IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF MARYLAND
NORTHERN DIVISION

CANDACE LOVETT, *et al.*, on behalf of themselves and all others similarly situated,

Plaintiffs,

v.

BALTIMORE CITY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES, *et al*.,

Defendants.

Case No. 1:26-cv-04889

PLAINTIFFS' MOTION FOR A TEMPORARY RESTRAINING ORDER ON BEHALF OF NAMED PLAINTIFFS AND A CLASSWIDE PRELIMINARY INJUNCTION

Plaintiffs move for a temporary restraining order on behalf of plaintiffs Candace Lovett, Edward Lovett, Regina Roland, C.C., R.R., and R.H., and for a preliminary injunction on behalf of the putative parents' and children's classes, enjoining defendants the Baltimore City Department of Social Services (BCDSS), Brandi Stocksdale, in her official capacity as BCDSS Director, and Raven Smith and Adeniyi Afolabi in their official capacities as BCDSS caseworkers, from the conduct specified in the proposed order accompanying this motion.

November 23, 2026

/s/ Marja Plater
(signed with permission of Marja Plater)
Marja Plater (#29706)
Kaitlin Banner*
Angela Rambert*
WASHINGTON LAWYERS' COMMITTEE
FOR CIVIL RIGHTS & URBAN AFFAIRS
700 Fourteenth Street N.W., Suite 400
Washington, D.C. 20005
(202) 319-1000
marja_plater@washlaw.org
kaitlin_banner@washlaw.org
angela_rambert@washlaw.org

Blair Decker†
Carolyn A. DeLone*
Aidan Coleman (#30303)
HOGAN LOVELLS CADWALADER US LLP
555 Thirteenth Street N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20004
(202) 637-5600
blair.decker@hlc.com
carrie.delone@hlc.com
aidan.coleman@hlc.com

Attorneys for plaintiffs C.C., R.R., R.H., and the putative children's class

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Kevin M. Lamb

Kevin M. Lamb (#20344)
Daniel S. Volchok†
Derek A. Woodman†
Molly Dillaway†
Andrew Nell†
WILMER CUTLER PICKERING
HALE AND DORR LLP
2100 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20037
(202) 663-6000
kevin.lamb@wilmerhale.com
daniel.volchok@wilmerhale.com
derek.woodman@wilmerhale.com
molly.dillaway@wilmerhale.com
andrew.nell@wilmerhale.com

Alan E. Schoenfeld*
Sarah M.L. Bender*
WILMER CUTLER PICKERING
HALE AND DORR LLP
7 World Trade Center
250 Greenwich Street
New York, New York 10007
(212) 230-8800
alan.schoenfeld@wilmerhale.com
sarah.bender@wilmerhale.com

Mairead Ahlbach*
WILMER CUTLER PICKERING
HALE AND DORR LLP
350 South Grand Avenue, Suite 2400
Los Angeles, California 90071
(213) 443-5300
mairead.ahlbach@wilmerhale.com

Elizabeth Rossi
Alexa Richardson†
Kailyn Gaines†
CIVIL RIGHTS CORPS
1601 Connecticut Avenue N.W., Suite 800
Washington, D.C. 20009
(202) 844-4975

elizabeth@civilrightscorps.org
alexa@civilrightscorps.org
kailyn@civilrightscorps.org

Attorneys for plaintiffs Candace Lovett, Edward Lovett, Regina Roland, and the putative parents' class

**Pro hac vice* application forthcoming
† Admissions pending

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

On November 23, 2026, I caused the foregoing and the accompanying memorandum and proposed order to be served on defendants via electronic mail and first-class U.S. mail.

/s/ Kevin M. Lamb

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Plaintiffs,

v.

BALTIMORE CITY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES, *et al*.,

Defendants.

Case No. 1:26-cv-04889

REDACTED VERSION

MEMORANDUM IN SUPPORT OF PLAINTIFFS' MOTION FOR A TEMPORARY RESTRAINING ORDER ON BEHALF OF NAMED PLAINTIFFS AND A CLASSWIDE PRELIMINARY INJUNCTION

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

INTRODUCTION 1

BACKGROUND 3

A. BCDSS Routinely Removes Children From Their Families Unlawfully 3

B. Baltimore's Post-Removal Process Does Not Provide Families An Adequate Opportunity To Contest Separations 6

C. Baltimore Families Wait Months For Any Hearing On The Merits Of BCDSS's Allegations 8

D. Child Removals Inflict Lasting Harm On Children And Families 9

E. Plaintiffs Are In Danger Of Being Unconstitutionally Separated From Their Children 9

LEGAL STANDARD 10

ARGUMENT 11

I. Plaintiffs Are Likely To Succeed On The Merits Of Their Claims 11

A. BCDSS Unconstitutionally Seizes Children Without Notice Or A Hearing And Absent An Emergency 11

1. Procedural due process requires pre-deprivation process absent extraordinary circumstances 12

2. Substantive due process requires an imminent danger of severe or irremediable injury to justify an extrajudicial removal 13

B. BCDSS Unconstitutionally Keeps Families Separated Without Adequate Process Or Substantive Justification 15

1. Procedural due process requires a prompt, meaningful hearing and other safeguards to justify removal or ongoing separation 15

2. Substantive due process requires a showing that continued separation is necessary to protect a child from severe harm 22

II. Plaintiffs Will Likely Suffer Irreparable Harm Absent Relief 27

III. The Equities And Public Interest Weigh Strongly In Favor Of Relief 29

IV. The Court Should Waive Bond.....30

CONCLUSION.....30

TABLE OF AUTHORITIES

Page(s)

Cases

Air Evac EMS, Inc. v. McVey,
37 F.4th 89 (4th Cir. 2022) 28

Americans for Prosperity Foundation v. Bonta,
594 U.S. 595 (2021) 25

Babaria v. Blinken,
87 F.4th 963 (9th Cir. 2023) 11

Banks v. Herbrich,
90 F.4th 407 (5th Cir. 2024) 13

Bostic v. Schaefer,
760 F.3d 352 (4th Cir. 2014) 22, 23

Brokaw v. Mercer County,
235 F.3d 1000 (7th Cir. 2000) 25

Centro Tepeyac v. Montgomery County,
722 F.3d 184 (4th Cir. 2013) 10, 29

Cooper v. Oklahoma,
517 U.S. 348 (1996) 20

Coreas v. Bounds,
457 F.Supp.3d 460 (D. Md. 2020) 30

Couch v. Jabe,
679 F.3d 197 (4th Cir. 2012) 26

Cruzan ex rel. Cruzan v. Director, Missouri Dep't of Health,
497 U.S. 261 (1990) 20

D.N.N. v. Liggins,
822 F.Supp.3d 543 (D. Md. 2026) 30

In re Damien F.,
958 A.2d 402 (Md. Ct. Spec. App. 2008) 7, 18

Desper v. Clarke,
1 F.4th 236 (4th Cir. 2021) 26

Doe 1 v. Office of the Director of National Intelligence,
180 F.4th 536 (4th Cir. 2026) 27

Doe v. Kearney,
329 F.3d 1286 (11th Cir. 2003) 14

EEOC v. Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission,
631 F.3d 174 (4th Cir. 2011) 24

Ezeagwuna v. Ashcroft,
325 F.3d 396 (3d Cir. 2003).....20

Fields v. Durham,
909 F.2d 94 (4th Cir. 1990) 12

Free Speech Coalition, Inc. v. Paxton,
606 U.S. 461 (2025).....24

Fuentes v. Shevin,
407 U.S. 67 (1972).....12, 21

In re Gault,
387 U.S. 1 (1967).....18

Gedrich v. Fairfax County Department of Family Services,
282 F.Supp.2d 439 (E.D. Va. 2003) 27

Washington v. Glucksberg,
521 U.S. 702 (1997).....22, 24

Goldberg v. Kelly,
397 U.S. 254 (1970).....16, 20, 21

Harrah Independent School District v. Martin,
440 U.S. 194 (1979).....24

Hawkins v. Freeman,
195 F.3d 732 (4th Cir. 1999) 23

Henry v. Sheriff of Tuscaloosa County,
180 F.4th 1294 (11th Cir. 2026) 23

Hogan v. Cherokee County,
519 F.Supp.3d 263 (W.D.N.C. 2021) 27

Hollingsworth v. Hill,
110 F.3d 733 (10th Cir. 1997) 14

I.T. ex rel. B.V.T.R. v. Kennedy,
2026 WL 882917 (S.D.N.Y. Mar. 31, 2026) 28

In re J.R.,
336 A.3d 42 (R.I. 2025) 15

Jacinto-Castanon de Nolasco v. U.S. Immigration & Customs Enforcement,
319 F.Supp.3d 491 (D.D.C. 2018) 15

Jenkins v. McKeithen,
395 U.S. 411 (1969) 18

John & Jane Parents 1 v. Montgomery County Board of Education,
78 F.4th 622 (4th Cir. 2023) (dissenting op.) 24

Jordan ex rel. Jordan v. Jackson,
15 F.3d 333 (4th Cir. 1994) 11, 12, 13, 17, 21, 22, 24, 25

K.W. ex rel. K.A. v. City of New York,
177 F.4th 127 (2d Cir. 2026) 13, 15

Kanuszewski v. Michigan Department of Health & Human Services,
927 F.3d 396 (6th Cir. 2019) 24

Kendall v. Balcerzak,
650 F.3d 515 (4th Cir. 2011) 15

Kirk v. Commissioner of Social Security Administration,
987 F.3d 314 (4th Cir. 2021) 17

Kovacic v. Cuyahoga County Department of Children & Family Services,
724 F.3d 687 (6th Cir. 2013) 13

Krispin v. Thurmer,
2010 WL 431906 (W.D. Wis. Feb. 5, 2010) 28

Leaders of a Beautiful Struggle v. Baltimore Police Dep't,
2 F.4th 330 (4th Cir. 2021) 30

Littlejohn v. School Board of Leon County,
132 F.4th 1232 (11th Cir. 2025) 23

Mabe v. San Bernardino County,
237 F.3d 1101 (9th Cir. 2001) 15

Mabes v. Thompson,
136 F.4th 697 (7th Cir. 2025) 13

Mathews v. Eldridge,
424 U.S. 319 (1976).....16, 19, 21

McNeill v. Butz,
480 F.2d 314 (4th Cir. 1973).....19

Moore v. City of East Cleveland,
431 U.S. 494 (1977).....23

Ms. L. v. U.S. Immigration & Customs Enforcement,
310 F.Supp.3d 1133 (S.D. Cal. 2018).....28

Newsom ex rel. Newsom v. Albemarle County School Board,
354 F.3d 249 (4th Cir. 2003).....29

Nken v. Holder,
556 U.S. 418 (2009).....10

O'Bryant v. New Jersey Division of Child Protection & Permanency,
2026 WL 2728461 (3d Cir. Sept. 16, 2026).....13, 26

In re O.P.,
235 A.3d 40 (Md. 2020).....19

Pashby v. Delia,
709 F.3d 307 (4th Cir. 2013).....30

Reaching Hearts Int'l, Inc. v. Prince George's County,
584 F.Supp.2d 766 (D. Md. 2008).....30

Regino v. Staley,
133 F.4th 951 (9th Cir. 2025).....24

Reno v. Flores,
507 U.S. 292 (1993).....22, 23, 25

Rodriguez v. Noriega,
2024 WL 689611 (D. Minn. Jan. 12, 2024).....28

Rogers v. County of San Joaquin,
487 F.3d 1288 (9th Cir. 2007).....13

Romero v. Brown,
937 F.3d 514 (5th Cir. 2019).....14

Santosky v. Kramer,
455 U.S. 745 (1982).....12, 16, 20, 21, 25

Snider Int'l Corp. v. Town of Forest Heights,
739 F.3d 140 (4th Cir. 2014) 11

Stanley v. Illinois,
405 U.S. 645 (1972).....12, 25

Syrovatka v. Erlich,
608 F.2d 307 (8th Cir. 1979) 18

Tenenbaum v. Williams,
193 F.3d 581 (2d Cir. 1999).....12, 29, 30

Troxel v. Granville,
530 U.S. 57 (2000).....11, 22

United States v. James Daniel Good Real Property,
510 U.S. 43 (1993).....12

United States v. Lozado,
776 F.3d 1119 (10th Cir. 2015) 20

United States v. Playboy Entertainment Group, Inc.,
529 U.S. 803 (2000).....26

United States v. Powell,
650 F.3d 388 (4th Cir. 2011) 19

Vitek v. Jones,
445 U.S. 480 (1980).....17

Washington v. Harper,
494 U.S. 210 (1990).....11

Weller v. Dep't of Social Services,
901 F.2d 387 (4th Cir. 1990) 16, 17, 21, 24, 26

White ex rel. White v. Chambliss,
112 F.3d 731 (4th Cir. 1997) 13

Wisconsin v. Yoder,
406 U.S. 205 (1972).....23

Wolff v. McDonnell,
418 U.S. 539 (1974).....18

Workman v. Mingo County Board of Education,
419 F.App'x 348 (4th Cir. 2011) 23

Zinermon v. Burch,
494 U.S. 113 (1990) 12

Constitutional Amendments, Statutes & Rules

U.S. Const. amend. XIV, §1 11

Family First Prevention Services Act, Pub. L. No. 115-123, 132 Stat. 64 (2018) 26

Md. Code Ann., Cts. & Jud. Proc. (CJP)
§3-814 3
§3-815 ..... 3, 6, 26
§3-817 8
§3-819 8

Md. Code Ann., Fam. Law (FL)
§5-525.1 8
§5-706 3

Md. Rule 5-101 7

Md. Rule 11-204 ..... 6, 8

Md. Rule 11-213 8

Other Authorities

Restatement of Children and the Law §2.43 (Am. L. Inst., Tentative Draft No. 6, 2024) 25

INTRODUCTION

Hundreds of times each year, the Baltimore City Department of Social Services (BCDSS) takes the extreme step of seizing a child without judicial authorization and where no emergency exists. In fact, every single child BCDSS seizes is taken without any hearing or other prior judicial process. These seizures, moreover, most commonly occur as a result of poverty or other daily struggles that BCDSS improperly characterizes as neglect. Unilaterally seizing a child without judicial involvement would be lawful only if waiting for a hearing and judicial approval would put the child in imminent danger of severe or irremediable injury. That is very rarely the case.

Once seized, children often remain in BCDSS custody for months (or longer) while parents are denied a prompt opportunity to genuinely contest BCDSS's continued custody. Families promptly receive only a perfunctory initial hearing, typically lasting no more than thirty minutes, at which they are denied basic substantive and procedural protections: They typically cannot present or confront witnesses, and no on-the-record finding is made explaining why ongoing separation remains necessary. These practices violate parents' and children's right to family integrity, contradict basic principles of due process, and inflict devastating, life-long harm on families.

Named plaintiffs Candace Lovett and Regina Roland (all parents' names are pseudonyms) are pregnant and in their third trimesters. Along with Ms. Lovett's husband, named plaintiff Edward Lovett, they live in fear that BCDSS will separate them from their newborn babies without a hearing and without any determination that separation is necessary. These fears are well-founded: BCDSS seized the Lovetts' older children, now one and three years old, without a hearing, and they remain in BCDSS custody after almost two years. Similarly, BCDSS twice removed Ms. Roland's children without notice or a hearing, and the children continue to fear that they may be separated from their mother in the future. To prevent that—and similar unlawful

conduct—this motion seeks a temporary restraining order (TRO) for the named plaintiffs and a preliminary injunction (PI) for all members of the parents' and children's classes.

In particular, plaintiffs seek three forms of relief. *First*, an order prohibiting BCDSS from seizing any child without a hearing or court approval unless the child faces an imminent danger of severe or irremediable injury that would materialize before a court could approve the removal. *Second*, an order prohibiting BCDSS from removing or retaining custody of a child unless a parent is promptly provided a hearing—applying appropriate legal standards, evidentiary rules, and burdens, as detailed herein—so that parents have a timely, genuine opportunity to contest the removal and continued separation. *Third*, an order prohibiting ongoing separation unless a court finds that (1) removal is necessary to prevent severe injury to the child that cannot be addressed by alternatives and (2) separation would harm the child less than remaining at home.

All four preliminary-injunction factors favor providing the requested relief.

First, plaintiffs are likely to succeed on each of the two claims pressed here. Defendants' child-removal policies and practices: (1) deny parents and children the basic process the Fourteenth Amendment requires before infringing on the right to family integrity; and (2) infringe that same right without the narrow tailoring strict scrutiny demands.[1]

Second, plaintiffs will likely suffer irreparable harm absent an injunction. Constitutional violations are *per se* irreparable harm. Removal itself, and every day a child is separated from his or her parents, inflicts devastating psychological and developmental injury, including weakening bonds between child and parents (and often siblings), that no final judgment could restore.

[1] Plaintiffs C.C., R.R., and R.H. will also likely succeed on the merits of their Fourth Amendment claims. However, they are not currently seeking a TRO on behalf of themselves or a PI on behalf the children's class based on that claim.

Third, the merged balance-of-equities and public-interest factor favors an injunction. Defendants have no legitimate interest (nor does the public) in separating families that can safely stay together. Nor do defendants have any interest in separating families without basic procedures that protect children both from severe, immediate danger at home and from the lasting trauma of being torn from their families unnecessarily.

BACKGROUND

A. BCDSS Routinely Removes Children From Their Families Unlawfully

1. BCDSS investigates allegations of abuse or neglect, physically removes children from their family and takes them into state custody, and enforces court orders committing children to state custody. *See* Md. Code Ann., Fam. Law (FL) §5-706; Md. Code Ann., Cts. & Jud. Proc. (CJP) §§3-814, 3-815. BCDSS has a policy and practice of seizing children without a court order or hearing, when no emergency justifies doing so. Chen Decl. (Ex.1) ¶¶9, 26, 28.

BCDSS has no standard for what constitutes an "emergency" that justifies extrajudicial removals, and caseworkers do not assess whether there is time to seek a court order before taking a child. Chen Decl. ¶26. Instead, BCDSS deems every removal to involve an emergency. *Id.* Before executing extrajudicial removals, BCDSS sometimes spends weeks or months investigating—yet does not use that time to seek judicial approval. *Id.* ¶¶24-25. BCDSS removes hundreds of children from their families this way every year. *Id.* ¶¶27-28.

Plaintiffs are among the many families affected by BCDSS's removal policies and practices. Plaintiffs Edward and Candace Lovett are married and the parents of two boys currently in BCDSS custody: H.L., age three, and D.L., age one. E. Lovett Decl. (Ex.2) ¶¶4-5. In February 2025, shortly after D.L. was born and while he was in the neonatal intensive care unit, a BCDSS caseworker visited the Lovetts' home with police officers and removed then-19-month-old H.L.,

[redacted]. *Id.* ¶¶6-9, 17, 22; C. Lovett Decl. (Ex.3) ¶¶3, 8-9. BCDSS took formal custody of H.L. and D.L. four weeks later despite the absence of any emergency—neither boy was even living at home at the time—and the boys remain separated from their parents. E. Lovett Decl. ¶¶13, 15, 19.

Plaintiff Regina Roland is the mother of C.C. (age nine), R.R. (age six), and R.H. (age five). Roland Decl. (Ex.4) ¶4. In October 2025, at a Zoom meeting that Ms. Roland believed was a court proceeding, BCDSS told her that her children had to live with their grandfather and that she could see them only under his supervision. *Id.* ¶¶11-12. BCDSS waited nearly two months to declare an "emergency" and go to a magistrate—[redacted]. *Id.* ¶¶13, 17, 21-22. The case was later dismissed. *Id.* ¶24.

As reflected by plaintiffs' experiences, when BCDSS decides to take a child, a caseworker—sometimes accompanied by uniformed police officers—removes the child from the home or other location. E. Lovett Decl. ¶9. Newborns are frequently taken from their mothers' arms in the hospital, sometimes within days of birth. Chen Decl. ¶¶21, 24. And BCDSS often delays judicial involvement by removing children under so-called "safety plans." *E.g.*, Roland Decl. ¶¶13-14, 19. Through these BCDSS-dictated separation orders, BCDSS requires that children live with relatives or family friends until the agency decides otherwise. *E.g.*, E. Lovett Decl. ¶10. These plans are voluntary in name only: BCDSS tells parents, or leads them to believe, that their children will be placed with strangers if they reject a safety plan, and parents almost never have a lawyer with them when the plan is proposed. *See id*; C. Lovett Decl. ¶8. Because BCDSS does not take legal custody, it files no court petition, and families have no opportunity to contest the removal or ongoing separation. Tierney Decl. (Ex.5) ¶¶16-17; Roland Decl. ¶¶13, 19; C. Lovett Decl. ¶¶8, 12. A court becomes involved only when BCDSS takes formal custody by

issuing an emergency authorization, which can be days, weeks, or even months after the family was separated. Chen Decl. ¶24. For example, Ms. Roland was separated from her children for nearly two months before BCDSS took formal custody of her children and initiated child-in-need-of-assistance (CINA) proceedings. Roland Decl. ¶¶14, 19.

BCDSS regularly separates families based on allegations of neglect that reflect symptoms of poverty. Chen Decl. ¶¶12-13, 15-18, 23; *see also* Wildeman Decl. (Ex.6) ¶23. Housing instability, for example, is a neglect allegation BCDSS often uses to justify removal, such as where the family is behind on rent or threatened with eviction. Chen Decl. ¶13; Feely Decl. (Ex.7) ¶18; Roland Decl. ¶¶10-11.

BCDSS also often alleges that a parent's substance use or mental-health condition justifies emergency removal. Chen Decl. ¶¶14, 20-21. These allegations sometimes rely on characterizations of caseworkers—who are not qualified to diagnose substance abuse or mental illness—and they are often unverified or based on unreliable hearsay. *Id.* ¶14. And mental-health allegations routinely involve common conditions like depression or anxiety, without any assertion that the condition will (or even credibly could) harm the child. *Id*. BCDSS regularly alleges neglect based on substance use even when a parent is following recommended treatment and, again, when there is no evidence of any harm to the child. *Id.* ¶20.

2. After a child is removed, BCDSS controls whether, when, and how parents and children see each other. Chen Decl. ¶57; Tierney Decl. ¶26. Once visits begin, BCDSS typically permits only a single one-hour visit per week, supervised by a caseworker or relative who observes the family throughout. Chen Decl. ¶58. For example, BCDSS barred the Lovetts from visiting their premature newborn in the hospital unless Mr. Lovett's mother or sister was present, making it a constant struggle for them to see him. E. Lovett Decl. ¶12; C. Lovett Decl. ¶¶15-16.

