

Mother's Day at the White House on May 9, 2010 was a fabulous beginning of our national activist mother's movement!

The day was clear, with unseasonal gusts of wind that swept the air clean and definitely gave us a feeling of exhilaration. We started gathering at 10:30 am, just a few at first, then more and more began to arrive until our ranks swelled to over 100 people.

Almost everyone wore white, which gave an angelic look to the group. When we put on white t-shirts with Mothers of Lost Children lettering in the front, we began to look and feel like the powerful team we are becoming.

We unfurled the huge white banner, designed to look like the exquisite banners held by the suffragists in the early 1900's. It tells the President and First Lady this terrible story in a few short lines.

**Mr. President and First Lady:
58,000 children per year
are placed by U.S. family courts
with their batterers and sexual molesters.
Their safe mothers are powerless to protect them.
Please stop these violations of human rights.**

We unrolled big signs that added to the story. Two people held a side of each sign.

This silent vigil is for the
Lost Children of Family Court

These children were taken from their
safe, nurturing **mothers**.

Family court gave the children to
violent, incestuous **men**.

The children live in court-created
prisoner-of-war camps.

They are raped.
They are beaten.
Some are murdered.

Their mothers are prohibited
from rescuing them.

This is a dirty war against
babies and little children.

YES, YOU CAN
order a **Federal investigation!**

YES, YOU CAN
convene a **Federal Grand**
Jury inquest!

YES, YOU CAN
set the **Lost Children of**
Family Courts free!

Before the winds rent the signs, the story was told to the President and First Lady, to the domestic and foreign press, to curious tourists and to documentary makers. We stood in silent vigil from 11:00 am to noon. More and more joined us. We passed out hundreds of 2010 Mother's Day Proclamations to all who stopped to look at the banner and the signs. On the back was printed the original Mothers Day Proclamation of 1870.

Mother's Day Proclamation

Mothers of Lost Children, Washington DC, 2010

Whereas: Research by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention finds that children's exposure to traumas such as child physical abuse, incest and witnessing domestic violence have severe negative effects that can last a lifetime and that childhood adverse experiences are the major risk factors for the leading causes of illness and death in the United States¹; and

Whereas: Domestic violence is a strong predictor of child physical abuse, increasing the risk from 5% after one violent act to 100% after 50 violent acts²; and

Whereas: Child sexual abuse allegations are extremely rare in custody cases (2-6%)³, are just as likely to be true as at any other time (two-thirds are substantiated)⁴, and fathers are far more likely to intentionally make false allegations (21%) than mothers (1%)⁵; and

Whereas: Domestic violence, child abuse and incest may not become known until the child's parents separate, and abuse may begin or escalate after separation; and

Whereas: Non-scientific theories such as alienation theories which assume that the children's reports of physical or sexual abuse are coached or fabricated by the protective parent result in children being inappropriately ordered into unsupervised contact with their identified batterers and molesters⁶; and

Whereas: Violent parents (usually fathers) are much more likely to seek sole custody and are successful about 70% of the time⁷; and

Whereas: More than 58,000 children a year are ordered into unsupervised contact with physically or sexually abusive parents following divorce in the United States⁸ and a growing number of children are murdered while in their violent parents' custody and control⁹; and

Whereas: Children's physical and sexual safety is fundamental to their health and welfare, and must take precedence over abusive parents' claims to custody or visitation.

Therefore: Be it resolved that:

1. A **Congressional Hearing** on family court abuses and corruption be convened.
2. A **complete investigation** be ordered by the President, requesting that the U.S. Attorney General investigate family court policies, practices and procedures in California, New York, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Florida, and Hawaii, states from which advocacy organizations receive an unusually high number of complaints that children are ordered to live with batterers and molesters.
3. A **Federal Grand Jury** be convened to ensure that these children are with their safe parents.

