

Parents to protest alleged injustices of Child Protective Services

Patrick Howley *The Epoch Times* | September 9, 2019



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Bay Area Families United is partnering with more than 30 groups nationwide to stage the Oct. 4 rally, which organizers hope will shed light on the disenfranchisement of parents by what they view as a profit-driven system that's incentivized to place children in foster care. The rally is slated for noon local time.

"I started protesting after I got my son back," Adolfo Gonzalez, the rally's chief organizer, told *The Epoch Times*, saying that "CPS conspired with the mother and the police department to take my son."

"I expect thousands" of parents at the event, Gonzalez said.

"Right now, we are at 35 groups and growing. So many people want to come from L.A., San Diego, Fresno. I have so many strong advocates flying in," including a documentary crew.

"The sheriff just called me and said we have to increase presence because there's going to be a pro-CPS group to protest YOU guys," Gonzalez said. "They said we're going to need more sheriffs to guard you." Gonzalez also noted the presence of many pro-CPS social media trolls on pages he frequents. "These people don't stop."

"CPS is legally kidnapping children," Toni Triano of Boise, Idaho, told The Epoch Times, noting that she's flying to Sacramento for the Oct. 4 rally. "It's picking up momentum with advocates and victims across the country. People are saying enough is enough.

"There's so much corruption and people are tired of it," Triano said. "I think CPS needs to be shut down."

Many parents express contempt for the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA), signed by President Bill Clinton in 1997, which mandates that states terminate most parents' rights after their children spend 15 months in foster care. Activists also bristle at the lucrative opportunities available for foster parents, courtesy of the states, and at family court mandates that parents must cover their court costs throughout their custody battles.

"They tried to get me to pay a professional to talk to my daughter," Barry White, a military veteran who is attending the rally, told The Epoch Times, adding that he has not seen his daughter in four years and that he's reaching out to the NAACP for help with his case. "My daughter said several times she wants to come home, but they said I couldn't record that or show anybody that."

"Recent reports have consistently indicated that a large number of victims of child sex trafficking were at one time in the foster care system," the U.S. State Department stated in its 2019 report on human trafficking, which has increased parents' fears about the system.

"People don't want to get involved until it happens to them, because they don't get it," Katherine Lester, a mother of an addict who lost her grandchild to a closed adoption after a prolonged fight with CPS, told The Epoch Times. "Why isn't anyone in Congress bringing this up? I took in six families for a meeting with (Democrat congressman) Jimmy Panetta. He said he would get back to me. He never has, but he's doing work on behalf of illegal immigrant families."

"I keep writing [Sen.] Kamala Harris. I keep writing [Sen.] Dianne Feinstein," Lester said, but with no commitment from lawmakers to advocate for families.

"Every single parent that I have worked with who has a viable case ends up having a gag order placed on them," Breeauna Sagdal, a regional director of the parental rights advocacy group Punished 4 Protecting and a speaker at the event, told The Epoch Times.

"When it is abundantly clear the state has made a mistake, the judge will admonish the court and prevent any further disclosure even if any identifying information is removed. The story itself is still considered a breach of privacy, and so really what the court is doing is covering for Child Protective Services. I think my biggest concern in all of this is we're seeing a

breakdown of trust in our justice system and our government in general with the general public," she said.

"Children are put on multiple psychotropic antipsychotic drugs. When children come into this system with any kind of behavioral thing, they are pumped full of meds," Sagdal said.

"I see such a consistent pattern of abuse," Sagdal said, referring to children being placed in out-of-state facilities where they often can't be contacted by their biological families. "Our state is not only benefiting significantly from out-of-state facilities, these children are going missing without a trace."

The Epoch Times recently reported on a series of child molestation allegations arising from the Contra Costa County foster care system in California; that county's Department of Children and Family Services is reeling from the arrests of a father-son duo accused of molesting their foster care children.

The state of California records all missing foster care children as "runaways," with no possibility for the children to be categorized as kidnap victims.

"The California Department of Social Services receives reports from California counties via the statewide child welfare data system," Adam Weintraub of the California Department of Social Services wrote The Epoch Times in an email.

"There is no separate category for 'missing' children—all children who leave the system without explanation, are grouped together under the category of 'runaway.' (Running away is the most common reason for leaving the foster care system without explanation, and many of these children eventually return to a foster home, their parent or a relative.)"