These outcomes are not inevitable. Alternatives to removal—like providing families financial support and housing assistance—have been shown to reduce both reports of child maltreatment and removals. Feely Decl. ¶¶20-27, 30-31, 37-38; *see also* Tierney Decl. ¶15. BCDSS has discretion to allocate resources to such alternatives, and to adopt policies and practices that keep families together. Tierney Decl. ¶23. It chooses instead to unlawfully separate families.

B. Baltimore's Post-Removal Process Does Not Provide Families An Adequate Opportunity To Contest Separations

When BCDSS formally takes a child, it issues an "emergency authorization" for state custody. At that time, BCDSS may provide parents with a form stating that an initial hearing will occur the next business day and that the parent should contact the Public Defender's office to obtain counsel. Chen Decl. ¶¶10-11. BCDSS typically files a petition in court the next business day containing the neglect or abuse allegations that purportedly justified the removal and rendered the child a "Child in Need of Assistance." In those petitions, BCDSS routinely includes false or misleading statements, or omits facts relevant to the removal decision and to whether continued separation is appropriate. *See, e.g.*, E. Lovett Decl. ¶¶16-17. For example [redacted]. E. Lovett Decl. ¶15. [redacted]. *Id.* ¶¶8, 17. Moreover, BCDSS often does not file its petition until just a few hours before an initial hearing. Chen Decl. ¶32.

Under Maryland law, the initial post-removal hearing should occur one business day after an emergency removal. CJP §3-815(c); Md. Rule 11-204(b)-(c). But when BCDSS uses a "safety plan" to remove a child, hearings can occur well after separation. Chen Decl. ¶24. And even when

the hearing occurs one business day after a removal, it can still be preceded by three to four days of separation—for example, if a child is taken on a Friday (especially a Friday before a holiday).

The initial post-removal hearing, moreover, is brief and almost always results in continued separation. Chen Decl. ¶¶40, 52. The hearing is also virtual, and scheduled for only thirty minutes, much of which goes to attorney appearances and scheduling future hearings. *Id.* ¶¶39, 46. Parents have no meaningful opportunity to consult their lawyers, they are often allowed to speak only to state their names, and the removed children usually are not present. *Id.* ¶¶38, 44-45. And if a parent tries to ask a question or contest facts proffered by BCDSS, they may be instructed to stop talking because the initial "hearing is not the time to contest facts." *Id.* ¶44.

Courts typically deny requests by parents or children to present live testimony or confront witnesses at an initial hearing, citing self-imposed time constraints. Chen Decl. ¶41. Parents or children instead must wait until a later hearing to present evidence supporting reunification and/or challenge BCDSS's evidence for continued state custody, thereby delaying the custody determination—and perpetuating the family's separation—by days or weeks. *Id.* ¶¶41, 43. And even when parents are eventually permitted to offer witnesses, those witnesses are limited to "testimony … which directly contradicts the allegation of abuse," *In re Damien F.*, 958 A.2d 402, 425 (Md. Ct. Spec. App. 2008), and thus cannot discuss several relevant issues, such as the bond between the parent and child, less-restrictive alternatives to removal, or the harms to the child of removal. The rules of evidence also do not apply at the initial hearing. Md. Rule 5-101(b)(11). Nor must BCDSS show that continued separation is required to prevent imminent severe injury, or that the danger at the home outweighs the harms of removal. Chen Decl. ¶¶47-49. When a magistrate decides that separation is appropriate, the finding typically rests on the assertions in

BCDSS's petition or its counsel's proffer. *Id.* ¶47. As a result, judicial officers grant BCDSS's request for continued custody in nearly every case. *Id.* ¶50.

A parent who loses before a magistrate may seek "immediate review" by a judge. Md. Rule 11-204(4); Chen Decl. ¶42. In Baltimore, however, that "immediate review" typically takes multiple days—and sometimes weeks—to obtain. Chen Decl. ¶¶42-43.

C. Baltimore Families Wait Months For Any Hearing On The Merits Of BCDSS's Allegations

Under Maryland law, BCDSS must prove its allegations only at an "adjudicatory hearing," where the rules of evidence apply. CJP §3-817. For a child in state custody, Maryland law requires that hearing be held within thirty days of an order continuing state custody after the initial hearing. Md. Rule 11-213(b)(2)(A). Baltimore City Circuit Court judges and magistrates, however, almost never schedule adjudicatory hearings within that time. Chen Decl. ¶¶51-52. Instead, they schedule an "adjudication settlement" (a proceeding with no basis in state law) within those thirty days. *Id.* ¶53. There, a parent or child may agree to the petition's allegations, stipulate to certain facts, or ask for a later hearing to contest the allegations; the court receives no evidence or argument on the merits. *Id.* ¶¶54-55. If a parent wants to contest the allegations, the court sets that hearing for *months* after the "adjudication settlement" hearing, prolonging the family's separation even more before a meaningful hearing. *Id.* ¶55.

These months of delay can determine if a family is ever reunified. If the court sustains BCDSS's allegations, it decides whether returning home serves the child's best interests. *See* CJP §3-819. But by then, the length of the separation, and the routines and relationships the child has formed in placement, can weigh against reunification. Chen Decl. ¶56. The delay also runs the clock toward termination of parental rights, which BCDSS must seek if a child has been in out-of-home placement for fifteen of the last twenty-two months. FL §5-525.1(b)(1).

D. Child Removals Inflict Lasting Harm On Children And Families

Separating children from their parents, even briefly, is traumatic and damaging. Wildeman Decl. ¶24; Tierney Decl. ¶14. Young children experience acute distress because they are still developing foundational attachments. Feely Decl. ¶¶15-16. Older children are often required to change schools, and often separated from siblings, relatives, and friends. Wildeman Decl. ¶26. And for children of all ages, prolonged separation from a parent is associated with disrupted attachment, impaired emotional regulation, and other negative effects on health and development. *Id.* ¶28; Feely Decl. ¶¶15-17. These consequences are long-lasting, as is children's common fear that caseworkers will come back and take them again. *E.g.*, Tierney Decl. ¶13; Roland Decl. ¶25. Ms. Roland's son experienced such trauma: For months he was afraid to visit his grandfather's house, where he stayed while separated from his mother, because he thought he might not be able to return to her. Roland Decl. ¶25; C.C. Decl. ¶¶5-9.

Child removals are also devastating for parents. Parents separated from their children experience higher rates of depression, adverse employment outcomes, and report symptoms of profound grief. Wildeman Decl. ¶32. This is borne out by the Lovetts's experience: Mr. Lovett reports that his sons' removals "hurt like hell," that it "felt like a part of me that I had poured all of myself into had been ripped away." E. Lovett Decl. ¶21. These harms persist even after a child is returned home. For example, Ms. Roland remains "terrified" that her children will be taken again. Roland Decl. ¶¶26-28.

E. Plaintiffs Are In Danger Of Being Unconstitutionally Separated From Their Children

Ms. Lovett is pregnant and due to give birth in January; she and Mr. Lovett fear that BCDSS will take their newborn at the hospital or soon after the baby comes home—just as it took H.L. and D.L. C. Lovett Decl. ¶¶21, 24-25. The magistrate overseeing their case has said she will

monitor how they do with the new baby before returning their sons. *Id.* ¶21. Ms. Lovett will also test positive after giving birth for the prescribed substances she takes, which will result in the hospital reporting her to BCDSS. *Id.* ¶24. Those circumstances create a significant risk that the Lovetts will again be subjected to BCDSS's unconstitutional removal practices. *Id.* ¶¶24-25.

Ms. Roland likewise fears that BCDSS will take her children. Roland Decl. ¶¶26, 28. She is due to give birth in December. *Id.* ¶28. On her doctors' advice, she stopped taking certain medicines when she learned she was pregnant, and she had been using cannabis to self-medicate. *Id.* ¶29. Though she has been working to stop, she is concerned she will test positive for cannabis after giving birth, which would lead the hospital to report her to BCDSS and trigger an investigation. *Id.* ¶¶28-29. She also worries that she will be closely watched and unreasonably judged when she gives birth given her family's prior involvement with BCDSS, and that any misstep may be used to justify taking her children again. *Id.* ¶¶8, 27-28. Ms. Roland's children share her fears. C.C. experienced significant stress when he was separated from Ms. Roland, and he worries that when he visits with his grandfather, he will be unable to see or visit with his mom. C.C. Decl. (Ex.8) ¶¶5-9. His sister, R.R., likewise recalls missing her mom when they were separated and wants to keep living in her mom's new home. R.R. Decl. (Ex.9) ¶¶3-5; *see also* R.H. Decl. (Ex.10) ¶¶2-3, 5.

LEGAL STANDARD

Preliminary injunctive relief is warranted when (1) plaintiffs are likely to succeed on the merits, (2) plaintiffs are likely to suffer irreparable harm in the absence of preliminary relief, (3) the balance of equities tips in plaintiffs' favor, and (4) an injunction is in the public interest. *Centro Tepeyac v. Montgomery Cnty.*, 722 F.3d 184, 188 (4th Cir. 2013). When, as here, the government is the opposing party, the last two factors "merge." *Nken v. Holder*, 556 U.S. 418,

435 (2009). The "legal standards applicable to TROs and preliminary injunctions are 'substantially identical.'" *Babaria v. Blinken*, 87 F.4th 963, 976 (9th Cir. 2023).

ARGUMENT

I. PLAINTIFFS ARE LIKELY TO SUCCEED ON THE MERITS OF THEIR CLAIMS

Parents have a fundamental right to "the care, custody and control of their children[]," *Troxel v. Granville*, 530 U.S. 57, 65 (2000) (plurality). Indeed, "[t]here are few rights more fundamental in and to our society than those of parents to retain custody over and care for their children." *Jordan ex rel. Jordan v. Jackson*, 15 F.3d 333, 342 (4th Cir. 1994). BCDSS "indisputably" interferes with this right through its "removal of a child from his parents," *id.*, and again when it enforces the separation after removal. These infringements are unconstitutional: The removals occur extrajudicially absent any emergency, and ongoing separations occur without a prompt hearing that includes basic procedural and substantive safeguards.

A. BCDSS Unconstitutionally Seizes Children Without Notice Or A Hearing And Absent An Emergency

The Due Process Clause bars a state from depriving "any person of life, liberty, or property without due process of law." U.S. Const. amend. XIV, §1. "Due Process contains both procedural and substantive components." *Snider Int'l Corp. v. Town of Forest Heights*, 739 F.3d 140, 145 (4th Cir. 2014). Substantive due process "involves a definition of [a] protected constitutional interest, as well as identification of the conditions under which competing state interests might outweigh it." *Washington v. Harper*, 494 U.S. 210, 220 (1990). Procedural due process "concerns the minimum procedures required by the Constitution for determining that the [protected] interest actually is outweighed in a particular instance." *Id.* Here, BCDSS violates both procedural and substantive rights, by seizing children (in violation of the *substantive* right to family integrity) without the pre-deprivation *process* required (though not alone sufficient) to justify such action.

1. Procedural due process requires pre-deprivation process absent extraordinary circumstances

Due process ordinarily "requires some kind of a hearing *before* the State deprives a person of liberty," *Zinermon v. Burch*, 494 U.S. 113, 127 (1990), including a liberty interest like family integrity, *see Santosky v. Kramer*, 455 U.S. 745, 753 (1982). Post-deprivation process suffices only in "extraordinary situations," which "must be truly unusual." *Fuentes v. Shevin*, 407 U.S. 67, 90 (1972). This exception is narrow for good reason: "[P]redeprivation process reduces the likelihood that erroneous deprivations of constitutionally protected interests will occur," *Fields v. Durham*, 909 F.2d 94, 97 (4th Cir. 1990), and a later hearing, "coming months after the seizure, would not cure the temporary deprivation that an earlier hearing might have prevented," *United States v. James Daniel Good Real Prop.*, 510 U.S. 43, 56 (1993). These concerns are particularly acute in the child-removal context, where both parent and child "suffer[] from the deprivation." *Stanley v. Illinois*, 405 U.S. 645, 647 (1972). That is why the Supreme Court has held that due process ordinarily requires a hearing "before … children [are] taken from [a parent]." *Id.* at 649.

BCDSS flouts this basic constitutional principle. Every time BCDSS seizes a child from their parents, it does so without a hearing or any judicial oversight. Chen Decl. ¶¶9, 26. Although "the requirements of process may be delayed where emergency action is necessary to avert imminent harm to a child," *Jordan*, 15 F.3d at 343, BCDSS never considers whether an emergency precludes a pre-removal hearing. Chen Decl. ¶26. And even if "there [were] a sufficient emergency to warrant officials' taking [a child into] custody without a prior hearing," *Tenenbaum v. Williams*, 193 F.3d 581, 594 (2d Cir. 1999) (alterations in original), that does not justify BCDSS's refusal to obtain a court order. Officials may forgo a pre-removal court order only where harm to the child is so imminent and severe that there is insufficient "time to seek prior judicial authorization, *ex parte* or otherwise." *Id.* at 594-595. Consistent with that approach, the Fourth

Circuit upheld an emergency removal without a hearing where immediate removal *was* necessary "to avert imminent harm to a child," the state "sought a judicially approved ex parte order before remov[al]," and "a full hearing was held within twenty-four hours of the removal." *White ex rel. White v. Chambliss*, 112 F.3d 731, 736 (4th Cir. 1997). Defendants provide none of these safeguards, so plaintiffs will likely succeed on this aspect of their claim.

2. Substantive due process requires an imminent danger of severe or irremediable injury to justify an extrajudicial removal

The Fourth Circuit has upheld pre-hearing removals of children only "where there is imminent danger of severe or irremediable injury to the child's health (and prior judicial authorization is not immediately obtainable)." *Jordan*, 15 F.3d at 346. These limits are essential because they "ensure to a significant extent … not only that the power will be exercised sparingly, but also that it will, with few exceptions, be used appropriately." *Id.*

Other circuits have also held that the Constitution permits extrajudicial removals only when a child faces an imminent danger of severe injury. One circuit, for example, has held that pre-hearing removals are constitutional only where a child faces "imminent danger" "[to] the child's health or safety" "so acute that officials would not have time to seek a court order." *K.W. ex rel. K.A. v. City of New York*, 177 F.4th 127, 143 (2d Cir. 2026). Another likewise requires "serious bodily harm in the time that would be required to obtain a warrant." *Rogers v. Cnty. of San Joaquin*, 487 F.3d 1288, 1294 (9th Cir. 2007). And others similarly require "imminent danger to the children," *O'Bryant v. N.J. Div. of Child Prot. & Permanency*, 2026 WL 2728461, at *12 n.22 (3d Cir. Sept. 16, 2026); an "imminent danger of physical or sexual abuse," *Banks v. Herbrich*, 90 F.4th 407, 416 (5th Cir. 2024); "imminent or ongoing physical abuse within a home," *Kovacic v. Cuyahoga Cnty. Dep't of Child. & Fam. Servs.*, 724 F.3d 687, 695 (6th Cir. 2013); "probable cause to believe that the child is in imminent danger of abuse," *Mabes v. Thompson*, 136 F.4th 697, 709

(7th Cir. 2025); "an immediate threat to the safety of a child," *Hollingsworth v. Hill*, 110 F.3d 733, 739 (10th Cir. 1997); or "an objectively imminent danger." *Doe v. Kearney*, 329 F.3d 1286, 1295 (11th Cir. 2003).

BCDSS disregards that essential constitutional limit. In *every* removal case, BCDSS either invokes an emergency to circumvent judicial oversight or asserts that extrajudicial removal is justified because "reasonable efforts" to prevent removal were unsuccessful. Chen Decl. ¶¶9, 24-25. But BCDSS cannot credibly claim that an emergency justifies all removals, and plaintiffs' experiences belie any such claim. Nor can BCDSS avoid its constitutional obligations merely by claiming it made reasonable efforts, often unexplained, to avoid removal.

Any claim that "emergency" extrajudicial removals are needed in every case is also belied by BCDSS's routine practice of removing children based on allegations of neglect rather than abuse. Chen Decl. ¶12. BCDSS regularly removes a child after alleging only that the family suffers from housing instability, non-threatening mental-health struggles, lack of access to childcare, and/or other poverty-related hardships. *Id.* ¶¶13-14, 22-23; Feely Decl. ¶¶18-19. For example, BCDSS often cites a "dirty house," school absences, or missed medical visits to justify emergency child removal—implausibly, if not absurdly, claiming that these circumstances pose an imminent danger of severe injury. Chen Decl. ¶¶15, 17-18, 23. BCDSS removed Mr. and Ms. Lovett's children based in part on such grounds: [redacted]. C. Lovett Decl. ¶¶8, 17, 22. But a "merely cluttered" home, and BCDSS's vague and unsubstantiated [redacted] do not pose the kind of imminent danger that justifies extrajudicial removal. *Romero v. Brown*, 937 F.3d 514, 522 (5th Cir. 2019). They do not, that is, imminently threaten severe injury, arise suddenly, or become materially more dangerous in the

time it would take to obtain a court order. Indeed, BCDSS itself often investigates such conditions for *weeks or months* before declaring an "emergency" or otherwise deciding to remove a child, proving that it has time to provide meaningful pre-deprivation process without any serious risk of injury. *See K.W.*, 177 F.4th at 144-145.

In sum, substantive due process requires BCDSS to obtain "judicial authorization before intruding on a parent's custody of her child," absent evidence "that the child is in imminent danger of serious bodily injury and that the scope of the intrusion is reasonably necessary to avert that specific injury." *Mabe v. San Bernardino Cnty.*, 237 F.3d 1101, 1106-1107 (9th Cir. 2001). The agency regularly—indeed, always—fails to do so, and so plaintiffs will likely succeed on this part of their claim.

B. BCDSS Unconstitutionally Keeps Families Separated Without Adequate Process Or Substantive Justification

BCDSS compounds its constitutional violation by separating children for weeks or months without (1) families receiving a prompt, meaningful hearing or (2) evidence that separation is necessary to protect the child. Plaintiffs will likely succeed in challenging this conduct as well.

1. Procedural due process requires a prompt, meaningful hearing and other safeguards to justify removal or ongoing separation

A plaintiff succeeds on a procedural-due-process claim by showing "(1) a cognizable liberty or property interest; (2) the deprivation of that interest by some form of state action; and (3) that the procedures employed were constitutionally inadequate." *Kendall v. Balcerzak*, 650 F.3d 515, 528 (4th Cir. 2011). Plaintiffs will likely make all three showings.

Indeed, plaintiffs easily satisfy the first two prongs. *See supra* p.11. Separating a family causes "life-altering" and "devastating consequences for the parent," *In re J.R.*, 336 A.3d 42, 58 (R.I. 2025), and "lasting damage to the children's well-being and their relationship with their [parent]," *Jacinto-Castanon de Nolasco v. U.S. Immigr. & Customs Enf't*, 319 F.Supp.3d 491, 503-

504 (D.D.C. 2018). Such heightened private interests require strong procedural safeguards to avoid "grievous loss." *Goldberg v. Kelly*, 397 U.S. 254, 264 (1970).

To assess the adequacy of procedures, courts weigh three factors: (1) the private interest affected; (2) the risk of erroneous deprivation of that interest through the procedures used, and the probable value of additional safeguards; and (3) the state's interest, including the fiscal and administrative burdens that added procedures would entail. *Mathews v. Eldridge*, 424 U.S. 319, 335 (1976). Applying those factors here, plaintiffs will likely show entitlement to five procedural protections: (i) a prompt post-removal hearing, (ii) adequate notice of the bases of removal, (iii) an opportunity to present evidence and confront witnesses, (iv) a decision based on reliable evidence, and (v) on-the-record fact findings supported by clear-and-convincing evidence. As discussed, the private interest affected is substantial. *See supra* p.11. The remaining *Mathews* factors are discussed below.

a. The risk of erroneous deprivation absent additional safeguards is high

Child-removal decisions, like the "determination of the fitness of a parent," are "fact specific [in] nature" and therefore present "a grave risk of erroneous deprivation." *Weller v. Dep't of Soc. Servs.*, 901 F.2d 387, 395 (4th Cir. 1990). In Baltimore City, such decisions rest on "imprecise substantive standards that leave determinations unusually open to the subjective values of the" decisionmaker. *Santosky*, 455 U.S. at 762. And the risk of error is exacerbated because BCDSS *always* removes children without judicial pre-approval and then denies families the "fundamental requirement of due process[,] … the opportunity to be heard 'at a meaningful time and in a meaningful manner.'" *Mathews*, 424 U.S. at 333. Plaintiffs will likely succeed in showing that due process requires several procedures that defendants never provide.

i. A prompt hearing. A state may forgo pre-deprivation process only where "adequate post-deprivation process to ratify the emergency action is *promptly accorded*." *Jordan*, 15 F.3d at 343. The Fourth Circuit has described a 65-hour delay as "near, if not at, the outer limit of permissible delay between a child's removal from his home and judicial review." *Id.* at 351. Although an initial hearing is supposed to be held the next business day after BCDSS takes a child, the agency sometimes delays that hearing by not filing a court petition for weeks or months after separating a family via an agency-dictated "safety plan." Plaintiffs' experiences show this: Relying on its unilaterally imposed "safety plans," BCDSS delayed initiating judicial proceedings by a month or two after plaintiffs' children were taken. E. Lovett Decl. ¶¶10-11, 15; Roland Decl. ¶¶14, 19. Due process requires a meaningful hearing no later than 65 hours after a child's removal. As described below, moreover, the initial hearing is largely perfunctory and does not satisfy the constitutional post-removal-hearing requirement. It is often not until months later that families receive an adjudicatory hearing where they can meaningfully contest BCDSS's allegations. Chen Decl. ¶¶51-55. Such delays are "clearly not the prompt due process that the Constitution requires." *Weller*, 901 F.2d at 396.

ii. Notice of the alleged bases of removal. Due process requires timely notice of the allegations. *Kirk v. Comm'r of Soc. Sec. Admin.*, 987 F.3d 314, 327 (4th Cir. 2021). "[N]otice is essential" so that a parent has "an opportunity to challenge the contemplated action and to understand the nature of what is happening to him." *Vitek v. Jones*, 445 U.S. 480, 496 (1980). Yet BCDSS frequently seizes children without any notice and with only a limited explanation of the reasons for removal. Chen Decl. ¶¶10, 32, 38. Families do not learn the allegations against them until just hours before an initial hearing, when BCDSS files a petition with the court, leaving parents no meaningful opportunity to gather evidence or prepare a defense. *Id.* ¶¶32, 37-39. That

is constitutionally insufficient: Due process requires that "parents … be notified, in writing, … at the earliest practicable time," *In re Gault*, 387 U.S. 1, 33 (1967), and in all cases "no less than 24 hours" before a hearing so that they have adequate time "to marshal the facts and prepare a defense," *Wolff v. McDonnell*, 418 U.S. 539, 564 (1974). That notice must include "the date, time and place of the hearing; a clear statement of the purpose of the proceedings and the possible consequences … the alleged factual basis for the proposed [removal]; and a statement of the legal standard" governing the hearing. *Syrovatka v. Erlich*, 608 F.2d 307, 310 (8th Cir. 1979).

iii. A meaningful opportunity to present and confront evidence. "The right to present evidence is … essential to the fair hearing required by the Due Process Clause." *Jenkins v. McKeithen*, 395 U.S. 411, 429 (1969). This includes presenting "oral testimony from other witnesses" and "compel[ling] attendance of those witnesses." *Id.* But defendants typically bar families from presenting evidence at the initial hearing, which is held virtually, scheduled for only thirty minutes, and largely consumed by party appearances and scheduling. Chen Decl. ¶¶38-39, 41, 46. If parents seek to present testimony, magistrates ordinarily reschedule the hearing days or weeks in the future—forcing parents to endure further separation from their child while they seek a meaningful opportunity to vindicate their rights. *Id.* ¶¶41, 43.

