year. Participate in Legislative Day,

volunteer to help at Albany's Tulip Festival, write a letter to ALL of your legislators every month, phone them once a week, send them an e-mail every day. Do something, and KEEP DOING IT. Remember, many hands lighten the load. So if you do one thing and keep doing it and someone else does one thing and keeps on doing it. Many one things, combined with each other, becomes a movement. So drop your gender, religious and race biased perspectives, drop your "anti" whatever views and your desire to tear things down and join together in a "family Civil Rights Movement". One based upon the fundamental parental rights and equality for all to raise their children as they see fit.

Sixth, and last but not least, get someone in each and every county to coordinate with FaFNY and become a County Coordinator. Whether you run an organization which provides services to families, you hold educational seminars or monthly meetings, whether you represent "non custodial" mothers, "non custodial" fathers, children or families or whether your organization is based upon effecting social and/or political change then you are a part of FaFNY's Family Civil Rights Movement.

The tasks before us seem insurmountable, I know that. There is much work to be done and so few resources to use against those that foster injustice. But you have to start each day with the first step, it proceeds all else. And when we all begin to take those small steps, and come together in voice and purpose, then I think we will find that what seemed like a long journey against insurmountable odds is actually achievable. When FAMILY members come together for our civil rights *and achieve them* then I think that we may achieve what our forefathers intended in writing the constitution, equality for all and the ability to pursue our dreams. Take that first step.

I Can: Photo below of Assemblywoman Sandra R. Galef (D, I) (District 90, Westchester County) James Hays, FaFNY Pres. and Randall L. Dickinson, FaFNY VP. Assem. Galef had sponsored the NY Constitutional change to gender neutral language legislation which passed two successive legislative sessions and was approved by the voters. FaFNY met with Assem. Galef in her district office asking for her to support terminology change legislation; from "visitation" to "parenting time". She was so impressed with the presentation that she not only signed on to terminology changes but also signed on in support of shared parenting legislation. One first step.