¹ <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/ace> and <http://www.cestudy.org>

² Ross, *Risk of Physical Abuse to Children of Spouse Abusing Parents*, 20(7)Child Abuse & Neglect, 589-98,1996

³ Thoennes & Tjaden, *The Extent, Nature, and Validity of Child Sexual Abuse Allegations in Custody and Visitation Disputes*, 14(2) Child Sexual Abuse & Neglect, 151-63, 1990

⁴ Brown, Frederico, Hewitt & Sheehan, *Revealing the Existence of Child Abuse in the Context of Marital Breakdown and Custody and Access Disputes*, 24(6) Child Abuse & Neglect, 849-85, 2000

⁵ Bala & Schuman, *Allegations of Sexual Abuse When Parents Have Separated*, 17 Canadian Family Law Quarterly, 191-241, 2000

⁶ *Violence and the Family: Report of the American Psychological Association Presidential Task Force on Violence and the Family*, www.nnflp.org/apa/APA_task_force.htm; and unpublished research by Geraldine Stahly, PhD

⁷ *Violence and the Family: Report of the American Psychological Association Presidential Task Force on Violence and the Family*, www.nnflp.org/apa/APA_task_force.htm; American Judges Foundation, *Domestic Violence and the Court House: Understanding the Problem... Knowing the Victim*, <http://aja.ncsc.dni.us/domviol/page5.html>; and unpublished research by Geraldine Stahly, PhD

⁸ www.leadershipcouncil.org

⁹ <http://dastardlydads.blogspot.com/2010/02>

Mothers' Day Proclamation

Julia Ward Howe, Boston, 1870

Mother's Day was originally started after the Civil War, as a protest to the carnage of that war, by women who had lost their sons. Here is the original Mother's Day Proclamation from 1870.

Arise then...women of this day!

Arise, all women who have hearts!

Whether your baptism be of water or of tears!

Say firmly:

"We will not have questions answered by irrelevant agencies,

Our husbands will not come to us, reeking with carnage,

For caresses and applause.

Our sons shall not be taken from us to unlearn

All that we have been able to teach them of charity, mercy and patience.

We, the women of one country,

Will be too tender of those of another country

To allow our sons to be trained to injure theirs."

From the bosom of a devastated Earth a voice goes up with

Our own. It says: "Disarm! Disarm!

The sword of murder is not the balance of justice."

Blood does not wipe out dishonor,

Nor violence indicate possession.

As men have often forsaken the plough and the anvil

At the summons of war,

Let women now leave all that may be left of home

For a great and earnest day of counsel.

Let them meet first, as women, to bewail and commemorate the dead.

Let them solemnly take counsel with each other as to the means

Whereby the great human family can live in peace...

Each bearing after his own time the sacred impress, not of Caesar,

But of God -

In the name of womanhood and humanity, I earnestly ask

That a general congress of women without limit of nationality,

May be appointed and held at someplace deemed most convenient

And the earliest period consistent with its objects,

To promote the alliance of the different nationalities,

The amicable settlement of international questions,

The great and general interests of peace.

At noon there was a press conference and speak out by advocates, mothers and supporters, including Mildred Mohammad, ex wife of the Beltway Sniper. Their amplified words could be heard clearly by the White House. Was anyone listening? We pray they were.

At about 1:30 pm, the parade began, led by parade Marshall Kathy Lee and followed by the huge banner held by Monica and Theresa. Over 100 people marched. Many held signs and posters.

The parade moved slowly down 17th Street on the sidewalk on the far side of the White House to Constitution Avenue, six or seven long blocks away, and stopped on the corner.

The Washington world saw and read about safe nurturing mothers whose children had been so cruelly removed from them and given to violent, incestuous men by U. S. family courts.

Then slowly, the parade returned along the same route.

I had stayed with the sound equipment as required by the police permit. Kneeling to lock one of the huge speakers into its black case, I looked up just as this stately procession returned and made its way around the corner from 17th Street. It turned onto Pennsylvania Avenue, a wide empty sand colored boulevard in front of the White House, blocked off from traffic, with police cars and troupers stationed strategically to ensure a peaceful march.

The banner was held high. It billowed out with the wind in its sails. The marchers moved slowly, calmly, with their signs held up, tired arms refusing to give in to fatigue. They kept coming and coming. It was a never ending army of grief-stricken nurturing mothers, our nation's mothers on Mother's Day, whose children had been torn from them under color of authority.

More and more mothers and their supporters came into view until it seemed like the wide boulevard was filled to capacity with the mothers in white, the banner, the signs, the advocates, the supporters, and others, including several children, who chose to join us that day. It was a sight never to be forgotten. I was moved to tears.

Connie