Even when parents eventually secure time for testimony at a hearing, they cannot offer all evidence relevant to whether their child should remain in state custody. Parents can present "only testimony of witnesses *which directly contradicts the allegation of abuse*." *In re Damien F.*, 958 A.2d at 425. That limit is problematic given what the court must decide at the initial hearing: whether separation is necessary to protect a child from serious injury, whether there are less restrictive alternatives to removing the child, and whether removal is less harmful than those alternatives. *See infra* p.22. Evidence bearing on whether separation is necessary, and the harms

from that separation pending an adjudicatory hearing, often goes beyond directly contradicting the allegations of abuse. For example, a parent may be barred from offering testimony about the parent-child bond, the family's support network, the context for an allegation, or the availability of alternatives short of removal—evidence directly relevant to the issues before the court. Chen Decl. ¶¶41, 44; Baumann Decl. (Ex.11) ¶¶19-23. This restriction greatly increases "the risk of erroneous deprivation," *Mathews*, 424 U.S. at 335, and requires courts to make life-altering decisions based on incomplete information.

Meanwhile, BCDSS frequently relies on attorney proffers and hearsay to justify separation, and parents cannot cross-examine the affiants whose statements purportedly support BCDSS's petition. Chen Decl. ¶¶41-44, 47. That too is impermissible: "In almost every setting where important decisions turn on questions of fact, due process requires an opportunity to confront and cross-examine adverse witnesses." *McNeill v. Butz*, 480 F.2d 314, 321 (4th Cir. 1973). Child-removal decisions are such factual inquiries, where a judicial officer must weigh the veracity of BCDSS's allegations and the potential harm to the child from returning home. Yet under defendants' policies, those determinations are made without cross-examination. Due process requires defendants to allow parents to promptly present evidence supporting family reunification and to confront any adverse evidence on which BCDSS relies to keep their family apart.

iv. A decision based on reliable evidence. Due process requires decisionmakers to "rely only on evidence with some minimal level of reliability." *United States v. Powell*, 650 F.3d 388, 393 (4th Cir. 2011). But at the initial post-removal hearing, the rules of evidence do not apply, and "much of the evidence that is submitted … would be inadmissible in any subsequent proceeding." *In re O.P.*, 235 A.3d 40, 56 (Md. 2020). That evidence, as noted, often includes attorney proffers and hearsay. Such evidence "is generally inadmissible" precisely "because it is

considered unreliable." *United States v. Lozado*, 776 F.3d 1119, 1121 (10th Cir. 2015). Even when "no constitutional right" is at stake, courts have held that due process requires decision makers to consider only "evidence … [that] is reliable and trustworthy." *Ezeagwuna v. Ashcroft*, 325 F.3d 396, 405-406 (3d Cir. 2003). Given the fundamental right at stake, BCDSS should not be permitted to rely on hearsay or attorney proffers to support depriving a parent of their child.

v. Findings of fact on the record based on clear-and-convincing evidence. An "elementary requirement" of due process is that a decisionmaker "state the reasons for his determination and indicate the evidence he relied on." *Goldberg*, 397 U.S. at 271. And when the government infringes "an individual's fundamental liberty interests," "due process places a heightened burden of proof on the government." *Cooper v. Oklahoma*, 517 U.S. 348, 349, 363 (1996). In particular, the Supreme Court has "mandated" a "clear and convincing evidence" standard whenever "the individual interests at stake in a state proceeding are both 'particularly important' and 'more substantial than mere loss of money.'" *Santosky*, 455 U.S. at 756. The Supreme Court has applied that standard to deportation, denaturalization, and civil-commitment proceedings—and "in proceedings for the termination of parental rights." *Cruzan ex rel. Cruzan v. Dir., Mo. Dep't of Health*, 497 U.S. 261, 282 (1990).

Baltimore courts, however, make no findings that separation is necessary, that less restrictive alternatives are unavailable, or that the balance of harms supports removal. Chen Decl. ¶¶49-50. And they require only "reasonable grounds" to accept BCDSS's allegations supporting separation. *Id.* ¶47. Such an "imprecise … standard[]" risks "underweigh[ing] probative facts that might favor the parent." *Santosky*, 455 U.S. at 762.

In *Santosky v. Kramer*, the Supreme Court held unconstitutional the "fair preponderance of the evidence" standard New York used to terminate parental rights, even though New York's

proceedings offered far more robust procedures than those here: The rules of evidence applied, and parents could call and cross-examine witnesses. *Id.* at 748, 762. The Court concluded that even in those circumstances, a "standard that allocates the risk of error nearly equally between [parents and the State] does not reflect properly the[] relative severity" of destroying "the[] natural family." *Id.* at 766. For similar reasons, before authorizing the removal of a child or ongoing separation, due process requires an on-the-record finding, supported by clear and convincing evidence, that separation is necessary to protect the child from severe harm.

b. *Additional safeguards advance the state's interest*

As to the third *Mathews* factor, defendants have no legitimate interest in denying the procedures advanced here, as the state "shares the interest of the parent and child in their family's integrity" and thus the "same concern that such removals not be effected or continued in error." *Jordan*, 15 F.3d at 346. Unnecessary child removal harms the government's interest in child safety and well-being given the short- and long-term harms to children. Wildeman Decl. ¶¶26-28, 34-36; Tierney Decl. ¶¶13-14; Feely Decl. ¶¶15-17; R.R. Decl. ¶¶ 3-5, C.C. Decl. ¶¶5-7; Roland Decl. ¶25. And complying with the Constitution will not require BCDSS to keep any child in an unsafe home. It can still remove and maintain custody of children in legitimate need of protection.

Additional safeguards would also impose minimal burdens, as BCDSS need only use existing courts and processes. Moreover, other jurisdictions already impose the procedural safeguards Baltimore lacks. Baumann Decl. ¶¶11, 13-25. In fact, defendants' practices impose substantial *costs* on the state: An emergency removal obligates BCDSS to fund and supervise an out-of-home placement, Tierney Decl. ¶16; E. Lovett Decl. ¶¶ 19, 23, costs that additional process could avoid. In any event, "the administrative and fiscal burden to [the State] can be of no moment when state law itself" requires "prompt judicial review of emergency action." *Weller*, 901 F.2d at 395; *accord Fuentes*, 407 U.S. at 82 (citing cases, including *Goldberg*, 397 U.S. at 261).

In short, plaintiffs will likely show that BCDSS's policy of separating families without a prompt, meaningful hearing, and of enforcing court orders requiring ongoing separation following constitutionally deficient hearings, violates procedural due process.

2. Substantive due process requires a showing that continued separation is necessary to protect a child from severe harm

Plaintiffs will also likely succeed on their substantive-due-process challenge to BCDSS's policy of keeping families separated unnecessarily. "The Fourteenth Amendment forbids the government to infringe … 'fundamental' liberty interests at all, no matter what process is provided, unless the infringement is narrowly tailored to serve a compelling state interest." *Washington v. Glucksberg*, 521 U.S. 702, 721 (1997). Because child removal infringes parents' fundamental rights to control their children's upbringing, *Jordan*, 15 F.3d at 342, defendants' family-separation policies and practices "warrant[] the application of strict scrutiny," *Bostic v. Schaefer*, 760 F.3d 352, 375 (4th Cir. 2014). Strict scrutiny prohibits government conduct that infringes fundamental rights unless "narrowly tailored to serve a compelling state interest." *Reno v. Flores*, 507 U.S. 292, 301-302 (1993). BCDSS's enforcement of any separation that exceeds 65 hours must be based on a court order finding that this grave infringement is narrowly tailored to a compelling government interest, i.e., that the separation is necessary to protect the child from severe or irremediable injury, that alternatives to removal could not prevent the injury, and that the harms from removal are outweighed by the potential harms from remaining at home.

a. BCDSS's child-removal policies trigger strict scrutiny

"[T]he interest of parents in the care, custody and control of their children[] is perhaps the oldest of the fundamental liberty interests recognized by th[e Supreme] Court," *Troxel*, 530 U.S. at 65 (plurality). The state may not infringe this "inviolable" relationship "except for the most compelling reasons." *Jordan*, 15 F.3d at 343. That requires the state to satisfy strict scrutiny, *see*

Reno, 507 U.S. at 302, under which child removals are "presumptively wrongful" unless the state proves that removal "is 'narrowly tailored to serve a compelling state interest,'" *Henry v. Sheriff of Tuscaloosa Cnty.*, 180 F.4th 1294, 1302-1305 (11th Cir. 2026).

Fourth Circuit precedent confirms that strict scrutiny applies here. Any "interference with a fundamental right warrants the application of strict scrutiny," *Bostic*, 760 F.3d at 375, as does interference with a right "deeply rooted in the nation's history and tradition," *Workman v. Mingo Cnty. Bd. of Educ.*, 419 F.App'x 348, 355 (4th Cir. 2011). It is "beyond debate" that parents possess a fundamental right to the care and custody of their children, *Wisconsin v. Yoder*, 406 U.S. 205, 232 (1972), and that this right "is deeply rooted in this Nation's history and tradition," *Moore v. City of E. Cleveland*, 431 U.S. 494, 504 (1977).

While some cases have applied a "shock the conscience" standard to child removals, those cases are inapplicable to this motion, which challenges blanket policies and practices. Substantive-due-process claims are subject to "different methods of judicial analysis" "[d]epending upon whether the claimed violation is by executive act or legislative enactment." *Hawkins v. Freeman*, 195 F.3d 732, 738 (4th Cir. 1999) (en banc). Acts executive in nature "characteristically apply to a limited number of persons," while acts legislative in nature "generally apply to a larger segment of—if not all of—society," and include "broad-ranging … regulations." *Littlejohn v. Sch. Bd. of Leon Cnty.*, 132 F.4th 1232, 1242 (11th Cir. 2025). Executive acts must be "so egregious" as "to shock the contemporary conscience." *Hawkins*, 195 F.3d at 738. Acts legislative in nature, by contrast, face no "threshold 'conscience-shocking' inquiry," and those that burden a "fundamental right[]" receive "strict scrutiny judicial review." *Id.* at 739.

Defendants' challenged conduct is quintessentially legislative and thus subject to strict scrutiny. BCDSS applies a "general policy affecting the larger population"—separating hundreds

of families each year—a textbook "[l]egislative act[]." *EEOC v. Wash. Suburban Sanitary Comm'n*, 631 F.3d 174, 184 (4th Cir. 2011). In every child-removal case, BCDSS seizes children without judicial oversight and subjects families to the same constitutionally deficient procedures. Such a generally applicable agency policy is legislative in nature. *See Harrah Indep. Sch. Dist. v. Martin*, 440 U.S. 194, 198-199 (1979). Courts reviewing such policies that burden parental rights thus apply strict scrutiny. *See, e.g.*, *Regino v. Staley*, 133 F.4th 951, 959-960 (9th Cir. 2025); *Kanuszewski v. Mich. Dep't of Health & Hum. Servs.*, 927 F.3d 396, 419-420 (6th Cir. 2019).

Consistent with the foregoing, every Fourth Circuit case applying the shocks-the-conscience standard involved a challenge to an official's decision in a particular case (i.e., executive action), not broad agency policies. *E.g.*, *Weller*, 901 F.2d at 391-392. By contrast, in *Jordan ex rel. Jordan v. Jackson*—a challenge to Virginia's child-removal policies—required "compelling reasons" before the state could intrude on "the relationship between parent and child." 15 F.3d at 343. That is the language of strict scrutiny. As Judge Niemeyer once explained, *Jordan* requires "strict scrutiny" of state policies that interfere with parents' "fundamental liberty interest in the 'care, custody, and control of their children.'" *John & Jane Parents 1 v. Montgomery Cnty. Bd. of Educ.*, 78 F.4th 622, 645-647 (4th Cir. 2023) (dissenting op.).[2]

b. BCDSS's child-removal policies and practices fail strict scrutiny

Strict scrutiny is "the most demanding test known to constitutional law." *Free Speech Coal., Inc. v. Paxton*, 606 U.S. 461, 484-485 (2025). To survive such scrutiny, the challenged conduct must be "narrowly tailored to serve a compelling state interest." *Glucksberg*, 521 U.S. at 721. BCDSS's policies satisfy neither requirement.

[2] Plaintiffs preserve the argument that strict scrutiny is the correct standard for executive action.

First, while BCDSS has a compelling interest in protecting children from harm, *see Jordan*, 15 F.3d at 346, that does not justify removing children who face no imminent danger of serious injury, or doing so when alternatives to removal would prevent that harm. The state's "interest favors preservation, not severance, of natural familial bonds." *Santosky*, 455 U.S. at 766-767. And "a state has no interest in protecting children from their parents" without concrete evidence "that a child has been abused or is in imminent danger of abuse." *Brokaw v. Mercer Cnty.*, 235 F.3d 1000, 1019 (7th Cir. 2000). Absent such danger, the state has no compelling interest in removal because "the State registers no gain towards its declared goals when it separates children … from the custody of fit parents." *Stanley*, 405 U.S. at 652. Even where parents have not been "model parents," the Supreme Court has explained, their "fundamental liberty interest … does not evaporate." *Santosky*, 455 U.S. at 753. "So long as certain minimum requirements of child care are met, … the interests of the parents" prevail. *Reno*, 507 U.S. at 304.

Nor can BCDSS claim a compelling interest in removals that do more harm than good. Yet defendants do not consider the well-documented, lasting harm that even short-term removal inflicts on the child before them, *see infra* p.28, much less weigh that harm against any alleged danger from remaining at home. Chen Decl. ¶49. Before BCDSS removes a child, courts must find that "the risk of harm to the child from removal is outweighed by the risk of harm the child faces by remaining in the care of the parent or guardian," Restatement of Children and the Law §2.43(a)(3) (Am. L. Inst., Tentative Draft No. 6, 2024). This weighing of harm is necessary to meet strict scrutiny's requirement that the state action be necessary to achieve a compelling state interest.

Second, BCDSS's child-removal practices are not narrowly tailored, i.e., are not "the least restrictive means of achieving a compelling state interest." *Ams. for Prosperity Found. v. Bonta*, 594 U.S. 595, 607 (2021). To satisfy narrow tailoring, BCDSS must show that it considered "less

restrictive alternatives" and found them not "as successful … in furthering the … compelling interest." *Couch v. Jabe*, 679 F.3d 197, 203-204 (4th Cir. 2012). It cannot do so, because effective alternatives exist.

For example, when families struggle with housing instability, mental-health challenges, substance-use disorders, or childcare issues, defendants could provide financial or other support to the family to address those concerns while keeping children safely at home. Tierney Decl. ¶¶19-23; Chen Decl. ¶22; Baumann Decl. ¶22. Indeed, Maryland law contemplates reasonable efforts to avoid removal whenever possible, *see* CJP §3-815(b)(3)(ii). And Congress has encouraged states to use less restrictive alternatives, such as family support services, before they consider child removal. *See* Family First Prevention Services Act, Pub. L. No. 115-123, div. E, tit. VII, 132 Stat. 64, 232 (2018). Yet BCDSS rarely provides such support. Chen Decl. ¶¶22-23. It instead, as discussed, routinely declares an "emergency" and tears a family apart, without considering or offering these less-restrictive interventions. *Id.* ¶26. And the judicial defendants then approve this separation without considering or making findings about the availability of alternatives or the harm of removing the child. Because plaintiffs have identified "plausible, less restrictive alternative[s]," it is defendants' "obligation to prove that the alternative[s] will be ineffective to achieve [their] goals." *United States v. Playboy Ent. Grp., Inc.*, 529 U.S. 803, 816, 819 (2000).

c. BCDSS's policies also shock the conscience

Although the shocks-the-conscience test does not apply, BCDSS's policies also fail that standard. Conduct shocks the conscience when it is egregious and outrageous under the circumstances. *Desper v. Clarke*, 1 F.4th 236, 248 (4th Cir. 2021). Removing a child and keeping a family separated shock the conscience when officials lack sufficient evidence that the child faces imminent danger. *See O'Bryant*, 2026 WL 2728461, at *9-11; *Weller*, 901 F.2d at 391. BCDSS's repeated pattern of removing children "without a valid court order [or] any evidence of emergency

or physical abuse," and of routinely including false statements in and withholding material information from removal petitions, supports a finding of "deliberate indifference" that also shocks the conscience. *Hogan v. Cherokee Cnty.*, 519 F.Supp.3d 263, 281 (W.D.N.C. 2021).

BCDSS's prolonged and unnecessary separations of children from their homes, families, and friends—such as H.L. and D.L. remaining in state custody months after [redacted] C. Lovett Decl. ¶¶15, 21; E. Lovett Decl. ¶¶19, 27-28—assuredly shock the conscience. *See Gedrich v. Fairfax Cnty. Dep't of Fam. Servs.*, 282 F.Supp.2d 439, 461 (E.D. Va. 2003).

* * *

Child abuse is horrific, and plaintiffs recognize that children sometimes face genuine dangers at home that require government protection. But in so many cases, defendants' removal and separation policies are *inflicting* rather than preventing harm—not only the devastating direct harm imposed on needlessly removed children, their parents, and their siblings, but also the indirect harm of diverting agency and judicial resources from protecting those children who actually face injury. The procedural and substantive due process protections addressed above are critical to prevent all those harms (and others). Before seizing a child, the Constitution requires BCDSS to provide parents with adequate notice and a pre-removal hearing, absent an imminent danger of severe or irremediable injury to a child. And if a child is seized, the Constitution prohibits BCDSS from keeping a child in custody unless the parent has been afforded a prompt, meaningful hearing where they can challenge ongoing separation under the constitutionally adequate standards discussed above.

II. PLAINTIFFS WILL LIKELY SUFFER IRREPARABLE HARM ABSENT RELIEF

Absent an injunction, plaintiffs will suffer irreparable harm. For starters, "the denial of a constitutional right constitutes irreparable harm," *Doe 1 v. Off. of the Dir. of Nat'l Intel.*, 180 F.4th

536, 549 (4th Cir. 2026), so the "prospect of an unconstitutional [child removal] 'supplies the necessary irreparable injury,'" *Air Evac EMS, Inc. v. McVey*, 37 F.4th 89, 103 (4th Cir. 2022).

Beyond that, the parent plaintiffs face the loss of their children, "often the most important part of the parent's life," a loss for which "there is no greater anguish." *Krispin v. Thurmer*, 2010 WL 431906, at *2 (W.D. Wis. Feb. 5, 2010). Many parents describe BCDSS's seizures as causing a loss of identity and report symptoms consistent with profound grief. Wildeman Decl. ¶32. For these reasons, courts have "repeatedly found" that "the separation of a parent from his or her child … constitutes irreparable harm." *Ms. L. v. U.S. Immigr. & Customs Enf't*, 310 F.Supp.3d 1133, 1146 (S.D. Cal. 2018); *see also I.T. ex rel. B.V.T.R. v. Kennedy*, 2026 WL 882917, at *2 (S.D.N.Y. Mar. 31, 2026); *Rodriguez v. Noriega*, 2024 WL 689611, at *3 (D. Minn. Jan. 12, 2024).

Scientific research confirms that family separation inflicts immediate and lasting injury on a child. Wildeman Decl. ¶¶26-28, 33-36; Feely Decl. ¶¶15-17. Even brief separations cause young children acute distress with lasting implications for their emotional and physical well-being. Feely Decl. ¶16. For school-age children, removal also frequently means not only a new home and neighborhood but also a new school, lost contact with siblings and relatives, and the loss of familiar routines and a sense of identity. Wildeman Decl. ¶26. And across age groups, prolonged separation is associated with disrupted attachment, impaired emotional regulation, and measurable effects on health and development, all of which persist after a child returns home. *Id.* ¶¶27-28, 33-36; Feely Decl. ¶¶15-17.

Plaintiffs' experiences, and the threat of future child removals they face, confirm the harm from defendants' conduct. For example, BCDSS seized the Lovetts' toddler without a court order [redacted]. E. Lovett Decl. ¶¶8-

9, 14-15. More than nineteen months later, defendants still have not returned their children—even though [redacted]. *Id.* ¶¶28-29. Ms. Lovett described the separation as "very painful" and "enormously stressful." C. Lovett Decl. ¶27. Their new baby now faces an imminent risk of removal. *Id.* ¶¶26, 30. Similarly, Ms. Roland and her children continue to suffer the effects of a nearly two-month separation: Ms. Roland "still grieve[s]" and is "still suffering emotionally from [her] children being removed," including living in "constant fear." Roland Decl. ¶¶22, 26. And her son remains afraid of being taken again, has struggled to move on from this traumatic experience, and now requires therapy. Roland Decl. ¶25; C.C. Decl. ¶¶9-10; R.H. Decl. ¶¶3-4. Ms. Roland is also pregnant and lives in fear that her circumstances will lead BCDSS to seize her newborn. Roland Decl. ¶¶27-28.

III. THE EQUITIES AND PUBLIC INTEREST WEIGH STRONGLY IN FAVOR OF RELIEF

The merged balance-of-equities and public-interest factor also favors injunctive relief.

As discussed, defendants' unconstitutional practices threaten plaintiffs with prolonged separation from their families. An injunction, by contrast, would not harm defendants, because it would leave them fully capable of protecting children from genuine harm. And defendants have no legitimate interest in enforcing unconstitutional policies. *See Newsom ex rel. Newsom v. Albemarle Cnty. Sch. Bd.*, 354 F.3d 249, 261 (4th Cir. 2003). "If anything, the [child-removal] system [would be] improved by … an injunction" that "prevents the state from enforcing [practices] found unconstitutional." *Centro Tepeyac*, 722 F.3d at 191.

