

January 29, 2014

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Odalis Sharp. I am a single mom of ten (10), yes, ten children. And if I may add, they are ten beautiful, gifted, giving, talented, intelligent, loving, God given children. Each one is a blessing from the Lord! They are truly miracles and gifts to me, and I love them dearly! But, I must mention that they are also very tough children that have held up my arms when I was weak, and have been a joy to me when sadness would have overcome me. They are the best kids in the whole world, even with their imperfections! I wish you could meet them personally some day, and then you will know that what I have said is true, and that I have only told the half of their beautiful qualities and all they mean to me.

I want to introduce you to the One who deserves the credit for the above children. It is God, Himself, the one who created them and gives them and me the breath we breathe and everything we enjoy. It is by this God, that I have had the strength to raise them up, teach them the things they know, feed and clothe them, care for them, sing with them, and just simply do all the wonderful things together that we do from day to day as a family.

In the year 2011, my eldest son, Caleb, at the age of 15, became dissatisfied with the right, wholesome, and pure path in which I was leading him, in which God was leading us, and decided to run away. He had the way of life and death before him. Shortly after having been found, taken to the hospital for examination, and returned in good health to me, the agency of the DCF came into my life. And this is where the living nightmare begins.

There is simply too much information concerning this matter, to be able to express, without writing a book, and I mean that literally, but I will try to explain what I think is important for you to consider.

First, I believe, and you will probably know this by my above statements, that there is Divine order. I believe that after God, the first institution that God created, is the home. With that being said, I believe that if parents truly love God and follow His instructions when it comes to their children, they will have the children's best interest at hand, in mind, in heart, and in their children's lives. This does not mean that there will not be opposition, distractions, and challenges that will try to detour them. But, still the advantage will be theirs, because you cannot get better than God and His perfection when it comes to choosing what is in a child's best interest. That said, the DCF has tried and continues to use the words "in the child's best interest" for their own personal gain and not for the children.

I have experienced this firsthand in my family. When the DCF came into my life as described earlier, they used these words to try to take all ten children away from me, their mother, without any clear and convincing evidence or reason to take them away. There was a court hearing for the removal of these children within a 24 hour period, but all ten cases were dismissed for lack of evidence. Thank God! And even though some of you may not like my giving credit to God, it was a miracle! According to a TFI worker, all my children had already been set up to be in foster care. To think, that we almost endured the destruction of our family, is mindboggling!

Furthermore, not even a week after the above mentioned court hearing, my son, Caleb ran away from home again. And while this was not a good choice, the DCF, the DA and the District Court Judge only fostered the problem, usurping the authority of the parent and deciding that they knew was in the best interest of the child. They used the system to remove the child from me, the parent, to his detriment! The following is just a summary to describe Caleb's life before and after DCF stole him and the result of them removing him from his home supposedly "in the best interest of the child".

They took a child that has been raised in the fashion I somewhat described recently and will further describe now. My son was taught in the Word of God, living amongst a big family (including 9 siblings), with home cooked meals around the table. My son lived in the small town of Auburn, KS, on 28 acres with 2 dogs and a horse at the time, playing outside and tramping the property instead of watching TV. He excelled in music including singing, playing the trumpet, guitar, and piano at home, and for concerts in our community and the surrounding community. He was homeschooled (with a 4.0 GPA), skilled in computers to the extent of producing our first homemade music CD with cover and all. My son enjoyed family fun, which included both indoor and outdoor activities, such as: fishing, swimming, horseback riding, fossil hunting, shooting bb guns, long walks in the country, tramping, birthday parties, board games, puzzles, good wholesome movies and more. Caleb my son enjoyed mowing the lawn and leading his younger brothers and sisters in kickball and basketball games, and even his mother, in a good game of soccer. Caleb loved to read and was an avid reader. Caleb was brought up in a home where good morals were taught. He was taught to stay pure until marriage. He was taught to be clean both inwardly and outwardly. The path I taught him to keep was one that "shineth more and more unto the perfect day". I, we, miss him!

Now, since the agency of the DCF, the DA, and the Judge removed him from his home, Caleb was taken into foster care to live in Junction City, KS, a very different lifestyle than the one in which he grew. I cannot speak of the details of his life, as he was kept from me. I will describe to the best of my knowledge what I know. He was put in a Single-male home with two other foster children. He was living in an apartment with no immediate yard. He was enrolled in public school where God is not allowed. He was ridiculed for making good grades and doing

his homework, and at one point called me in utter tears and depression for all he was experiencing in his new environment. Caleb spent most of his free time watching TV and movies, and rarely read a good book. Caleb was exposed to unmonitored, inappropriate movies. Caleb was around bad influences, such as, drunkenness, and nudity and sex. Caleb was exposed and introduced to cigarette smoking and illegal drugs, and at one point ended up in the hospital emergency room, drug overdosed. He claims the drugs were forced on him. To this day, I do not know. Caleb had very minimal access to his family and found himself to be very lonely, sad, and in all kinds of trouble. He even incurred some felony charges. The child soon ended up in a psychiatric ward in just a short time. This is only the beginning of Caleb's life while in state custody. God help us! He then was transferred to another foster home and public school. Again Caleb ended up in the hospital and psychiatric ward. And now the system, against my will and first Dr.'s recommendation, put Caleb on meds. All the while I fought to get him back to no avail. Finally, after 7 months, with only one alternative, I signed residential custody to Caleb's Father in IN, and Caleb was out of state custody. I do not think this was the best, but it was better than watching my son slowly die in state custody. I was given no other choice by the DCF and TFI and the Courts. My son has lost his testimony, dropped out of school, lost his purity. He no longer excels in his beautiful gifts of music and has remained away from his family for nearly three years. What a path The DCF, the DA, and the Judge have led him to! How Sad! I could only pray and hope that someday soon, my son will make his way back to God and back home.

I have nowhere near exhausted myself as to the harm that has been done to our family. At this point in time, nearly three years later, I am representing myself, Pro-se, against the unreasonable agency of the DCF, and against the unjust judgment of the Judge of District Court, in the Court of Appeals. There have been many unjust judgments made by DCF in the name of it is "in the best interest of the child".

This testimony is only one of many that proves that the system should not be able to use the words "in the best interest of the child", as it clearly shows that they do not truly know what is the best interest of the child. It also shows that the DCF, the Attorneys and the Judges only make matters worse and harm the children and families, by not considering, what was the "least detrimental alternative for the child". It proves the destruction that occurs when the Divine order is altered and disregarded. I believe some serious changes need to be made.

For today, I make a request for the following changes to be made for HB2450. I request a change from "in the best interest of the child" to "least detrimental alternative for the child". I also request the following be added to the definitions:

**“Least Detrimental Alternative” means any action taken by any individual shall be least detrimental to the child’s well being to cause the child the least harm;
and;
that the court shall determine from the evidence presented as to what would be the least detrimental to a child’s well being and without an initial finding of detriment the court shall not remove the child from the parent.**

I, Ms. Odalis Sharp, would also like to request the opportunity to give an oral testimony at the Children and Seniors Committee hearing for HB2450 on Thursday, January 30, 2014, @9:00 a.m.

Sincerely for the Children and Families,

Ms. Odalis Sharp

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