

Michael Leshner  
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Dear Michael,

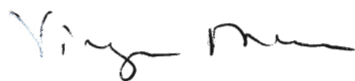
I write to thank you for your talk here at the University of Virginia on the very important topic of the challenges women face in family court.

Although few are familiar with the exigencies of the family court system, women who have been involved in it have told us the story of the unreality of having their family caught in the process. It is striking that, as you say, women can and are still being very effectively controlled through the threat of losing their children in a custody battle. There is little that can be more effective than this threat to a mother and it has been instrumental in keeping women in abusive relationships and marriages. In short, the refusal of family court personnel to recognize the coercive nature of a custody battle initiated by a father as the last stage in a series of abuses sets a mother up for continued abuse by the system itself as psychologists, judges, and guardians ad litem who have no accountability to the world outside the family court and no review by outside authorities may hold a mother's very protectiveness against her.

I believe you have a strong argument in saying that these situations are a fundamental violation of a mother's civil rights. Your evidence is strong and your point is well researched and presented in a balanced way. I strongly urge you to continue to make it known publicly and to fight on behalf of these mothers.

Again, many thanks.

Best regards,



Virginia Moran  
Senior Associate Director