Nor would an injunction harm children. Plaintiffs do not seek to prohibit all emergency removals. But BCDSS may not conduct "all interventions … on an 'emergency' basis"—emergencies, by definition, are the exception rather than the rule. *Tenenbaum*, 193 F.3d at 595.

When circumstances justify intervention but a child is not in immediate danger, BCDSS can follow ordinary removal processes, including a pre-removal hearing. And when a child faces imminent and severe harm, BCDSS can still seek an *ex parte* order authorizing emergency removal. *Id.* Only when the threat is so imminent and severe that BCDSS cannot safely go through even this minimal process may it constitutionally remove a child extra-judicially, followed by a prompt and adequate post-deprivation hearing. In short, plaintiffs' proposed relief protects children while ensuring constitutionally adequate process and preventing unnecessary, injurious removals.

Finally, "the public interest favors protecting constitutional rights." *Leaders of a Beautiful Struggle v. Balt. Police Dep't*, 2 F.4th 330, 346 (4th Cir. 2021) (en banc). The relief here would do just that, "further[ing] the exercise and protection of constitutional right[s]," *Reaching Hearts Int'l, Inc. v. Prince George's Cnty.*, 584 F.Supp.2d 766, 796 (D. Md. 2008).

IV. THE COURT SHOULD WAIVE BOND

This Court "retains the discretion to set the bond amount as it sees fit or waive the security requirement" altogether. *Pashby v. Delia*, 709 F.3d 307, 332 (4th Cir. 2013) (subsequent history omitted). Waiver is appropriate where, as here, "the financial impact to [the government] of an improperly imposed injunction is limited and would not create any significant hardship." *Coreas v. Bounds*, 457 F.Supp.3d 460, 464 (D. Md. 2020). And "this court has frequently waived … bond by imposing a nominal bond of zero dollars where fundamental constitutional right[s] [are] at stake." *D.N.N. v. Liggins*, 822 F.Supp.3d 543, 598 (D. Md. 2026) (second alteration in original) (quotation marks omitted) (collecting cases).

CONCLUSION

The Court should grant a temporary restraining order for the individual plaintiffs and a preliminary injunction for the parents' and children's classes.

November 23, 2026

/s/ Marja Plater
(signed with permission of Marja Plater)
Marja Plater (#29706)
Kaitlin Banner*
Angela Rambert*
WASHINGTON LAWYERS' COMMITTEE
FOR CIVIL RIGHTS & URBAN AFFAIRS
700 Fourteenth Street N.W., Suite 400
Washington, D.C. 20005
(202) 319-1000
marja_plater@washlaw.org
kaitlin_banner@washlaw.org
angela_rambert@washlaw.org

Blair Decker†
Carolyn A. DeLone*
Aidan Coleman (#30303)
HOGAN LOVELLS CADWALADER US LLP
555 Thirteenth Street N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20004
(202) 637-5600
blair.decker@hlc.com
carrie.delone@hlc.com
aidan.coleman@hlc.com

Attorneys for plaintiffs C.C., R.R., R.H., and the putative children's class

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Kevin M. Lamb

Kevin M. Lamb (#20344)
Daniel S. Volchok†
Derek A. Woodman†
Molly Dillaway†
Andrew Nell†
WILMER CUTLER PICKERING
HALE AND DORR LLP
2100 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20037
(202) 663-6000
kevin.lamb@wilmerhale.com
daniel.volchok@wilmerhale.com
derek.woodman@wilmerhale.com
molly.dillaway@wilmerhale.com
andrew.nell@wilmerhale.com

Alan E. Schoenfeld*
Sarah M.L. Bender*
WILMER CUTLER PICKERING
HALE AND DORR LLP
7 World Trade Center
250 Greenwich Street
New York, New York 10007
(212) 230-8800
alan.schoenfeld@wilmerhale.com
sarah.bender@wilmerhale.com

Mairead Ahlbach*
WILMER CUTLER PICKERING
HALE AND DORR LLP
350 South Grand Avenue, Suite 2400
Los Angeles, California 90071
(213) 443-5300
mairead.ahlbach@wilmerhale.com

Elizabeth Rossi
Alexa Richardson†
Kailyn Gaines†
CIVIL RIGHTS CORPS
1601 Connecticut Avenue N.W., Suite 800
Washington, D.C. 20009
(202) 844-4975

elizabeth@civilrightscorps.org
alexa@civilrightscorps.org
kailyn@civilrightscorps.org

Attorneys for plaintiffs Candace Lovett, Edward Lovett, Regina Roland, and the putative parents' class

**Pro hac vice* application forthcoming
† Admissions pending

EXHIBIT 1

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF MARYLAND
NORTHERN DIVISION

CANDACE LOVETT, *et al.*, on behalf of themselves and all others similarly situated, *Plaintiffs*, v. BALTIMORE CITY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES, *et al*., *Defendants*.	Case No. _____

DECLARATION OF ANYA CHEN

1. My name is Anya Chen.

2. I am an attorney licensed to practice law in the state of Maryland.

3. I served as an Assistant Public Defender in the Parental Defense Division in Baltimore City at the Maryland Office of the Public Defender ("OPD") from January 2025 to November 2026.

4. Attorneys in Baltimore City's Parental Defense Division represent parents or legal guardians when the Baltimore City Department of Social Services ("BCDSS") initiates court proceedings alleging that a child is a Child in Need of Assistance ("CINA"). The office provides legal representation to indigent parents through all stages of the CINA process, including emergency shelter care hearings (initial-post-removal hearings), adjudication hearings, disposition hearings, and permanency planning hearings, as well as in termination of parental rights proceedings.

5. Prior to coming to the Maryland Office of the Public Defender, I represented parents in family law proceedings in Delaware at Community Legal Aid Society, Inc.

6. I earned my J.D. from University of Pennsylvania Carey Law School in 2023. I earned my B.A. from Johns Hopkins University in 2018.

7. Over the course of my time at OPD, I represented over 90 parents and participated in CINA (dependency) and termination of parental rights proceedings, including dozens of initial removal hearings. I also participated in case discussions and consultations with other attorneys in the Baltimore City Parental Defense Division and was aware of the content of some of their cases.

8. This declaration explains the removal and CINA process in Baltimore City. It is based on my personal experience as a parent defense attorney in Baltimore City and my discussions with other attorneys who represented parents.

A. CINA Petitions Are Filed After a Child is Removed, and Typically Center on Allegations of Neglect

9. Since beginning my employment at OPD in January 2025, in every case I have litigated, reviewed, or otherwise been made aware of in which BDCSS knows the location of the child involved, it has removed the child prior to filing a CINA petition or a petition for shelter care in court. I have seen BCDSS file a petition prior to removal only in the rare case when the agency cannot locate the child (i.e. when there is a runaway teen).

10. When BCDSS removes a child, it does so by issuing an emergency shelter care authorization.

11. The next business day after BCDSS removes a child via shelter care authorization, BCDSS files a petition in the Circuit Court for Baltimore City with the allegations of abuse or

neglect that it says justify the removal, the agency's request for temporary shelter care (i.e., state custody), and the claim that the child is in need of assistance.

12. Most petitions allege neglect.

13. Housing instability is a common allegation in petitions. BCDSS may allege housing instability in circumstances where the family is behind on rent or being threatened with eviction.

14. Allegations of mental health struggles appear in many petitions. These allegations often include that a parent uses prescription medications or suffers from depression, anxiety, or other disorders, without always indicating a clear nexus of how these mental health conditions are causing the child any harm. The alleged diagnoses may be based on characterizations of parents' behavior by caseworkers who are usually not qualified to diagnose mental illness, and are often unverified, or based on unreliable hearsay from family members.

15. So-called "dirty house" allegations are also common, such as allegations of pests or rodents, dishes left undone, or unpleasant smells in the home.

16. Likewise, descriptions of clothes the caseworker says are too dirty, or a child who is in a "soiled" diaper, are sometimes included as allegations of neglect in CINA petitions filed by BCDSS.

17. School tardiness, absence, and lack of enrollment are also commonly alleged as neglect.

18. Missed medical visits can be another basis for alleging neglect.

19. Inadequate supervision is a common allegation of neglect, including allegations that young children are inadequately supervised if left alone with older siblings.

20. BCDSS commonly alleges substance use, or histories of substance use, as neglect, including instances where parents have already independently chosen to engage in substance abuse treatment and instances where parents have been in recovery for months or years. Often, there is no allegation or evidence of any direct harm to the child from substance use. BCDSS often includes cannabis use as an allegation of neglect.

21. Many BCDSS investigations and removals arise out of positive toxicology tests during childbirth, including positive tests for cannabis use and prescribed medications.

22. BCDSS sometimes includes that a parent or guardian—such as an aging grandparent—is in declining health and supposedly cannot physically care for the child, even though the caregiver might be able to do so with support.

23. Typically, BCDSS stacks allegations to create an aggregate picture of general family dysfunction and struggle that, considered together, in the agency's view, might lead to harm to a child.

24. Petitions sometimes include information about the removal itself. Petitions sometimes indicate that the child was already living with a relative, separately from the parent, when BCDSS issued the emergency authorization for shelter care, and the child subsequently continues to reside with that relative once in BCDSS custody. The petitions may reflect that the child has been out of the home for days or weeks before the petition was filed. Petitions sometimes indicate that the child was in a healthcare facility such as a hospital when BCDSS issued the emergency authorization for shelter care, and that the child remains there at the time of the filing of the petition.

25. Petitions sometimes indicate the BCDSS has been involved in investigating the family for days, weeks, or months prior to the filing of the petition, and do not indicate that

anything material has changed in the family's circumstances immediately preceding the agency's decision to issue an emergency authorization for shelter care and file a CINA petition.

26. I am not aware of any internal BCDSS standard for what constitutes an "emergency" sufficient to take formal custody of a child. Instead, BCDSS deems every circumstance in which it formally removes a child to be an "emergency."

B. The Post-Removal Court Process

1. OPD's Initial Contact with Parents

27. OPD's Baltimore City office represents parents in the hundreds of new CINA cases that are filed each year. All those cases involve a child being removed from their home without prior judicial involvement, except in the rare instance where a child cannot be located.

28. In Baltimore City, the Parental Defense Division learns of a child removal when the Baltimore City Department of Social Services (BCDSS), early in the morning, gives the office a list of children who have been removed. Specifically, around 7:00 or 7:30 a.m., the attorneys learn the number of shelter hearings that will be held that day. During my time at OPD, we typically had no information about the cases, but sometimes our supervisor would be able to obtain minimal information such as the children's ages and the categories of cases, *e.g.*, a substance-exposed newborn case or a so-called "dirty house" case, and the supervisor would share that information with us.

29. Typically, to avoid conflicts, OPD can represent one parent or guardian of a removed child, and any other parent or guardian involved will be assigned to external panel attorneys.

30. Once OPD receives the list of removed children from BCDSS, OPD staff attempts to contact a parent or guardian, collects demographic and contact information, and determines financial eligibility for OPD's representation.

31. Once OPD staff completes an intake and confirms eligibility for OPD representation, OPD staff assigns the client to an OPD attorney.

32. In Baltimore City, attorneys do not know the allegations against a parent until BCDSS files the petition on Maryland Electronic Courts ("MDEC"), the Maryland electronic filing system. The petitions are typically not filed until around 11:00 a.m. each morning. Sometimes the petitions are not filed until less than an hour before the shelter hearing docket begins. In my experience, attorneys could not start meaningfully preparing for the shelter hearings until after we received the petitions.

33. Attorneys therefore have only a short time to prepare for all the shelter hearings that day—including reviewing the petitions, interviewing the parents, reviewing any documents or discovery provided by BCDSS, requesting any relevant documentation from the parent such as letters, medical records, pictures, home health assessments, or text exchanges, counseling the client and determining their position for the hearing, ascertaining the position of other parent's and child's counsel, and preparing an argument.

2. The Initial Post-Removal Hearings

34. The initial post-removal court proceeding is called the "shelter care hearing." At that hearing, a judicial officer—typically a magistrate—is required to decide whether the family must be separated pending a later trial (known as the "adjudication hearing") on the allegations that the parent abused or neglected the child.

35. Shelter care hearings typically begin at 1:30 p.m. each business day.

36. There are currently six magistrates in the Juvenile Division of the Circuit Court for Baltimore City. Magistrates are appointed by the elected judges for the Circuit Court and work at the pleasure of the elected judges. The magistrates cover shelter care hearings each day on a rotation. Occasionally, one of the elected judges will cover shelter care hearings for the day.

37. Parents learn the full scope of written allegations against them only when counsel shows them the petition.

38. In many cases, due to the aforementioned time constraints, attorneys must limit their interview with the client or cannot fully counsel the client on the impending proceeding. Attorneys may not have enough time to obtain the documentation needed to fully defend their client's rights. OPD attorneys do the best they can in the extremely limited time available to them to prepare.

39. In my experience, shelter care hearings are always conducted virtually using Zoom, and each hearing is typically scheduled for 30 minutes. When many hearings are scheduled, the court may schedule the hearings to last only 15 minutes. The number of shelter care hearings each day varies widely.

40. During the shelter care hearing, should the parent choose to contest shelter, BCDSS makes a "proffer," informing the court what facts the testimony and evidence would show if they put on testimony. The magistrate or judge then typically permits parents' attorneys to submit a brief competing proffer stating what facts the testimony and documentary evidence would show if they were permitted to put on testimony. The proffers are necessarily short and provide no opportunity for the court to gauge the credibility of the witnesses whose testimony the attorneys are summarizing.

41. It was commonly understood during my time at OPD that it was not feasible to present witnesses at the initial shelter care hearing because the hearings are scheduled for only 30 minutes, and sometimes only 15. As an attorney, I expected that requesting an opportunity to contest shelter care with testimony would result in a delay of multiple days and possibly weeks.

42. Magistrates' decisions are subject to an immediate review hearing by a judge. That means that, if the parent contests shelter care, regardless of whether the parent wins or loses, the magistrate's decision may not be final. Parents seeking an immediate review hearing usually wait days and sometimes weeks for a hearing before a judge. During that time, the child remains in state custody and families remain separated.

43. Typically, if a parent wants to have a hearing with time for testimony in front of a magistrate, it will take longer than three days after removal for it to be scheduled. It typically will take more than a week to get a hearing before a judge with time for testimony.

44. Parents typically do not have an opportunity to speak during the initial hearing, except to state their name and contact information for the record. If a parent unmutes themselves to ask a question or contest facts proffered by BCDSS, they may get scolded by the magistrate and be instructed to stop talking. I have heard magistrates tell parents that this hearing is not the time to contest facts.

45. Children almost never attend initial shelter care hearings.

46. During the initial shelter care hearings, the court schedules future hearings in the case. Picking dates for these future hearings often consumes 10-15 minutes or more of the already limited time, leaving a maximum of 15-20 minutes for proffers and argument.

47. Judges and magistrates apply a "reasonable grounds" evidentiary standard at the initial shelter care proceeding. BCDSS typically argues that the allegations themselves supply

"reasonable grounds" for continued state custody, and magistrates and judges often order ongoing separation based solely on the allegations and any BCDSS attorney proffer.

48. Judges and magistrates in Baltimore typically do not make findings, written or oral, at shelter care hearings about whether there is a less restrictive option than removal that can address the alleged safety concerns. They typically do not make a finding, written or oral, that keeping the child separated from his parents is necessary to protect the child from severe injury.

49. In determining whether returning a child home would be contrary to the welfare of the child, judges and magistrates typically do not make a finding, written or oral, that the harm of removing the child from her home is lesser than the potential risk of harm to the child's welfare if the child were to remain at home.

50. Magistrates almost always grant continued state custody at the initial shelter care hearing.

C. Adjudication Hearings Are Delayed

51. The adjudication hearing is supposed to occur within 30 days of the filing of the petition.

52. Until summer 2026, in Baltimore City, I had never seen the Circuit Court schedule a contested adjudication trial within 30 days of the filing of the petition. Last July, a pilot program began and now, some adjudication trials occur within 30 days.

53. In most cases, however, the court schedules a 30-minute, virtual proceeding, which is referred to locally as an "adjudication settlement" hearing within 30 days of the petition.

54. At the "adjudication settlement" hearing (which, to my knowledge, has no basis in Maryland law), a parent and child have two choices: They can either agree with BCDSS's

allegations in whole or in part or decline to do so and ask the court to schedule a contested hearing.

55. Parents are entitled by statute to contest ongoing state custody at an adjudication settlement hearing, but—like the initial shelter care hearings—these proceedings are scheduled for only 30 minutes, which is not enough time to present live witness testimony. When a parent requests a contested adjudication trial to dispute allegations against them, they almost always face months of delay following the initial thirty-day waiting period for the adjudication settlement. Then, due to various factors including witness unavailability, time constraints, and lack of judicial resources, contested trials often stretch across multiple court days spanning several months. Throughout this extended period, parents remain separated from their children, often restricted to a single hour of supervised visitation per week.

56. The lengthy delays in the court process, and the prolonged separation of parents and children that results, can weigh against reunification in the long run for families. Once the court is tasked with inquiring into the best interest of the child at permanency planning hearings and beyond, the length of separation and the child's routines and relationships in placement can serve as reasons not to reunify.

D. BCDSS Controls Parent-Child Contact

57. After BCDSS removes children from their parents, BCDSS controls the nature and frequency of the children's contact with their parents.

58. In almost all cases where the plan for the child and parent is reunification, BCDSS initially asks the court for supervised visitation only and provides children and parents a single supervised visit for one hour per week. For children in foster placements and some children living with relatives, supervised visits typically take place in institutional visitation

centers. Caseworkers typically observe the parent and child and record written notes on their impressions of the parent during the visit, including the details of the family's interactions.

59. Children whom BDCSS has placed with relatives may be able to see their parents at the relative's home under the relative's supervision, so long as BCSDS and the relative agree with the arrangement.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

Anya Chen
Anya Chen (Nov 19, 2026 10:47:23 EST)
Anya Chen

19/11/2026
Date

EXHIBIT 2

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF MARYLAND
NORTHERN DIVISION

CANDACE LOVETT, *et al.*, on behalf of themselves and all others similarly situated, *Plaintiffs*, v. BALTIMORE CITY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES, *et al.*, *Defendants*.	Case No. _____ **REDACTED VERSION**

DECLARATION OF EDWARD LOVETT

Pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §1746, I, Edward Lovett, declare under penalty of perjury:

1. I am over 18 years old.

2. I am moving the Court to allow me to proceed under the pseudonym of Edward Lovett.

3. I want to use a pseudonym to help protect the identities of my children. I don't want their identities disclosed, and public disclosure of my identity might lead to their identification as my children. Also, this case involves personal and sensitive information about my family, including information about my medical history, mental health, and alleged substance abuse. Disclosing this information publicly puts myself and my family at risk of harm.

4. I am the father of two boys: H.L., who is 3 years old, and D.L., who is 1 year old.

5. I am married to Candace Lovett, who is the mother of both of my children. We have been together since before they were born. We love being parents and love our children deeply.

6. On June 22, 2023, Candace gave birth to H.L. Candace and I have loved H.L. from the moment he was born and have done everything we can to keep him safe and happy.

7. On January 5, 2025, Candace gave birth to D.L. He was born when Candace was about six months' pregnant and was taken immediately to the neonatal intensive care unit ("NICU"). We were extremely worried about his premature birth and hoped he would be okay.

8. On February 5, 2025, Baltimore City Department of Social Services ("BCDSS") came to our home in the morning. I later learned that [redacted]. I do slur my speech, but this is due to a speech impediment. Whoever called BCDSS also reported [redacted] She was exhausted: She had given birth a month ago, we were visiting D.L. in the hospital and concerned about his health, and we were also caring for our one-year-old.

9. The caseworker came back later that day and brought several police officers. It was terrifying. They said H.L. couldn't live with us because [redacted] We did have a space heater to keep the bedroom warm. And we were in the process of moving.

10. BCDSS said H.L. would have to live with my sister and demanded that we sign a paper that they called a "safety plan." The caseworker didn't explain what the paper was or what it did. She said: "I just need your signature." It was dark outside and my baby was crying, so I barely saw the paper. I didn't know that I could refuse to sign.

11. I didn't know how long he would be there or when I would see him next. They said we neglected him, but H.L was a smiling, laughing, joyful baby before they took him. He was loved, fed, and kept warm. We took good care of him.

12. BCDSS also told us that we couldn't visit D.L. in the hospital alone. We had to bring someone with us, which made it so much harder for us to visit our baby.

13. BCDSS continued to investigate us over the next four weeks. We worked as quickly as we could to change our housing situation and figure out what BCDSS needed us to do so we could have our kids come home.

14. Before BCDSS took H.L., we didn't have a chance to see a judge to explain that H.L. could live with us safely and happily (and was already doing so).

15. On March 4, 2025 (about a month after BCDSS took H.L.), we learned that [redacted], even though H.L. was still living with my sister and D.L. was still in the NICU. That day, BCDSS filed a petition with the court [redacted]. But that never happened. In fact, [redacted] It seemed like BCDSS didn't care about the truth, and was lying to the court to support being able to take our children.

16. When BCDSS said they took the children on an emergency basis on March 3, that didn't make sense to me, because neither was living with us. I didn't understand what triggered the petition with the court, or why we didn't get to see a judge before BCDSS filed it.

17. The petition BCDSS filed contained other statements about me or my family that didn't give a full picture of our circumstances. For example, the petition said [redacted]. It also did not mention [redacted]. And the petition said [redacted]

[redacted]

18. The day BCDSS filed the petition (March 4), we met our lawyers in the morning to discuss the filing. We got on Zoom that afternoon for a very brief court hearing. I did not really understand what happened at the hearing, and I didn't have an opportunity to speak, except to state my name. The magistrate did not hear any evidence and did not make any finding that the removal or ongoing separation was necessary.

19. H.L. has been living with my sister ever since, and D.L. has been there since he was discharged from the NICU in March 2025—almost two years for H.L, and about a year and a half for D.L.

20. We have to coordinate with my sister and mom and BCDSS to see our own children, which can be difficult because of everyone's different schedules.

21. I miss being able to see H.L. and D.L. so much, it breaks my heart. BCDSS has controlled access to my kids. The agency and my family have made it very difficult to see them or spend as much time with them as we want. Having my children removed and barely seeing them hurt like hell. It felt like a part of me that I had poured all of myself into had been ripped away.

22. After BCDSS took H.L. and D.L., the agency told us we had to get an apartment with running water, heat, and electricity. We did that; we moved into a two-bedroom apartment. But the agency still didn't give our babies back. We also proved that [redacted] that accusation was completely made up by BCDSS. We completed all the classes BCDSS wanted us to take. We provided all the therapy and psychiatry notes the agency asked for,

and we took repeated drug tests. We do not know what more we must do to get our children back—because BCDSS will not tell us.

23. I don't understand why BCDSS is paying my sister to take care of H.L. and D.L., when it would not have to pay us to do so.

24. Every day since BCDSS took my sons, I have fought to get our children back. Being separated from my sons has been stressful, exhausting, and deeply painful.

25. The court process has been lengthy. There is so much time between the hearings. Sometimes I feel as though the magistrate has been disrespectful to us.

26. Candace is pregnant and due on January 29, 2027.

27. At our last hearing on July 23, 2026, [redacted] The magistrate issued an order stating: [redacted]

28. Despite these findings, the magistrate won't give our kids back to us. She said to us [redacted]

29. The only reason things are [redacted] is because BCDSS took our kids without any reason for doing so, told the court a lie in order to keep us apart, and the judge won't give them back despite [redacted] I miss H.L. and D.L. with all of my heart.

30. I do not want to be separated from the new baby, and I know BCDSS and the court will be watching us after the baby is born because they still have H.L. and D.L. I understand this could make us more likely to have the baby removed. I also know BCDSS has told lies in the past, and I worry they could do the same thing again and take our baby. I don't know what the judge is expecting of us, or what we have to do to get our kids back. We're doing everything we can to show her that we can take of our children.

31. If BCDSS wants to take the new baby, I want to have a hearing before that happens so I can explain to the judge that Candace and I can provide a safe and loving home for all of our children.

32. I want to be with my children. When I see H.L. for visits, he smiles and laughs. When I see D.L., I help him learn to walk and play with him. I tell them both that everything's going to be okay. We know how important it is to take care of our kids. We love taking care of our children.

33. When I was young, I spent a month in the foster system. I was also locked up at Cheltenham juvenile prison, where I was horribly abused and suffered lifelong injuries. I know how important it is to have a safe and stable home, and that is what Candace and I provide for H.L. and D.L.

34. I am concerned about my children's well-being and the long-term effects this separation will have on them. I know that what's happening to my family is happening to a lot of other families. I know many other parents and children are afraid that BCDSS will separate them without a chance to argue that removal isn't needed. I want to be a part of this lawsuit so that what happened to us doesn't happen to other people.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

Executed on November 17, 2026

EDWARD LOVETT

EXHIBIT 3

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF MARYLAND
NORTHERN DIVISION

CANDACE LOVETT, *et al.*, on behalf of themselves and all others similarly situated, *Plaintiffs*, v. BALTIMORE CITY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES, *et al.*, *Defendants*.	Case No. _____ **REDACTED VERSION**

DECLARATION OF CANDACE LOVETT

Pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §1746, I, Candace Lovett, declare under penalty of perjury:

1. I am over 18 years old.

2. I am moving the Court to allow me to proceed under the pseudonym of Candace Lovett.

3. I want to use a pseudonym to help protect the identities of my children. I don't want their identities disclosed, and public disclosure of my identity might lead to their identification as my children. Also, this case involves personal and sensitive information about my family, including information about my medical history, mental health, and alleged substance abuse. Disclosing this information publicly puts myself and my family at risk of harm.

4. I have two sons: H.L., who is 3 years old, and D.L., who is 1 year old.

5. I am married to Edward Lovett, who is the father of both of my children. We have been together since before they were born. We love being parents and love our children deeply.

6. On June 22, 2023, I gave birth to H.L. Edward and I have loved H.L. from the moment he was born and have done everything we can to keep him safe and happy.

7. On January 5, 2025, I gave birth to D.L. He was born when I was around six months pregnant. He was taken immediately to the neonatal intensive care unit ("NICU") and we were extremely worried about him.

8. In early February 2025, BCDSS took H.L. from us, [redacted] BCDSS came to our house with uniformed police officers. I was so scared, and I did not want them to take H.L. I signed a paper called a "Safety Plan" after BCDSS told me I needed to sign it. I did not really understand what it was; nobody told me. I barely read it. It was dark, my baby was crying, and I was also crying uncontrollably. I wanted to know what I needed to do to get my child back.

9. I didn't know how long H.L. would be gone, or when I would see him next.

10. BCDSS also told us that we couldn't visit D.L. in the hospital alone. We had to bring someone with us to see him.

11. After BCDSS took H.L. and told us we couldn't visit D.L. on our own, the agency continued to investigate us.

12. About a month later, we had our first court hearing. It was a virtual hearing in the afternoon, and I met my lawyer that morning.

13. BCDSS accused me of [redacted], but I never did that. I don't understand why we couldn't have seen a judge before BCDSS took our kids, so that I could have explained why they shouldn't be taken.

14. I did not really understand what happened at the hearing, which felt like it lasted only about 5 minutes, and I didn't get to say anything except my name. The magistrate did not hear any evidence and did not make any finding that the removal or ongoing separation was necessary.

15. H.L. has been living with Edward's sister ever since BCDSS took him from us, and D.L. also went to live with her when he got out of the NICU.

16. We have to coordinate with Edward's sister, mom, and BCDSS to see our own children, which can be difficult.

17. We've done everything BCDSS told us to do to get our kids back. But we are still separated. I don't know what we have to do so that H.L. and D.L. can come home. I hate being away from them.

18. We are loving parents and have always done the best we can for our kids.

19. The court process has been lengthy. There have been multiple hearings, with significant time between them. At the hearings, it has often felt like the magistrate didn't remember our family or our case.

20. I am pregnant and due on January 29, 2027.

21. At our last hearing, on July 23, 2026, the magistrate said [redacted] But the magistrate still won't give our kids back to us. She said that [redacted] I do not understand what she is expecting from me or what I need to do to get my kids back.

22. I miss H.L. and D.L. with all of my heart.

23. I do not want to be separated from the new baby.

24. I know the agency is watching us. I know the magistrate [redacted], but I'm not sure what that means. I know that people who are being

watched by BCDSS are more likely to have their kids taken. I also know BCDSS [redacted] I understand I could be at risk of my baby being taken because H.L. and D.L. have been taken away from us. Also, because I take the medications that my doctor prescribes me, I will test positive on drug tests when I give birth. I know that these positive drug tests will be reported to BCDSS and that the agency will investigate me.

25. If BCDSS wants to take the new baby, I want to have a hearing before that happens so I can explain to the magistrate that Edward and I can provide a safe and loving home for all of our children.

26. When I was a kid, I spent time in the foster system, including in a home where other girls and boys were being abused. My mother wasn't perfect but I loved her, and I wanted to be with her. I know how important it is to have a safe and stable home, and that is what Edward and I provide for our kids.

27. Not being able to talk to and see my children has been enormously stressful. The separation is very painful. I've seen changes in my kids. For example, H.L. is regressing with potty training, and I wish I could help him.

28. I know that what's happening to my family is happening to a lot of other families. I know many other parents and children are afraid that BCDSS will separate them unnecessarily. I want to be a part of this lawsuit so that what happened to us doesn't happen to other people.

29. I am concerned about my children's well-being and the long-term effects this separation will have on them.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

Executed on November 17, 2026

Candace Lovett

CANDACE LOVETT

EXHIBIT 4

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF MARYLAND
NORTHERN DIVISION

CANDACE LOVETT, *et al.*, on behalf of themselves and all others similarly situated,

Plaintiffs,

v.

BALTIMORE CITY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES, *et al.*,

Defendants.

Case No. _____

REDACTED VERSION

DECLARATION OF REGINA ROLAND

Pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1746, I, Regina Roland, declare under penalty of perjury:

1. I am over 18 years old.

2. I am moving the Court to allow me to proceed under the pseudonym of Regina Roland.

3. I want to use a pseudonym to help protect the identities of my children. I don't want their identities disclosed, and public disclosure of my identity might lead to their identification as my children. Also, this case involves personal and sensitive information about my family, including information about my medical history, mental health, and alleged substance abuse. Disclosing this information publicly puts myself and my family at risk of harm.

4. I am the mother of C.C., a 9-year-old boy; R.R., a 6-year-old girl; and R.H., a 5-year-old girl. I am currently pregnant and due on December 20, 2026. I am scheduled to have a cesarean section on December 14, 2026, but recognize I could go into labor before that time.

5. For the past two years, I have worked full-time as a 911 specialist, from 10:30 p.m. – 6:30 a.m. five nights a week. Before that, I was a security officer on the campus of Coppin State University for about a year.

6. I have been the primary caregiver for my children since birth. I'm not rich, but I love my kids, and I do whatever I can for them. I love being a mom. My kids are my life.

7. BCDSS has investigated me several times in the past. In 2020, when I was pregnant with my oldest daughter, my son was removed by BCDSS due to a so-called emergency and returned to me after a months-long court process.

8. These experiences taught me that my every action as a parent is subject to scrutiny, and if BCDSS suspects anything—even if the allegations are completely baseless—I could be forced to jump through a lot of hoops to keep my kids or get them back.

9. Most recently, BCDSS separated me from my three children for months as a result of a false report made by my father.

10. Last year, my children and I were living with my father. Following an argument with my dad, I went to stay with my sister and looked for a new place for my kids and I to live. My children stayed with my dad while I looked for housing, but I remained in close contact with them and involved in their day-to-day care.

11. In late September or early October 2025, soon after I moved out and while my kids were still living with my dad, I recall that BCDSS contacted me and told me to attend a Zoom meeting. I recall that, during the Zoom meeting, BCDSS told me my kids would have to stay with my father, and that I had to meet a set of BCDSS requirements to get them back. I did not understand the placement of my children with my father to be optional.

12. At the time, I thought this Zoom hearing was a court hearing, and that a judge had ordered my kids to be in my dad's custody.

13. More than two weeks later, I met with a BCDSS caseworker who had me sign a form that had to do with the hearing. I did not understand what I was signing. I later learned that the agency calls this a "safety plan" and that, according to them, I had agreed for my children to stay with my dad by signing it.

14. Over the next nearly two months, I was painfully separated from my children. I visited as much as I could and spoke to them on the phone, but every day we were apart, I missed them: helping them with their homework, putting them to bed, all the little things.

15. Leaving the kids after each visit was terrible. I dreaded leaving and hearing their screams. They screamed like someone had pinched them, and cried like they were in pain when I left. C.C. had to step up and be a big brother for his sisters.

16. My father is elderly, and I worried that he struggled to care for three young children by himself. Family and friends raised concerns about the kids' hygiene and happiness while they were with my father.

17. During this period of separation, I worked as quickly as possible to meet the requirements BCDSS set. By October 29, I rented a three-bedroom apartment, which had enough room for me and my children to live. I told the BCDSS caseworker that I had gotten new housing, so that my kids could be reunited with me. But no one from BCDSS ever came to inspect.

18. I also recall sending money to my father to support the children; scheduling medical and dental visits; providing documentation of my own mental health treatment; and sharing updates with BCDSS about my visits with the children.

19. After I had been separated from my children for almost two months, I finally was assigned an attorney. I had a virtual court hearing the same day I met my lawyer. I learned that BDCSS [redacted]. I didn't understand what this meant because they had been taken from me almost two months ago.

20. When my attorney read BCDSS's allegations to me, it was the first time I understood why BDCSS thought I harmed my kids. But the allegations were untrue. I gave my attorney documentation proving they were false.

21. The court hearing that afternoon was held via Zoom before Magistrate William Gyauch. At that hearing, my attorney [redacted].

22. [redacted]. But BCDSS and my father failed to return my children to me for several days. My father would not return my kids until I threatened to call the police on him. As a result, I missed spending Thanksgiving with my children that year, something I still grieve.

23. After my children were finally returned to me, the case stayed open. I showed up to court just before Christmas last year, but the hearing was rescheduled for two months later because I would not agree to BCDSS's allegations, and the judge was not prepared to hear the evidence.

24. At the hearing in February 2026, [redacted]

[redacted].

25. The months of separation were hard on my young children. They still experience lingering effects from what they experienced. My son is now in therapy, and my kids have expressed fear about going to their grandfather's house because they do not want to be left there without me.

26. I am also still suffering emotionally from my children being removed. I live in constant fear that they will be taken from me again. Prior to the removal, the longest I had been without seeing them was a week when they visited family in another state. It was horrible not being able to see them every day. I worry about what another separation would do to my children, who are still adjusting after being separated from me last year.

27. I know my children's school knows about my prior DSS involvement, and I fear school officials scrutinize me more closely than other parents and would be quicker to report any concerns to BCDSS as a result than they would for other parents. I believe my daughter's doctors may know about my prior BCDSS involvement and worry that it puts me under greater scrutiny and at higher risk of another report.

28. I am currently pregnant and due to give birth in December. I am terrified that because of my past involvement with BCDSS, my newborn baby will be taken away. I also worry that the hospital providers will constantly watch me and evaluate me when I go to the hospital to give birth, and that anything that might be characterized as anything less than perfect parenting could lead to a report to BCDSS and my children being taken from me. This fear has already taken what should be a moment of great joy and excitement for my family—welcoming a new baby—and turned it into a terrifying experience of fear and worry.

29. I have been diagnosed with psychiatric conditions and am prescribed medication to treat those conditions. However, my doctors have advised that those medications are not safe to take while I'm pregnant. But I struggle without them. To self-medicate, I had been using cannabis. It's hard, but I am committed to avoiding cannabis. I fear I will test positive for cannabis when the baby is born in the coming days or weeks, and I know that a positive drug test will precipitate a full BCDSS investigation. I fear my baby and my older children will be taken if I test positive.

30. I don't want what has happened to me to happen to anyone else, but I know that it happens every day to families in Baltimore City. I wouldn't wish this hurt on my worst enemy. Being separated from my children unnecessarily and subject to BCDSS's decisions about what will happen to me and my children was one of the hardest things I've ever been through.

31. I want to be part of this lawsuit because I want other people to have the chance I didn't have: to have a real hearing in court before their children are removed, so that better decisions can be made and fewer families harmed.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

Executed on November 18, 2026

Regina Roland
REGINA ROLAND

EXHIBIT 5

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF MARYLAND
NORTHERN DIVISION

CANDACE LOVETT, *et al.*, on behalf of themselves and all others similarly situated, *Plaintiffs*, v. BALTIMORE CITY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES, *et al*., *Defendants*.	Case No. _____

E PERT REPORT OF MOLLY TIERNEY

I. Background and Qualifications

1. My name is Molly Tierney. I served as Director of the Baltimore City Department of Social Services ("BCDSS") from 2008 to 2017, where I managed the city's child-welfare and public-assistance programs. Before that I served from 2003 to 2007 as the Deputy Commissioner of the City of Chicago. In that position, I managed the mayor's major human-services reforms. Before that I was a Deputy Director in Washington D.C.'s child-welfare agency (2002), a fellow at the Annie E. Casey Foundation (2001), and a program director in the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (1997-2001). Prior to those management positions, I spent seven years as a case manager.

2. I am now Managing Director at Accenture, where I have worked since 2018. I lead the firm's child-welfare practice, including developing tools and advising child-welfare agencies around the country and the world to improve outcomes for vulnerable families and their children.

3. I have a master's degree in child development from Loyola University in Chicago (1997) and a bachelor's degree in American Studies from the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill (1995).

4. I have multiple publications in blog format available at https://mollytierney.com/ as well as the following publications:

Tierney, M. (2016, November) From Family Data to Neighborhood Outcomes. The Stanford Social Innovation Review Retrieved from https: ssir.org articles entry from_family_data_to_neighborhood_outcomes

Tierney, M. (2014, January) Rethinking Foster Care. TEDx Baltimore. Retrieved from www.youtube.com

5. I am a nationally and internationally recognized expert on child-welfare agencies' operations and best practices for keeping families together while protecting children from abuse and neglect. I am also an expert specifically on BCDSS's functions and bureaucracy, as well as on its operations between 2008 and 2017 when I was Director.

6. My curriculum vitae is attached as Exhibit A.

7. I have been asked by the plaintiffs in this lawsuit to provide my expert opinion on best practices in the social-services sector for keeping families together and protecting children from abuse or neglect.

8. I am being compensated at a rate of $200 per hour for my work in this case as well as reimbursement for any out-of-pocket expenses reasonably and necessarily incurred in my work on this case.

II. Methodology

9. Based on my extensive experience in the field of child welfare, I have formed a series of opinions about the strategy of removing children from their homes as a means of keeping them safe, the feasibility of alternatives to removal for keeping children safe, best

practices for when to remove a child, and the practices available to Departments of Social Services for protecting children while also minimizing removals.

10. The materials I reviewed in preparing my report are listed in Exhibit B.

11. My opinions sometimes evolve as new research and information becomes available. I will continue to update my analyses based on additional information I learn.

III. Opinions

12. I was asked to provide my opinion on the following questions: (1) What are best practices in the field for when a child protective services ("CPS") agency should remove a child from their home? (2) What procedures are within the discretion of BCDSS to implement that would protect children and keep families together?

A. Question #1: What are best practices in the field for when a social services agency should remove a child from their home?

13. CPS agencies should avoid removing children from their homes and families, except when removal is absolutely necessary. This opinion is informed by a career in this field and overwhelming research showing the damage removal does to a child. Approximately 80% of the children who come into foster care do so for neglect or struggles associated with poverty, including untreated substance use or mental health conditions,[1] and it is often very hard for case workers on the front line of child welfare to discern the difference between poverty and neglect. As a result, a significant portion of the children who come into foster care due so simply because their parents are under-resourced. They could have been kept safely at home. Even those children who are the subject of real abuse and neglect allegations can often be provided services that will keep them safe at home. Being brought into foster care instead adds un-ending trauma to

[1] U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau, *e e t a land* (Preliminary FY 2022 estimates as of May 9, 2023 – No. 30. https: acf.gov sites default files documents cb afcars-tar-md-2022_0.pdf.

childhood by disrupting a family bond – separating a child from their parents, community, and everything that is familiar to them. Disruption to health care and education also have long-term effects from which it is very hard to recover. A child who spends time in the foster system has twice the risk of total mortality and three times the risk of suicide in adulthood as compared to children who are not exposed to the foster system.[2]

14. Research and my own experience show unequivocally that children's outcomes in a wide range of areas are worse if they have spent time in foster care.[3] Children generally do best when they can stay in their home with their families. Removing a child from their home is one of the most harmful things a child can experience. It is deeply traumatic for them to be separated from their parents, siblings, home, pets, belongings, and community. For that reason, if there is no serious and immediate safety issue, the best practice is for the CPS agency to do everything in its power to mitigate the risk without taking the child out of their home. Removal is appropriate only when the child's safety is so severely and imminently threatened that nothing other than removal will protect the child.

15. The decision to remove a child is a serious one. Because removal is so harmful to children, a child should not be removed if the risk to the child's well-being can be addressed by one or both of the following:

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[2] Batty, . D., ivim ki, M., Frank, P. (2022). State care in childhood and adult mortality: A systematic review and meta-analysis of prospective cohort studies. *e an et P li ealt* (6), e504–e514 ao, M., Br nnstr m, L., Almquist, Y. B. (2017). Exposure to out-of-home care in childhood and adult all-cause mortality: a cohort study. *nte nati nal nal f ide i l g* , 46(3), 1010–1017.

[3] ypen, L., Vanderfaeillie, J., De Maeyer, S., Belenger, L., Van Holen, F. (2017). Outcomes of children who grew up in foster care: Systematic-review. *ild en and t e i es e ie* , 74–83 Solerdelcoll, M., Sugranyes, ., Baeza, I. (2026). Developmental outcomes across foster care, adoption, and child welfare services: a mini review. Frontiers in Psychiatry, 17 Evans, R., Brown, R., Rees, ., Smith, P. (2017). Systematic review of educational interventions for looked-after children and young people. Open access via PMC (PMC5299458).

- Creating a "safety plan" with a parent that keeps the child in the home. A safety plan is supposed to be a time-limited specific agreement, spanning several days or weeks, and signed by the caseworker and the parent, with explicit terms the parent agrees to in order to maintain the child at home. Some examples of a safety plan might be that the mom would agree not to leave the child home alone and would have articulated her childcare plans, or that the children would be kept away from a dangerous friend or neighbor. A safety plan should be the result of a dialogue with the parent, not a set of requirements unilaterally imposed by CPS.
- Providing the family with cash assistance or other material resources.

16. It is not considered a best practice for a CPS agency to require a child to leave the home under a safety plan. A safety plan is an informal process that does not involve court oversight and that does not trigger the requirements of the 1997 Federal Adoption and Safety Families Act ("ASFA"). Among other things, the ASFA requires the government to provide a portfolio of services to children in foster care, including a comprehensive assessment, a case plan, a permanency goal, and a court date. Removing a child pursuant to a safety plan typically means that the child-protection agency does not conduct home assessments or background checks before separating the family and does not notify the court. To have a child removed from their home under a safety plan and without a petition or court order is often referred to as "shadow foster care" and is generally seen as high risk because it is placing children in unlicensed settings, without appropriate court oversight.

17. In my experience, requiring a child to leave their home under a "safety plan" is often experienced by children and families as a removal, and carries many of the same negative effects on children and parents as formal removals.

18. Any safety plan should have a clear end date. It is not considered a best practice to have a safety plan with no clear end date.

B. Question #2: What policies and practices are within the discretion of the BCDSS Director to implement that would protect children and keep families together?

19. The BCDSS Director has broad discretion to formulate operating procedures for the agency, within the bounds of federal and state law. In other words, unless federal or state law or a court order prohibits the agency from doing something, the agency can do it.

20. As BCDSS Director, I exercised my discretion to implement and enforce operating procedures that would protect children while keeping families together as much as possible, including the ones described below.

21. The Director has discretion to require a certain quantum of proof supporting an allegation of neglect or abuse before a supervisor will sign off on a petition for removal. For example, the Director can require that the caseworker and case supervisor obtain a doctor's opinion before proceeding to removal where there is an unexplained injury.

22. The Director can dictate the steps caseworkers and supervisors must take in making a decision to remove, including the consideration of alternatives to removal.

23. The Director also has discretion to require workers to offer families material resources (cash or otherwise) to help mitigate any risks to children. When I was Director, I made it a policy that caseworkers use money to help families stay together. When cash could help families resolve the issues that raised the agency's concerns about child safety, the policy was that the agency could provide cash to support the family and keep the child safe—e.g. from a home that lacks heat or food, or from risks associated with lack of supervision—as an alternative to taking the child out of the home when it was safe to do so. BCDSS has resources at its

disposal for this purpose, including Temporary Assistance for Needy Families funding and Title IV-E dollars. Title IV-E of the Social Security Act is the largest federal funding stream for child welfare activities. BCDSS can access additional state and federal resources designed to prevent children going into foster care, potentially including federal Family First dollars under Title IV-E, which funds family preservation services.

24. When I was Director, I could prohibit caseworkers from using "safety plans" as a mechanism for separating families without judicial oversight.

25. The BCDSS Director controls supervision and training. When I was Director, I required monthly supervision meetings for every caseworker and I determined the agendas for those meetings. No caseworker was permitted to cancel those supervision meetings. This ensured every caseworker was receiving consistent training, oversight, and information throughout the organization about our priorities, including our strong emphasis on avoiding separating families.

26. As long as there is not a contradictory court order, the agency has broad discretion to make decisions about visitation between parents and children, including when and where it happens, how frequently, and whether it is supervised or unsupervised.

27. When a child is committed to BCDSS custody, BCDSS has complete authority to make decisions about the child's placement, as long as there's nothing contrary specified in the court order. That includes the authority to move a child from one placement to another at any time, or to place a child at home for a trial period should the agency decide, in its discretion, that the child would be safe there.

28. The Director of BCDSS has the authority to discipline and terminate employees who are not truthful in case filings.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

Molly Tierney
Molly Tierney (Nov 17, 2026 12:25:34 EST)

11/17/2026

Molly Tierney

November 16, 2026

E hi it A – Curriculum Vitae

Molly Tierney

443-799-9700 | Mollytierney@me.com | Baltimore, MD 21209

Nationally recognized public-sector and consulting executive with 25+ years of experience leading transformational change in human services systems. Proven record of building collaborative cultures. Designing enterprise-wide strategy, and scaling solutions that achieve measurable social impact. Skilled at uniting diverse stakeholders, securing funding, and translating strategy into action to improve outcomes for vulnerable populations in the U.S. and globally.

Experience

ACCENTURE, The AMERICAs

Managing Director | 2018 - Current

Strategy lead for the Accenture's child welfare practice in North America, including the development of tools and management consulting that enable state child welfare agencies to leverage safety, permanency and well-being for children involved in child protection and foster care systems across the country including:

- Executive producer for a VR based learning method that accelerates the pace with which employees in public service become seasoned decision makers (www.accenture.com/AVEnueS)
- Co-designed a federally compliant child welfare electronic case management system that dramatically increased access to information, shared intel across data systems and produced data insights that drive practice improvements (www.accenture.com/ACIS).
- Developed a management consulting approach designed to enable leadership in state child welfare agencies to use data and insights to drive decision making toward better outcomes for vulnerable families and their children.

JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY, Baltimore, MD

Co-Director of Social Policy Minor Fellowship Program

Tommy Koh Lecturer in the Department of Sociology | 2018 - 2022

Managed a Social Policy minor program, including recruiting, selecting, and advising students, curating content for the minor program and negotiating fellowship placements for each student. Developed and taught a 300-level course on policy and practice in human services.

BALTIMORE CITY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES, Baltimore, MD

Director | 2008 - 2017

Created a program and business model for social services to vulnerable children and families that ensured continuous and sustainable improvement of agency performance and that is now considered a national model. Outcomes over an 8 year period include:

- 72% reduction in the number of children in foster care
- 59% increase in adoptions
- 89% reduction in the number of children living in group homes
- 2% payment error rate

- 98% accuracy in the delivery of federal benefits to 215,000 citizens
- Named Maryland's Jurisdiction of the Year in 2009, 2010 and 2012

Responsible for the overall management of social services in Baltimore City including Child Welfare, TANF, and Homeless services. Managed 2500 employees and a $750 million budget. Provided leadership for large scale reform in pursuit of substantially improved outcomes for low-income children and families in Baltimore. Implemented an array of promising and evidenced based practices, including the rigorous and public use of data, the deployment of analytics to refine and target interventions for highest risk populations and communities, accountability for every employee and leadership development throughout the management team. Redeployed government funds toward more effective programming. Developed new revenue streams of private dollars to fund programs and services focused on reducing teen pregnancy, improving school readiness, increasing literacy, and increasing school attendance. Responsible for media relations and marketing of public information, recruitment and public service messages for child safety and well-being. Advised the Secretary and Mayor on policy and programs for vulnerable children and families and represented the Department to the state legislature.

CITY OF CHIGAGO

Office of Budget and Management

Deputy Commissioner | 2007

Implemented performance management program that measured increased well-being among vulnerable families in Chicago and redirected resources toward more effective programs. Responsible for the management and oversight of 12 City Departments including Human Services, Workforce Development, Housing, Public health, Children and Youth Services, and Aging. Total budget exceeded $950 million.

Department of Human Services

Deputy Commissioner | 2003 - 2006

Designed and implemented programs for families involved with Mayor Richard M. Daley's major human service reform plans, including:

- A privatized case management program for 15,000 public housing families during the reformation of the largest public housing system in the country
- An array of services for families who are homeless or at risk of homelessness during the City's 10-year effort to end homelessness

Reoriented all systems of care to outcomes-based model. Developed partnerships with city and state agencies that leveraged funding and reduced duplication of services. Managed a $44 million budget.

CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES AGENCY, Washington, D.C.

Deputy Director | 2002

Joined the DC public child welfare leadership team that lead the agency out of a 10-year period of federal receivership. Responsible for the transformation of agency contracts to performance-based system, the development of requisite technology for regular analysis of the caseload, and an increase in the number of adoptions.

ANNIE E. CASEY FOUNDATION, Baltimore, MD

Fellow | 2001

Selected as one of ten national fellows for the Children and Family Fellowship Program. The eleven-month fellowship is designed for accomplished professionals from around the country who want to accelerate their professional and personal development in order to make a greater difference in improving life chances of children and families living in disadvantaged communities.

The program also involved a series of seminars provided by New York University's Wagner School of Public Policy as well as site visits to communities and organizations across the country that exhibit groundbreaking work, and widespread exposure to leaders in the field of child welfare, education, public policy, and community development.

ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

Program Director | 1997 - 2001

Integrated best practices from the Early Childhood field into the child welfare system in Illinois. Developed clinically based protocols for front line social workers that were age specific, and which substantially raised the sophistication of clinical decision making statewide. Resulted in improved well-being outcomes for very young children in foster care: placement stability, academic readiness, behavioral health/

KALEIDOSCOPE, INC, Chicago, Illinois

Program Supervisor | 1991 - 1996

Provided intensive, individualized case management to families at risk of abuse, neglect, and removal of children. Promoted to Supervisor in 1994.

APPALACHIA SERVICE PROJECT, Johnson City, Tennessee

Center Director | 1987 - 1989

Directed regional center for community organizing program.

Education

Loyola University, Chicago, Illinois: M.Ed. in Child Development **|** 1997

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill: B.A. in American Studies **|** 1995

Awards Received

Silver Award for Responsible Technology in Public Service, Anthem Awards | 2024

Top 50 Women in Maryland, Women We Admire | 2022

Gold Award for Innovation and Responsible Technology, Anthem Awards | 2022

VR for Social Impact Award, AIXR | 2021

Todd Perry Innovator of the Year, Accenture | 2019

Mobile World Congress, GLOMO Innovation Award | 2018

SXSW Innovation Award, Finalist | 2018

Maryland Daily Record's Top 100 Women, Circle of Excellence | 2016

Maryland Daily Record's Top 100 Women | 2014

Foster Care Alumni of America, Child Welfare Administrator of the Year | 2014

Greater Baltimore Committee, Sondheim Exemplary Leadership Award Honoree | 2013

Harvard University Innovations in American Government: Bright Ideas Award | 2012

Maryland Department of Human Resources Outstanding Jurisdiction of the Year | 2012

Maryland Daily Record's Top 100 Women | 2011

Maryland Department of Human Resources Outstanding Jurisdiction of the Year | 2010

Maryland Department of Human Resources Outstanding Jurisdiction of the Year | 2009

The Woodlawn Organization, Social Services Leadership Award | 2004

Harvard University Innovations in American Government: Semifinalist | 1998

Publications

Tierney, M. (2018-2024) Medium posts retrieved from https://medium.com/@mollytierney

Tierney, M. (2023) Rabbit Was. Self-published memoir

Tierney, M. (2008 - 2024) Blog Posts Retrieved from http://www.mollytierney.com.

Tierney, M. (2016, November) From Family Data to Neighborhood Outcomes . *The Stanford Social Innovation Review* Retrieved from https://ssir.org/articles/entry/from_family_data_to_neighborhood_outcomes

Tierney, M. (2014, January) Rethinking Foster Care. TEDx Baltimore. Retrieved from www.youtube.com

Affiliations

Mt. Washington Improvement Association | 2024 to present
Restorative Response Baltimore Board of Directors: Member | 2018 - 2019
Foster America Board of Directors: Member | 2015 to 2018
The Family League of Baltimore City Board of Directors: Member | 2008 - 2017
Head Start Governance Board Baltimore City: Member | 2011 - 2017
Leadership Greater Baltimore: Fellow | 2011
United Way of Central Maryland Community Partnership Board: Member | 2011 - 2016
Maryland Foster Youth Resource Center Executive Board: Member | 2011
The Annie E. Casey Foundation Children and Family Fellowship Network: Member | 2002-present

E hi it B – Materials Reviewed

- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau, *The AFCARS report: Maryland* (Preliminary FY 2022 estimates as of May 9, 2023 – No. 30. https://acf.gov/sites/default/files/documents/cb/afcars-tar-md-2022_0.pdf.

- Barth, R. P., & Blackwell, D. L. (1998). Death rates among California's foster care and former foster care populations. Children and Youth Services Review, 20(7), 577–604.

- Batty, G. D., Kivimäki, M., & Frank, P. (2022). State care in childhood and adult mortality: A systematic review and meta-analysis of prospective cohort studies. *The Lancet Public Health, 7*(6), e504–e514.

- Evans, R., Brown, R., Rees, ., Smith, P. (2017). Systematic review of educational interventions for looked-after children and young people. Open access via PMC (PMC5299458).

- Gao, M., Brännström, L., & Almquist, Y. B. (2017). Exposure to out-of-home care in childhood and adult all-cause mortality: a cohort study. International Journal of Epidemiology, 46(3), 1010–1017

- Gypen, L., Vanderfaeillie, J., De Maeyer, S., Belenger, L., & Van Holen, F. (2017). Outcomes of children who grew up in foster care: Systematic-review. *Children and Youth Services Review, 76*, 74–83.

- O'Higgins, A. Systematic review on factors associated with educational achievement for children in kinship or foster care, University of Oxford.

- Solerdelcoll, M., Sugranyes, G., & Baeza, I. (2026). Developmental outcomes across foster care, adoption, and child welfare services: a mini review. Frontiers in Psychiatry, 17.

EXHIBIT 6

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF MARYLAND
NORTHERN DIVISION

CANDACE LOVETT, *et al.*, on behalf of themselves and all others similarly situated, *Plaintiffs*, v. BALTIMORE CITY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES, *et al*., *Defendants*.	Case No. _____

EXPERT REPORT AND DECLARATION OF DR. CHRISTOPHER WILDEMAN

I. BACKGROUND AND QUALIFICATIONS

1. I am Professor of Sociology and Public Policy at Duke University in Durham, North Carolina. I also serve as Chair of the Sociology Department in the Trinity College of Arts and Sciences at Duke. I earned my Master's and Ph.D. in Sociology and Demography from Princeton University in 2006 and 2008, respectively. I wrote my dissertation on *Parental Incarceration, the Prison Book, and the Intergenerational Transmission of Stigma and Disadvantage*. My research currently focuses on the prevalence, causes, and consequences for families of contact with the child welfare system and the criminal justice system. I am a nationally recognized authority on these topics.

2. I received the Dorothy Thomas Award from the Population Association of America for the best graduate student paper (in 2008), the Ruth Shonle Cavan Young Scholar Award from the American Society of Criminology (in 2013), the Article of the Year Award from the journal *Child Maltreatment* (in 2020), and the Clifford C. Clogg Award for Mid-Career Achievement from the Population Association of America (in 2026). I was also elected to the Sociological Research Association (in 2022).

3. I am the Director of the National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect, funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. As the Director, I am responsible for archiving the two major administrative datasets on child protective-services (CPS) contact, foster

care placement, and adoption in the United States—the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System Data and the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System—as well as many other relevant datasets. I am also responsible for promoting the sharing of those data sets with the research community.

4. I am currently the principal investigator on a National Institutes of Health (NIH)-funded study on "The Health Consequences of Childhood Maltreatment and Foster Care from Adolescence Into Mid-Life," which examines data on a wide range of long-term health outcomes for children who were in foster care. I am also the Co-Principal Investigator on another NIH-funded study, the "Implications of Parental Incarceration for Child Health and Wellbeing," which uses linked administrative data from Wisconsin to evaluate the health and other wellbeing outcomes for children of parents who are incarcerated. I have several other grants that are currently active, but these are the grants that are most relevant to this report.

5. I have published extensively on the scope and distribution of child welfare-system involvement, and the consequences of that involvement. "The child welfare system is a continuum of services designed to protect the well-being of children by promoting safety, achieving permanency, and strengthening families." (Child Welfare Information Gateway 2025). Within that system, "[c]hild protective services … investigates reports of child maltreatment and, if necessary, places children in out-of-home care if their homes are deemed to be unsafe" (Child Welfare Information Gateway 2025). Thus, I define CPS as any state or local agency that investigates reported maltreatment, provides services to families who have been reported for maltreatment, and/or places children in foster care.

6. My research on the scope of child welfare-system contact has generated the first estimates of how likely it is for a child to ever experience a CPS investigation (Kim et al. 2017), be the subject of a confirmed report of maltreatment (Wildeman et al. 2014), be placed in foster care (Wildeman and Emanuel 2014), or have their parents' parental rights terminated (Wildeman et al. 2020). My research has also resulted in the first analyses of how a child's risk of experiencing these events varies across states (Yi et al. 2023) and large counties (Edwards et al. 2021). I also have written and published on how contact with the child welfare system, especially placement in foster care, shapes children's lives (Wakefield and Wildeman 2022; Wildeman and Waldfogel 2014; Yi and Wildeman 2018). Much of my work, especially my most recent work on child welfare-system involvement, has considered how certain experiences—such as placement in the foster system—may generate different effects on certain groups as compared to others. This research has implications for assessing the effectiveness of child welfare policies related to removal and ongoing separation.

7. A copy of my *curriculum vitae*, including a list of all publications authored in the past ten years, is attached as Exhibit A. I have not testified as an expert at trial or by deposition during the preceding four years.

8. Counsel for the plaintiffs in this case have asked me to provide my opinion on several questions related to the effects of child welfare-system involvement on children and families.

9. I am being compensated at $400/hour for my work on this case and $100/hour for any travel.

II. MATERIALS REVIEWED AND METHODOLOGY

10. I have attached as Exhibit B a list of the materials that I reviewed in preparing this report. The studies listed were compiled from a comprehensive review of the relevant literature. I have assessed them for reliability and accuracy based on my professional knowledge, training, and familiarity with the statistical and research methods the authors employed. My assessment of and reliance on the findings in that literature take into account the statistical-modeling approach and overall study design, as well as the statistical significance of the authors' findings.

11. In forming my opinions, I rely on findings from multiple studies concerning child welfare systems authored by various researchers and scholars, along with my nearly 15 years of experience studying these topics. The studies I rely on employ descriptive, associational, and causal methods to reach their conclusions. I briefly describe each of these methods below.

12. Descriptive Methods. These studies describe which and how many children come into contact with the child welfare system and disparities among different groups in the likelihood that a child will come into contact with it. Some studies estimate cumulative risk, meaning the proportion of children who will experience a specified event, such as a CPS investigation, at least once by a particular age. They generally use high-quality administrative datasets, which are datasets that are collected by government agencies, and their principal findings have been replicated by different research teams using different data and methods (e.g., Edwards et al. 2021; Putnam-Hornstein et al. 2021a). Put simply, independent researchers have approached the questions in different ways and reached similar conclusions, increasing my confidence that the findings are not artifacts of a particular dataset or analytical choice. I am an author of several of the descriptive studies on which I rely.

13. Associational Methods. The associational studies I rely on identify important differences between youth who have experienced foster care and youth who have not, including

after researchers account for basic demographic and socioeconomic characteristics. For example, studies show that adolescents who have been placed in foster care have higher rates of teen pregnancy than adolescents who have not (e.g. Dworsky and Courtney 2010; Svoboda et al. 2012). These studies suggest that the observed differences are not merely a function of measured socioeconomic disadvantage. They are also relevant to assessing whether foster care placement is beneficial or detrimental to children. Sticking with the teen-pregnancy example, if foster care placement were beneficial across all populations, one might expect that after adjusting for socioeconomic disadvantage, youth who were currently in foster care or had ever been in foster care would have lower rates of teen pregnancy because of the beneficial effects of foster care, but that is not what the studies show. Indeed, studies show just the opposite. At the same time, these studies vary in the quality of their data and methods, and I treat them with caution when drawing conclusions about causation. The studies do not, by themselves, establish the degree to which placement caused the differences observed. I therefore use associational studies to identify meaningful patterns and potential consequences, while considering causal research and the broader body of evidence before drawing conclusions about the effects of foster care placement.

14. Causal Methods. Several of the causal studies I rely on examine the extent to which contact with the child welfare system likely impacted certain outcomes for a child, such as subsequent interaction with the juvenile-justice and criminal-justice systems. I also consider causal studies that analyze the effects of maternal incarceration on children, which provide additional evidence about how being separated from a parent impacts children. The causal studies I review come in two varieties, explained below.

a. Certain of the causal studies I rely on compare the outcomes for children whose cases are assigned at random to different caseworkers with different removal practices. These studies are premised on the assumption that caseworkers receive comparable cases, which assists in isolating the impact of removal. The studies use a two-stage method involving a technical process called "instrumental variables regression," which makes it possible to isolate the causal effect of some event (in this case, foster care placement) on some outcome of interest. These studies are especially informative for marginal cases: cases where the factors in favor of removal are weaker and in which the placement decision is therefore more likely to be affected by which caseworker receives the assignment. They provide less information about children at either end of the risk distribution, including children facing such grave danger that nearly any caseworker would remove them and children in comparatively low-risk circumstances whom nearly any caseworker would leave at home.

b. Other causal studies I rely on analyze the outcomes experienced by broader swaths of the population who have had contact with the child welfare system. This

approach generally identifies causal effects with less precision, but can illuminate differences that the causal studies described above (which provide an average estimate for marginal cases) may conceal. Much of my thinking in terms of the causal effects of child welfare-system contact—and especially foster care placement—is derived from my own work on the heterogeneous effects of maternal incarceration on children, which has shown that even though such effects are on average largely null (Wildeman and Turney 2014), these average null effects mask significant heterogeneity in terms of effects across populations of children who are more or less likely to experience maternal incarceration (Turney and Wildeman 2015). These studies do an excellent job of helping us think about the limitations of other causal studies, and strongly suggest that children are almost certainly worse off if they are unnecessarily removed from their families.

15. Taken together, the descriptive, associational, and causal studies are sufficiently rigorous and come from a sufficiently varied range of jurisdictions that I would expect the findings to be generalizable to other jurisdictions. That is to say, there is enough research on a wide enough range of populations that I would expect the findings to apply in Baltimore City.

16. My analysis is ongoing, and opinions are always developing as new information or data becomes available. Thus, the opinions set forth below are subject to updates as new evidence comes to light.

III. SUMMARY OF OPINIONS

17. Counsel for the plaintiffs have asked me for my professional opinion on the following questions:

a. What is the scope of the child welfare system, especially what percentage of children will be exposed to the system, and how does the share of the population exposed to the system vary by race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status?

b. How do children and families experience contact with the child welfare system, especially child removal and foster-system involvement?

c. What are the average short- and long-term effects of foster-system placement on children?

18. In response to these questions, I provide the following opinions that are explained in greater detail below.

a. A large number of children in the United States will experience contact with the child welfare system at some point, with Black, native, and low-resource children especially likely to experience such contact.

b. Interactions with the child welfare system are often stressful for families and children in ways that suggest potential negative effects on children and parents.

c. Children who are removed from their parents when not seriously endangered are highly likely to suffer substantial and lasting trauma and negative consequences as a result of removal and placement in the child welfare system. There is no evidence to support the proposition that removal into the foster care system, on average, benefits child wellbeing.

IV. OPINIONS

A. A Large Number of Children in the United States Will Experience Contact With the Child welfare System, and Black, Native, and Low-Resource Children Are Especially Likely to Experience Such Contact

19. The child welfare system touches the lives of large numbers of children and families nationwide.

20. Research I conducted with colleagues on the lifetime prevalence of investigations of child maltreatment using the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System Child Files from 2003 to 2014 showed that, during those years, 37.4% of all children in the United States experienced a CPS investigation. Although rates fell somewhat during the Covid pandemic, the most recent estimates, which are from 2023, indicate that around one-third of all children will ever experience a maltreatment investigation (Yi et al. 2026). Research concerning large urban counties in the United States reveals rates of CPS contact higher than the national average. This research suggests that the risk of an investigation in Baltimore City, where the population is comparatively impoverished and African American, is at least as high as—and very likely exceeds that of—the national average. (Edwards et al. 2021; Putnam-Hornstein et al. 2021a).

21. The rate of child welfare system involvement beyond investigation is also high. One in 16 children will experience foster care placement (Wildeman and Emanuel 2014), and 1 in 100 will experience a termination of parental rights (Wildeman et al. 2020). Rates have declined slightly since the Covid pandemic but remain very similar today (Yi et al. 2026).

22. Reliable research also shows that poor families experience higher rates of child welfare-system investigations, separations, and terminations of parental rights (Putnam-Hornstein et al. 2021b). Although this research was conducted using statewide California data, other research suggests this phenomenon is not limited to California, and that living in poverty elsewhere likewise substantially increases the risk at all stages that a child will come into contact with CPS (Berger et al. 2017; Cancian et al. 2013; Thomas and Waldfogel 2022; Wildeman and Fallesen 2017). Because

African Americans are, on average, more likely to live in poverty than whites, both nationally and in Baltimore City, data strongly suggests that African American children are more likely to be exposed to all stages of CPS contact than non-Hispanic white children in Baltimore City.

23. Nationwide, CPS investigations typically center on allegations of neglect, with between two-thirds and four-fifths of investigations being prompted by alleged neglect. And neglect allegations happen for poor families at a much higher rate than they do for families with more resources. This is the case at the national level (Pelton 1994; 2015), and I know of no contrary research at the state-, county-, or city-level. The difference in rates at which poor families and other families are subject to neglect allegations is often large, with children living below the poverty line routinely experiencing neglect allegations at rates 10, 20, 30, or even 40 times higher than those of children in more affluent households (Pelton 1994; 2015).

B. Interactions with the Child welfare System Are Often Stressful for Families and Children in Ways That Can Negatively Affect Children and Parents

24. Child welfare-system involvement is a severe life stressor for many children and parents.

25. An investigation by a child welfare agency typically includes a caseworker entering the home; interviewing parents, children, extended family members, school personnel, and medical providers; examining living conditions; and requiring family members to respond to allegations they may not fully understand. Even when an investigation does not lead to removal, the process may leave a family uncertain about its duration, the standards being applied, and whether the child will remain at home (Fong 2023).

26. Removal creates additional disruptions for children and parents. Depending on the placement, a child may lose contact or experience a decrease in contact with parents, siblings, relatives, friends, teachers, medical providers, and other trusted adults. Placement may alter the child's residence, school, possessions, community, daily schedule, and ordinary routines. Put simply, foster care placement represents an often-sharp break in children's lives. These immediate consequences are distinct from the question whether placement causes a particular long-term outcome. And for a child who could safely remain at home, the disruption is a harm that could have been avoided.

27. Children and adolescents who are currently in foster care, who have ever been in foster care, and who have aged out of foster care struggle in a variety of ways both relative to all children and adolescents in the general population and relative to children who are similar in terms of family background, race and ethnicity, and a range of socioeconomic indicators. Children who age out of foster care or spend time in congregate care tend to experience particularly poor

outcomes. These struggles are both sufficiently severe and span a sufficiently large number of parts of their lives that they should give us pause prior to removing children and adolescents from their families since there is a chance that such strong associations might partially represent causal effects of placement. The research summarized below illustrates some of the specific ways in which this is the case.

28. Children and adolescents with experience in the foster care system struggle mightily, relative to children without that experience, when it comes to mental health, including a wide range of conditions such as oppositional defiant disorder, depression, adjustment disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), any substance-use disorder, bipolar disorder, mania, reactive attachment disorder, anxiety, and suicidality (Engler et al. 2022:259). Research shows that many of the differences in mental-health outcomes between foster children and children in the general population are large. For example, several studies show that foster youth are 4 to 5 times as likely to report suicidality as children in the general population in several studies (Engler et al. 2022:260).

29. Foster youth also experience high rates of contact with the criminal-justice system, both as juveniles (Doyle 2007) and as adults (2008), compared to children in the general population. Descriptive and associational data on the high rates of criminal-justice contact for foster youth are plentiful (Gypen et al. 2017; Wildeman and Waldfogel 2014). As Yi and Wildeman (2018) note, roughly 15 percent of imprisoned individuals ages 18-21 in the United States had ever spent time in foster care (roughly three times the national average) and roughly half of children aging out of the foster care system will have experienced incarceration by their mid-20s.

30. Foster youth also face precarious transitions when it comes to family formation. As Svoboda and colleagues note: “Foster youth have inconsistent relationships with adults, experience less stability in their living arrangements, have a history of trauma, and have on the whole less access to prevention messages than their peers outside of foster care. These barriers place foster youth at increased risk of becoming parents at an early age” (Svoboda et al. 2012:874). Because foster youth also have fewer adults on whom to call for help in the face of an early transition to parenthood, these elevated risks of teen fertility are especially consequential.

31. Although former foster youth are at elevated risk of housing instability and homelessness more broadly (Gypen et al. 2017; Wildeman and Waldfogel 2014), youth who age out of the foster care system are at especially high risk. In one study that uses high-quality data on youth who have aged out of the foster care system, Dworsky and colleagues (Dworsky et al. 2013) show that between 31% and 46% of youth who aged out of the foster care system had ever been homeless by their mid-20s. These rates suggest an extreme level of housing instability and homelessness relative to the general population.

32. Quantitative research using Danish registry data, which includes extensive information on fathers and their children both before and after placement, also suggests that parents whose children are placed in foster care experience adverse labor-market outcomes, and that at least some of this change is likely causal (Fallesen 2016). These quantitative studies are consistent with what qualitative research demonstrates in terms of how parents struggle after a child is placed

in foster care. In one study that used data from there very different contexts (England, Norway, and Sweden), for instance, researchers found consistent evidence that parents struggled with depression and identity loss as a result of having their child placed in care and that for some parents these losses were severe (Schofield et al. 2011).

C. Children Who Are Removed When Not Endangered Likely Suffer Negative Outcomes as a Result of That Removal

33. Causal studies have come to differing conclusions and do not support the notion that, on average, placement in the foster system provides a net benefit to children. Some studies considering marginal effects show severe long-term harms of placement (Doyle 2007, 2008), including substantial adverse effects on outcomes such as increases in teen pregnancy, juvenile criminal-justice contact, and adult criminal-justice involvement. The effects of adult criminal-justice-system contact are especially substantial, indicating a doubling or even tripling of the risk of such contact as a result of foster care placement (Doyle 2008). Other studies examining average effects show modest short-term benefits of foster placement and larger long-term benefits of foster placement on safety, educational outcomes, and adult criminal-system contact (Gross and Baron 2022). The reported benefits in the Baron and Gross (2025; Gross and Baron 2022) studies relating to safety and education were strongest among children later reunified with their parents. The authors hypothesized that the benefit may have been the result of services the parents received during the separation, but they did not study that mechanism, leaving it open for interpretation why their findings diverge from those of earlier studies (Doyle 2007, 2008). Together, these studies suggest that the average effects of foster placement is approximately neutral.

34. The mixed findings concerning the average effects of foster placement make careful individualized consideration of any family prior to removal especially important. It is reasonable to expect that removing a child from circumstances involving grave and imminent dangers can be beneficial. If some children benefit substantially from removal while average effects are approximately neutral, then less favorable effects must occur elsewhere in the population. In other words, the fact that there are neutral impacts on average suggests that children who are removed in circumstances that did not justify removal are almost certainly harmed as a result of that removal.

35. My broader thinking on this topic is available in my previous written work (Wakefield and Wildeman 2022) and is based both on my understanding of the effects of foster care placement on children and on research on how maternal incarceration affects children on average and for children at highest and lowest risk of experiencing that event (Turney and Wildeman 2015; Wildeman and Turney 2014). The core argument I have made in previous research is that in the face of average null effects of foster care placement on children, we should expect children who are at the lowest risk of danger in their families of origin to experience the most negative consequences of foster care placement.

36. Because removing children from their families entails significant disruptions and it is quite likely that children removed from lower-risk settings experience significant negative effects, accuracy in determining when removal is necessary is critical. Sound child welfare decision-making should distinguish between children who face severe and imminent safety risks and who may require separation to mitigate that risk, from children whose needs can safely be addressed without removal.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

Executed on November 16, 2026,



Dr. Christopher Wildeman

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EXHIBIT A

Christopher Wildeman

Contact Information

Office:	Department of Sociology 327 Reuben-Cooke Building, 417 Chapel Drive, Durham, NC 27708
Email:	christopher.wildeman@duke.edu
Phone:	609.462.6797

Employment and Affiliations

2020- **Duke University**
Chair of Sociology (2025-)
Professor of Sociology (2020-)
Professor of Public Policy (Courtesy, 2023-)
Co-Director. Carceral Studies Certificate (2025-)
Director. National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect (NDACAN) (2020-)
Pillar Director. Carceral Justice. Samuel DuBois Cook Center on Social Equity (2025-)

2015- **Rockwool Foundation Research Unit**
Senior Researcher (2015-2019) to Research Professor (2019-)

2014-2020 **Cornell University**
Provost Fellow for the Social Sciences (2018-2019)
Associate Vice Provost for the Social Sciences (2019-2020)
Associate (Courtesy, 2017) to Full (Courtesy, 2017-2020) Professor of Sociology
Director. Bronfenbrenner Center for Translational Research (BCTR) (2018-2020)
Associate (2014-2017) to Full (2017-2020) Professor of Policy Analysis & Management
Director. National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect (NDACAN) (2018-2020)
Co-Director. National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect (NDACAN) (2015-2018)
Associate Director. Bronfenbrenner Center for Translational Research (BCTR) (2016-2018)

2012-2017 **United States Department of Justice**
Visiting Fellow. Bureau of Justice Statistics

2010-2014 **Yale University**
Assistant (2010-2013) to Associate (2013-2014) Professor of Sociology

2008-2010 **University of Michigan**
Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Health & Society Scholar

Education

2008 **Ph.D. in Sociology and Demography. Princeton University**
Parental Incarceration, the Prison Boom, and the Intergenerational Transmission of Stigma and Disadvantage (Committee: Sara McLanahan, Bruce Western, Devah Pager)

2006 **M.A. in Sociology and Demography. Princeton University**
Examinations: Crime and Punishment, Demography, Family Demography, Religion

2002 **B.A. in Philosophy, Sociology, and Spanish. Dickinson College**
Honors: *Magna Cum Laude*, Departmental Honors in Sociology, Phi Beta Kappa

Books and Edited Volumes (* Indicates Refereed; UC Indicates Under Contract)

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*Wildeman, Christopher, Hedwig Lee, and Megan Comfort. "A New Vulnerable Population? The Health of Female Partners of Men Recently Released from Prison." *Women's Health Issues* 23:e335-e340.

*Wildeman, Christopher, Sara Wakefield, and Kristin Turney. "Misidentifying the Effects of Parental Incarceration? A Comment on Johnson and Easterling (2012)." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 75:252-258

*Lee, Hedwig, and Christopher Wildeman. "Things Fall Apart: Health Consequences of Mass Imprisonment for African American Women." *Review of Black Political Economy* 40:39-52.

2012 *Wildeman, Christopher, and Christopher Muller. "Mass Imprisonment and Inequality in Health and Family Life." *Annual Review of Law and Social Science* 8:11-30.

*Turney, Kristin, Christopher Wildeman, and Jason Schnittker. "As Fathers and Felons: Explaining the Effects of Current and Recent Incarceration on Major Depression." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 53:467-483.

*Turney, Kristin, Jason Schnittker, and Christopher Wildeman. "Those They Leave Behind: Paternal Incarceration and Maternal Instrumental Support." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 74:1149-1165.

*Wildeman, Christopher. "Imprisonment and Infant Mortality." *Social Problems* 59:228-257.

*Wildeman, Christopher, Jason Schnittker, and Kristin Turney. "Despair by Association? The Mental Health of Mothers with Children by Recently Incarcerated Fathers." *American Sociological Review* 77:216-243.

*Wildeman, Christopher. "Imprisonment and (Inequality in) Population Health." *Social Science Research* 41:74-91.

2011 *Wakefield, Sara, and Christopher Wildeman. "Mass Imprisonment and Racial Disparities in Childhood Behavioral Problems." *Criminology and Public Policy* 10:791-817.

*Wang, Emily A., and Christopher Wildeman. "Studying Health Disparities by Including Incarcerated and Formerly Incarcerated Individuals." *JAMA* 305:1708-1709.

Wildeman, Christopher. "Invited Commentary: (Mass) Imprisonment and (Inequities in) Health." *American Journal of Epidemiology* 173:488-491.

Wildeman, Christopher. "Commentary on Roettger et al. (2011): Confronting the Elephant in the Room." *Addiction* 106:133-134.

2010 *Wildeman, Christopher. "Paternal Incarceration and Children's Physically Aggressive Behaviors: Evidence from the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study." *Social Forces* 89:285-310.
2008 Outstanding Graduate Student Paper. ASA Crime, Law, and Deviance Section.

Wildeman, Christopher, and Bruce Western. "Incarceration in Fragile Families." *Future of Children* 20:157-177.

2009 *Wildeman, Christopher, and Christine Percheski. "Associations of Childhood Religious Attendance, Family Structure, and Nonmarital Fertility Across Cohorts." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 71:1294-1308.

*Wildeman, Christopher. "Parental Imprisonment, the Prison Boom, and the Concentration of Childhood Disadvantage." *Demography* 46:265-280.
2008 Dorothy Thomas Award. Population Association of America.
2007 Outstanding Graduate Student Paper. ASA Children and Youth Section.
2007 Outstanding Graduate Student Paper. ASA Sociology of Family Section.

Western, Bruce, and Christopher Wildeman. "The Black Family and Mass Incarceration." *ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 621:221-242.
Portions reprinted in: Western, Bruce, and Christopher Wildeman. "Punishment, Inequality, and the Future of Mass Incarceration." *Kansas Law Review* 57:851-877.

2008 *Wildeman, Christopher. "Soliciting Prayer for the Absent, Measuring Their Social Worth: Prayer Requests for the Deployed and the Incarcerated." *Poetics* 36:421-434.

*Cadge, Wendy, and Christopher Wildeman. "Facilitators and Advocates: How Mainline Protestant Clergy Respond to Homosexuality." *Sociological Perspectives* 51:587-603.

*Wildeman, Christopher. "Conservative Protestantism and Paternal Engagement in Fragile Families." *Sociological Forum* 23:556-574.

*Cadge, Wendy, Laura Olson, and Christopher Wildeman. "How Denominational Context Influences Debate about Homosexuality in Mainline Protestant Congregations." *Sociology of Religion* 69:187-207.

*Percheski, Christine, and Christopher Wildeman. "Becoming a Dad: Employment Trajectories of Married, Cohabiting, and Nonresidential Fathers." *Social Science Quarterly* 26:482-501.

2007 *Cadge, Wendy, Heather Day, and Christopher Wildeman. "Bridging the Denomination-Congregation Divide: Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Congregations Respond to Homosexuality." *Review of Religious Research* 48:245-259.

Op-Eds, Book Reviews, and Other Writings

2025 Wildeman, Christopher. "What We Know About Child Protective Services in the Global North." *N-IUSSP*.

2023 Yi, Youngmin, and Christopher Wildeman. "How the AFCARS and NCANDS Can Provide Insight into Linked Administrative Data." Pp. 13-31 in *Strengthening Child Safety and Well-Being Through Integrated Data Solutions*, Edited by Christian M. Connell and Daniel Max Crowley. Cham: Springer International Publishing.

2022 Wildeman, Christopher, and Hedwig Lee. "Indebted by Proxy: How Women Are Faring Under the Carceral State." P. 15-26 in *Care, Climate, and Debt: Transcdisciplinary Problems and Possibilities*, Edited by Benjamin C. Wilson. London, UK: Palgrave Macmillian.

Wakefield, Sara, and Christopher Wildeman. "Are the Average Effects of Foster Care Placement Really Close to Zero? *Research on Social Work Practice* 32:499-503.

2021 *Wildeman, Christopher. "The Impact of Incarceration on the Desistance Process Among Individuals Who Chronically Engage in Criminal Activity," in *Desistance from Crime: Implications for Research, Policy, and Practice*, Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice, NCJ 301497, 81-110.

Edwards, Frank R., Sara Wakefield, Kieran Healy, and Christopher Wildeman. "Reply to Putnam-Hornstein et al: On Honest Mistakes and Raceless Children." *PNAS: Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 118:e2116225118.

2020 Wildeman, Christopher, and Lars H. Andersen. "Even Better Data on Solitary Confinement Are Needed." *Lancet Public Health*.

2019 Goldman, Alyssa,† Lars H. Andersen, Signe H. Andersen, and Christopher Wildeman. "Can Alternatives to Incarceration Enhance Child Well-being?" Pp. 237-248 in *Handbook on Children with Incarcerated Parents: Research, Policy, and Practice: Second Edition*, Edited by J. Mark Eddy and Julie Poehlmann-Tynan. New York, NY: Springer.

2018 Wakefield, Sara, and Christopher Wildeman. "How Much Might Mass Imprisonment Affect Inequality?" Pp. 58-72 in *Prisons, Punishment, and Families: Towards a New Sociology of Punishment*, Edited by Rachel Condry and Peter Scharff Smith. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

*Wakefield, Sara, and Christopher Wildeman. "How Parental Incarceration Harms Children and What To Do About It." *National Council on Family Relations Policy Brief* 3:1-6

Brew, Bridget,† Alyssa Goldman,† and Christopher Wildeman. "Effects of Corrections on Families and Communities." Pp. 443-454 in *Routledge Handbook of Corrections in the United States*, Edited by O. Hayden Griffin III and Vanessa H. Woodward. New York, NY: Routledge Press.

2017 Wildeman, Christopher, Anna R. Haskins, and Julie Poehlmann-Tynan. "Invigorating Research and Practice on Children of Incarcerated Parents." Pp. 3-8 in *When Parents Are Incarcerated: Interdisciplinary Research and Interventions to Support Children*, Edited by Christopher Wildeman, Anna R. Haskins, and Julie Poehlmann-Tynan. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association Press.

Wildeman, Christopher, Anna R. Haskins, and Julie Poehlmann-Tynan. "Steps for Future Interdisciplinary Research and Interventions for Children with Incarcerated Parents." Pp. 195-200 in *When Parents Are Incarcerated: Interdisciplinary Research and Interventions to Support Children*, Edited by Christopher Wildeman, Anna R. Haskins, and Julie Poehlmann-Tynan. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association Press.

*Andersen, Signe Hald, Lars H. Andersen, Maria D. Fitzpatrick, and Christopher Wildeman. "How Alternatives to Imprisonment Could Affect Child Well-Being." Pp. 151-172 in *When Parents Are Incarcerated: Interdisciplinary Research and Interventions to Support Children*, Edited by Christopher Wildeman, Anna R. Haskins, and Julie Poehlmann-Tynan. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association Press.

2016 Wildeman, Christopher. "Book Review of *The Punishment Imperative: The Rise and Failure of Mass Incarceration in America* by Todd R. Clear and Natasha A. Frost. New York, NY: New York University Press, 2013. 269 pp. $30 cloth. ISBN: 9780814717196." *Contemporary Sociology* 45:33-35.

2015 Wildeman, Christopher. "Incarceration and Health." In *Emerging Trends in the Social and Behavioral Sciences*, Edited by Robert A. Scott and Stephen M. Kosslyn. John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Wildeman, Christopher. "Book Review of *Pulled Over: How Police Stops Define Race and Citizenship* by Charles E. Epp, Steven Maynard-Moody, and Donald P. Haider-Markel. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. Pp. xvii + 253. $25.00 (paper)." *American Journal of Sociology* 115:1555-1557.

Wildeman, Christopher. "Book Review of *Invisible Men: Mass Incarceration and the Myth of Black Progress* by Becky Pettit. Russell Sage Foundation, 2012, 141 Pages. $29.95 (paper)." *Social Forces* e89.

2013 Wildeman, Christopher. "How Mass Imprisonment Has – and Has Not – Shaped Childhood Inequality." *Communities and Banking* 25:7-9.

*Wildeman, Christopher, Anna R. Haskins, and Christopher Muller. "Implications of Mass Imprisonment for Inequality among American Children." Pp. 177-191 in *The Punitive Turn: New Approaches to Race and Incarceration*, Edited by Deborah E. McDowell, Claudrena Harold, and Juan Battle. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press.

Fallesen, Peter,† Natalia Emanuel,† and Christopher Wildeman. "Den Kumulative Risiko for Anbringelse Udenfor Hjemmet." Pp. 31-44 in *Nar Man Anbringer et Barn, del 2: Arsager, Effekter og Konsekvenser*, Edited by Signe Hald Andersen and Peter Fallesen. Odense: University Press of Southern Denmark.

Wildeman, Christopher, and Signe Hald Andersen. "Nar Dar Kommer i Fængsel." Pp. 71-100 in *Nar Man Anbringer et Barn, del 2: Arsager, Effekter og Konsekvenser*, Edited by Signe Hald Andersen and Peter Fallesen. Odense: University Press of Southern Denmark.

2012 Muller, Christopher, and Christopher Wildeman. "Punishment and Inequality." Pp. 169-185 in *Handbook of Punishment and Society*, Edited by Jonathan Simon and Richard Sparks. London: Sage Publications.

2010 *Wildeman, Christopher. "Mass Parental Imprisonment, Social Policy, and the Future of Inequality in America." Pp. 303-317 in *Children of Incarcerated Parents: A Handbook for Researchers and Practitioners*, Edited by J. Mark Eddy and Julie Poehlmann. Washington: Urban Institute Press.

2008 Wildeman, Christopher, and Christopher Muller. "Incarceration, Adulthood." Pp. 221-225 in *Encyclopedia of the Life Course and Human Development: Volume 2*, Edited by Deborah Carr. Detroit: MacMillan Reference USA.

Under Review and In Progress (R&R; UR [Under Review]; and IP [In Progress])

R&R Baker, Garrett,† Alexandra Gibbons,† and Christopher Wildeman. "Buying, Driving, and Housing: Familial Support for Children in the Aftermath of Parental Incarceration."

McCauley, Erin J., and Christopher Wildeman. "Teachers Assume Elevated Rates of Maltreatment Among Black (But Not White) Children of Incarcerated Parents."

Taxhjelm, Frederik R., Stinne S. Jorgensen, Lars H. Andersen, and Christopher Wildeman. "Isolation Type and Post-Release Mortality Risk Among Formerly Incarcerated Individuals: A Population-Based Study."

UR Baker, Garrett,† Sarah A. Font, and Christopher Wildeman. "Parental Criminal Justice Involvement and Child Safety."

Gibbons, Alexandra, Tasseli McKay, Christopher Wildeman, and Erin J. McCauley. "Unseen Volatility: How Survey Frequency Shapes Understanding of Well-Being in Emerging Adults Exiting Foster Care."

Baker, Garrett, Noa J.K. Hendel, Anne Sofie Tegner Anker, Lars H. Andersen, and Christopher Wildeman. "How Do the Antecedents to Parental Incarceration Shape Children's School Attendance?"

Nielsen, Mikkeline Munk, Peter Fallesen, Martin Eiermann, Alexander F. Roehrkasse, Brielle Bryan, and Christopher Wildeman. "Risk of Child Welfare Involvement Among Children of Kalaallit Inuit Decent in Denmark and Greenland."

Tegner Anker, Sanne Sofie, Jakob Kaarup Jensen, Christopher Wildeman, and Peter Fallesen. "Out-of-Home Placement and the Intergenerational Persistence of Poverty."

IP Wildeman, Christopher, and Christina M. Aaron. "The Child Protective Services-Criminal Justice System Nexus?" Commissioned by *Annual Review of Criminology*.

Wildeman, Christopher, Lars H. Andersen, Noa J.K. Hendel, Garrett Baker, and Robert J. Sampson. "Intergenerational Divergence in Criminal Justice Contact in the Population of Denmark, 1965-2023."

Wakefield, Sara, Garrett Baker,† Robert Apel, and Christopher Wildeman. "Sibling Incarceration and Juvenile Delinquency.'"

Lautrup, Melanie, Garrett Baker,† Lars H. Andersen, Sara Wakefield, and Christopher Wildeman. "Lifetime Risks of System Contact for Intimate Partner Violence in Denmark."

Eiermann, Martin, Alexandra Gibbons,† Robert Apel, and Christopher Wildeman. "Differentiating the Cumulative Risk of Prison and Jail Incarceration in an Early Millennial Cohort."

Selected Grants, Awards, and Fellowships (Total Costs Listed for All Grants)

2026 Clifford C. Clogg Award for Mid-Career Achievement. Population Association of America.

2025-2029 "Intergenerational Desistance, Persistence, and Escalation in Severe Marginalization." ROCKWOOL Foundation. $1,085,000 (Role: Co-PI).

2025-2028 "Childhood Income Shocks, Relative Poverty Exposure, and Child Welfare Involvement." ROCKWOOL Foundation. $1,100,000 (Role: Co-PI).

2025-2027 "The Health Consequences of Childhood Maltreatment and Foster Care From Adolescence Into Mid-Life." National Institutes of Health. Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. $429,144 (Role: PI).

2024-2026 "A Social Scientific Approach to Intimate Partner Violence." ROCKWOOL Foundation. $300,000 (Role: Co-PI).

2024-2025 "Closing the Research Gap on the Social Costs of Incarceration by Extending the NLSY79 Data Infrastructure." Russell Sage Foundation. $74,966 (Role: PI).

2024 "Building the Data Infrastructure to Differentiate Prison and Jail Incarceration in the NLSY79." Duke Population Research Institute. $40,000 (Role: PI).

2023-2025 "Comparative Rates of Child Welfare Involvement Among Indigenous Populations and Populations Residing in Territories with a History of Colonial Rule in OECD Countries." ROCKWOOL Foundation. $800,000 (Role: Co-PI).

2023-2025 "Research on the Consequences of Mass Incarceration." Social Science Research Institute. $25,000 (Role: PI).

2023-2025 "Transition to Adulthood for Youth Aging Out of Foster Care and LifeSet Program Evaluation." New Yorkers for Children. $174,611 (Role: PI).

2023 "How Much Does Having a Family Member Incarcerated Cost?" FWD.us. $175,000 (Role: PI).

2023 "Child Maltreatment and CPS Contact." Duke Population Research Institute. $26,920 (Role: PI).

2022 Elected to the Sociological Research Association.

2022-2027 National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect. Administration for Children and Families. $6,459,954 (Role: PI).

2022-2027 "Implications of Parental Incarceration for Child Health and Wellbeing." Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health & Human Development. $2,684,693 (Role: Co-PI).

2021-2025 "DNA Methylation in Context." National Institute of Aging. $656,197 (Role: Co-PI).

2021-2023 "Augmenting, Analyzing, and Archiving Criminal Trajectories in Four Birth Cohorts from the Project on Human Development in Chicago Neighborhoods, 1995-2021." National Institute of Justice. $674,183 (Role: Co-PI).

2021-2023 "A Comparative Study of Disadvantages Experienced in Adolescence." ROCKWOOL Foundation. $1,000,000 (Role: Co-PI).

2021-2022 "Comparative Rates of and Responses to Confirmed Child Maltreatment." ROCKWOOL Foundation. $344,000 (Role: Co-PI).

2021 "The Demography of Congregate Care in the United States." Casey Family Programs. $40,00 (Role: PI).

2020 Article of the Year Award. *Child Maltreatment*.

2020-2022 "Mass Incarceration and Violence in Families." National Science Foundation. $138,000 (Role: Co-PI; Project to fund Tasseli McKay as a National Science Foundation Postdoc).

2019-2025 "Transitioning: An App-Based Pilot Study of Youth on the Cusp of Leaving Home." Conrad N. Hilton Foundation. $250,000 (Role: PI).

2019-2020 "Demographic Projections of the Child Welfare Population." Casey Family Programs. $198,00 (Role: PI).

2019 "Exploring the Causes of Native American Exceptionalism in the Child Welfare System." Casey Family Programs. $50,00 (Role: PI).

2018-2020 "Measuring Familial History of Incarceration." FWD.us. $472,500 (Role: PI).

2017-2022 National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect. Administration for Children and Families. $5,260,782 (Role: PI 2017-2020; Co-PI 2020-2022).

2017-2018 "Linking NYC Administrative Data to Estimate Parental Incarceration's Effects on Children." Center for the Study of Inequality at Cornell University. $68,825 (Role: PI).

2017-2018 "Linking NYC Administrative Data to Estimate Parental Incarceration's Effects on Children." Russell Sage Foundation. $35,000 (Role: PI).

2017-2018 "Preliminary Analysis of Caseworkers in NCANDS/AFCARS." Casey Family Programs. $125,00 (Role: PI).

2017 Cornell Graduate and Professional Students Association Faculty Award for Excellence in the Teaching, Advising, and Mentoring of Graduate and Professional Students.

2016- Research Affiliate. Institute for Research on Poverty (IRP). University of Wisconsin, Madison.

2016-2018 "Geographic Variation in Child Maltreatment and Foster Care Placement." National Institutes of Health. Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. $176,789 (Role: PI).

2016 "Geographic Variation in Child Maltreatment and Foster Care Placement." Casey Family Programs. $50,00 (Role: PI).

2016 Outstanding Book Award. ASA Inequality, Poverty, and Mobility Section.

2015-2018 Theme Project on the Causes, Consequences, and Future of Mass Incarceration. Institute for the Social Sciences. Cornell University. $150,000 (Role: Co-I).

2015-2017 National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect. Administration for Children and Families. $1,813,289 (Role: Co-PI).

2015-2017 Faculty Fellow. Bronfenbrenner Center for Translational Research. Cornell University.

2015-2016 Steering Committee Member. National Academy of Sciences Workshop on Collecting Indicators of Criminal Justice System Involvement on Population Health Data Surveys.

2015-2016 "The Physical and Mental Health of Women Attached to Incarcerated Men." West Coast Poverty Center at the University of Washington. $20,000 (Role: Co-I).

2014-2015 "Paternal Incarceration and Teachers' Expectations of Students." Institute for the Social Sciences. Cornell University. $10,500 (Role: PI).

2013 Ruth Shonle Cavan Young Scholar Award from the American Society of Criminology.

2013 Distinguished New Scholar Award from the American Society of Criminology's Division on Corrections and Sentencing.

2013-2014 "Using Social Network Analysis for Crime Prevention and Evaluation." Department of Justice. Office of Justice Programs. $300,000 (Role: Co-I).

2012-2017 Bureau of Justice Statistics Visiting Fellows Program: Criminal Justice. Office of Justice Programs. Department of Justice. $322,201 ($112,504 for 2012-2014; $149,967 for 2014-2016; $60,000 in 2017). (Role: PI).

2012-2013 Junior Faculty Fellowship. Yale University.

2012 Summmer Research Institute (SRI). National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect (NDACAN). Cornell University.

2011-2012 "Redefining Relationships: Explaining the Countervailing Consequences of Paternal Incarceration for Parenting." National Center for Family and Marriage Research External Grants Program. $20,000 (Role: PI).

2010-2011 "Children of the Prison Boom: Mass Incarceration and the Future of American Inequality." Presidential Authority Award. Russell Sage Foundation. $34,633 (Role: Co-I).

2009-2010 Emerging Scholars. University of Kentucky Center for Povery Research (UKCPR).

2009-2010 "Imprisonment and (Inequality in) Population Health." Young Investigator Development Grants Program. University of Kentucky Center for Poverty Research (UKCPR). $6,133 (Role: PI).

2009-2010 "Imprisonment and (Inequality in) Population Health." Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Health & Society Scholars Small Grants Program. $15,424 (Role: PI).

2008 Outstanding Graduate Student Paper. ASA Crime, Law, and Deviance Section.

2008 Dorothy Thomas Award. Population Association of America.

2007-2008 Harry Frank Guggenheim Dissertation Fellowship. $20,000 (Role: PI).

2007 Finalist. Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Scholars in Health Policy Research Program. (Declined in order to interview for the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Health & Society Scholars Program.)

2007 Outstanding Graduate Student Paper. ASA Children and Youth Section.

2007 Outstanding Graduate Student Paper. ASA Sociology of Family Section.

2006 Marvin Bressler Graduate Student Teaching Award. Princeton University Department of Sociology.

Selected Presentations (* Indicates Invited)

What Can We Learn About (Getting Around) Data Limitations in the US From Denmark?: *Cornell University* (2025).*

You Can't Always Get What You Want: *Brookings Institution* (2025).*

Parental Criminal Justice Involvement and Child Safety: *Sanford School of Public Policy at Duke University* (2025)*; and *Stone Inequality and Social Policy Seminar at the Harvard Kennedy School* (2025).*

Data Needs and Methodological Challenges (in Survey Data): *Commitee on Population of the National Academy of Sciences Seminar on Criminal Justice Involvement and Later Life Health* (2024).*

The Direct Financial Costs of Having a Family Member Incarcerated: *Population Association of American (2025)*, *Brown University Population and Studies Center * (2024)*; *Montana State University Department of Sociology and Anthropology * (2024)*, *ROCKWOOL Foundation Research Unit * (2024)*; and *University of Georgia Department of Sociology * (2024).*

Fallout from Coming in Contact with the Criminal Justice System: *Russell Sage Foundation * (2024).*

Adult Children of the Prison Boom: Family Troubles and the Intergenerational Transmission of Criminal Justice Contact: *Danish Center for Social Science Research * (2023)*, *University of Copenhagen Department of Sociology * (2023)*, *Population Association of America (2023)*, *Rice University Department of Sociology * (2023)*, and *American Society of Criminology (2022).*

Lifetime Risk of Imprisonment Remains High and Starkly Unequal in the United States: *Population Association of America (2022).*

The Cumulative Prevalence of Termination of Parental Rights for U.S. Children, 2000-2016: *The American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children Virtual Colloquium * (2021).*

Does Incarceration Shape Trust in the State, Community Engagement, and Civic Participation? *Law and Economics Workshop at Georgetown University * (2022)*, *Ribstein Law and Economics Workshop at George Mason University * (2022)*, *Department of Sociology at the London School of Economics and Political Science * (2021)*, *Carolina Population Center at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill * (2021)*, and *Minnesota Population Center at the University of Minnesota * (2021).*

Life After Solitary Confinement: *College of Human Ecology Employee Rejuvenation (CHEER) at Cornell University * (2019).*

Indebted by Proxy: How Women and Children Are Faring Under the Carceral State: *SUNY-Cortland * (2019).*

What Percentage of Americans Have Ever Had a Family Member Incarcerated? Evidence from the Family History of Incarceration Survey (FamHIS): *Vera Institute of Justice * (2019)*; and *Universidad Carlos III de Madrid * (2019)*.

Why (and Maybe How) Foster Care Interventions Could Decrease Justice System Inequality: *Conference on Multisystem Approaches to Help Keep Children Out of the Justice System at Princeton University * (2018)*.

How The AFCARS and NCANDS Can Provide Insight into Linked Administrative Data: *Penn State Child Maltreatment Solutions Network Conference * (2018)*.

Childhood in an Era of Mass Forced Parental Absence: *American Sociological Association * (2018)*.

Cumulative Prevalence of Child Protective Services Contact for American Children: *Keynote at Children's Data Network Convening on the Child Welfare System at the University of Southern California * (2018)*.

Using Linked Administrative Data to Estimate the Effects of Parental Incarceration on Birth Outcomes: *Duke University Population Research Institute * (2020)*; *University of North Carolina School of Medicine * (2018)*; and *Population Association of America (2018)*.

Mass Incarceration, Public Health, and Widening Inequality in the US: *Weill Cornell Medicine Clinical & Translational Science Center * (2019)*, *Harvard Medical School * (2017)*, and *Yale Medical School * (2017)*.

What Mass Incarceration Means for American Children: *The Policy Lab at Yale University * (2017)*.

The Past, Present, and Future of the National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect: *North American Data Documentation Initiative Conference (2017)*.

(How) Can Foster Care Diminish Inequality in Children's Justice System Contact?: *Future of Children Conference at Princeton University * (2017)*.

The Long-Term Consequences of Solitary Confinement: *Duke University Department of Sociology * (2019)*, *University of California, Berkeley Demography Brown Bag Series * (2019)*, *Northwestern University * (2019)*, *University of North Carolina School of Social Work * (2018)*, *Vanderbilt University Department of Sociology * (2018)*, *Washington University St. Louis Department of Sociology * (2017)*, *Population Research Center Brown Bag at the University of Texas at Austin * (2017)*, *Notestein Seminar Series in the Office of Population Research at Princeton University * (2017)*, *University of Chicago Population Research Center * (2017)*, and *Center for the Study of Inequality at Cornell University (2017)*.

Cumulative Prevalence of Having a Child Protective Services Investigation by Age 8 for US Children: *International Family Violence and Child Victimization Research Conference (2016)*.

What Do We Want to Measure When We Measure Criminal Justice Contact?: *National Academy of Sciences Workshop on Improving Collection of Indicators of Criminal Justice System Involvement in Population Health Data Programs * (2016)*.

Paternal Incarceration and Teacher Expectations of Students: *Epidemiology Seminar Series at Brown University's School of Public Health * (2016)*, *Jensen Lecture Series at Duke University's Department of Sociology * (2016)*, *Institute on Health Economics, Health Behaviors and Disparities at Cornell University * (2016)*, *American Sociological Association * (2016)*, *Summer Lecture Series at the Silver Bay YMCA * (2016)*, *Youth Development Research Update at the Bronfenbrenner Center for Translational Research at Cornell University * (2016)*, *Rockwool Foundation Research Unit * (2016)*, *Research for Reform Conference in the Malcolm Wiener Center for Social Policy at Harvard University * (2016)*, *Institute of Human Development and Social Change at New York University * (2016)*, *Institute for Research on Poverty at the University of Wisconsin * (2016)*, and *Department of Human Development at Cornell University * (2016).*

Paternal Incarceration and Children's Risk of Being Charged by Early Adulthood: *McCourt School of Public Policy at Georgetown University * (2017)* and *Population Association of America (2016).*

Family Life in an Era of Mass Incarceration: *College of Human Ecology Employee Rejuvenation at Cornell University * (2015)* and *Clarke Forum for Contemporary Issues at Dickinson College * (2015).*

The Effect of Lowering Welfare Payment Ceilings on Children's Risk of Out-of-Home Placement: *Institute for Research on Poverty at the University of Wisconsin * (2015).*

Variation in the Imprisonment-Mortality Relationship: *Eastern Sociological Society * (2015).*

Geographic Variation in the Cumulative Risk of Maltreatment and Foster Care Placement: *Casey Family Programs * (2017)*, *Duke University Population Research Institute * (2016)*, *Center for Demography and Ecology at the University of Wisconsin * (2016)*, *Stice Lecture Series, Department of Sociology, and Center for Statistics and the Social Sciences at the University of Washington * (2015)*, *Rockwool Foundation Research Unit * (2015)*, *Columbia University Department of Sociology * (2015)*, *Office of Academic Diversity Initiatives at Cornell University * (2015)*, *Emory University Department of Sociology * (2015)*, *Loyola University * (2015)*, *Inequality and Social Policy Seminar Series at Harvard University * (2014)*, and *Center for the Study of Inequality at Cornell University (2014).*

Collateral Consequences of Mass Incarceration for Children, Adult Women, and Communities: *Congressional Briefing on the Collateral Consequences of Mass Incarceration * (2014).*

Implications of Sociology's Methodological Breadth: *Keynote Address at Kent State University's Alpha Kappa Delta (AKD) Honors and Awards Banquet * (2014).*

Growth and Inequality in the Cumulative Risk of Paternal and Maternal Imprisonment: *Conference on Parental Incarceration in the United States: Bringing Together Research and Policy to Reduce Collateral Costs to Children at the White House * (2013).*

Is Incarceration a Poverty Trap: *Administration for Children and Families Welfare Research and Evaluation Conference * (2013).*

Effects of Mass Imprisonment on Women and Children: *Virginia Department of Probation and Parole Annual Conference * (2013).*

Mortality and Morbidity in Recently Released Prisoners: *Virginia Department of Probation and Parole Annual Conference * (2013).*

Using Mass Incarceration and the Affordable Care Act to Improve the Health of Those Who Aren't Incarcerated: *Institute of Medicine and National Academy of Sciences Workshop on Incarceration and Health * (2012).*

Positive, Negative, or Null? The Effects of Maternal Incarceration on Children's Behavioral Problems: *Division of Prevention and Community Research at Yale University * (2013)*, *Pennsylvania State University Department of Sociology * (2013)*, *The Reentry Council Research Network, the Women and Reentry Steering Committee, and the Children of Incarcerated Parents Working Group of the Federal Interagency Reentry Council Staff Working Group * (2013)*, *American Sociological Association (2013)*, *Population Association of America (2013)*, *Rutgers University School of Criminal Justice * (2013)*, *Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Working Group * (2012)*, *Jerry Lee Center of Criminology at the University of Pennsylvania * (2012)*, and *Department of Policy Analysis and Management at Cornell University * (2012)*.

Children of the Prison Boom: Mass Incarceration and the Future of American Inequaliy: *Cornell Cooperative Extension New York City * (2018)*, *Summer Lecture Series at the Silver Bay YMCA * (2016)*, *Foreverfamily Atlanta * (2015)*, *Bronfenbrenner Center for Translational Research at Cornell University * (2015)*, *Opening Keynote Address at Delaware Center for Justice's Annual Meeting * (2014)*, *Symposium on Squandered Resources: Incarceration's Consequences, Costs, and Alternatives at Johns Hopkins University School of Public Health * (2014)*, *Reversing Trajectories Conference at the University of Kentucky * (2014)*, *Kent State University Department of Sociology * (2014)*, *SUNY Albany Justice and Multiculturalism Project * (2014)*, *Rutgers University Workshop on Quantitative Applications in Sociology * (2014)*, *Family Centered Services of Connecticut * (2013)*, *Edward Zigler Center in Child Development and Social Policy at Yale University * (2012)*, *Social Welfare Series on Inequality and Dispossessed Lives Left Behind at the CUNY Graduate Center * (2012)*, *Bucknell University Social Science Colloquium * (2012)*, *Department of Sociology at the University of Oslo * (2012)*, *Rockwool Foundation Research Unit * (2012)*, and *Justice Policy Center at the Urban Institute * (2012)*.

Combining Descriptive and Causal Methods to Study Inequality (A Workshop): *Social Science Research Center Berlin (WZB) * (2012)*.

Cumulative Risks of Foster Care Placement for U.S. Children, 2000-2011: *Harvard School of Public Health's Maternal and Child Health Seminar * (2014)*, *McGill University Centre for Population Dynamics * (2014)*, *Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management (2013)*, *Population Association of America (2013)*, *Population Studies Center at the University of Pennsylvania * (2013)*, *Center for Research on Inequalities and the Life Course (CIQLE) at Yale University (2012)*, *Population Studies Center (PSC) at the University of Michigan * (2012)*, *Social Science Research Center Berlin (WZB) * (2012)*, *Department of Education at Aarhus University * (2012)*, and *Rockwool Foundation Research Unit * (2012)*.

Fathers and Fathering in the Era of Mass Incarceration: *Fathers and Fathering in Contemporary Contexts at the National Center for Family and Marriage Research * (2012)*.

Despair by Association? The Mental Health of Mothers with Children by Recently Incarcerated Fathers: *Eastern Sociological Society * (2012)*, *Population Association of America (2011)*, and *Yale Health Economics Workshop * (2011)*.

Parental Incarceration, Child Homelessness, and the Invisible Consequences of Mass Imprisonment: *Detaining Democracy Conference at the Institution for Social and Policy Studies (ISPS) at Yale University * (2012)*, *American Sociological Association (2012)*, *American Society of Criminology (2011)*, *Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Working Group (2011)*, *Population Association of America (2011)*, *Center for Research on Inequalities and the Life Course (2011) at Yale University*, *Eastern Sociological Society (2011)*, *Duke University Population Research Institute (DuPRI) * (2010)*, *Yale Health Economics Workshop * (2010)*, *American Bar Association Criminal Justice System Sentencing and Reentry Institute and Criminal Justice Legal Educators Colloquium * (2010)*, and *Law and Society Association (2010)*.

Imprisonment and (Inequality in) Population Health: *University of Kentucky Center for Poverty Research Small Grants Conference * (2010)*, *Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Health & Society Scholars Annual Meeting * (2010)*, *Population Association of America (2010)*, and *Center for Social Epidemiology and Population Health (CSEPH) at the University of Michigan * (2010)*.

Incarceration and Population Health in Wealthy Democracies: *Department of Policy Analysis and Management and Cornell Population Center at Cornell University * (2014)*, *Mailman School of Public Health at Columbia University * (2013)*, *Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Health & Society Scholars Symposium on Mass Incarceration at the University of Michigan * (2013)*, *American Society of Criminology (2012)*, *Swedish Institute for Social Research (SOFI) at Stockholm University * (2012)*, *Community Disruption and HIV Risk Conference at American University's Center on Health, Risk, and Society * (2012)*, *Neil A. Weiner Research Speaker Series at Vera Institute of Justice * (2012)*, *Urban Social Processes Workshop at Harvard University * (2012)*, *Incarceration Working Group at the Columbia Population Research Center (CPRC) at Columbia University * (2012)*, *Population Association of America (2010)*, and *Center for Research on Inequalities and the Life Course (CIQLE) at Yale University * (2010)*.

Imprisonment and Infant Mortality: *Incarceration and Health Disparities Symposium at Harvard Medical School, Brigham and Women's Hospital * (2011)*, *University of Kentucky Center for Poverty Research * (2010)*, *Child Psychiatric Epidemiology Group at Columbia University * (2009)*, *University of Michigan Population Studies Center * (2009)*, *Research Committee 28 (RC28) of the International Sociological Association (2009)*, *Criminology and Population Dynamics Workshop (2009)*, *Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Health & Society Scholars Annual Meeting * (2009)*, *Population Association of America (2009)*, and *Bowling Green State University Center for Family and Demographic Research * (2009)*.

Paternal Incarceration and Children's Physically Aggressive Behaviors: Evidence from the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study: *American Sociological Association (2008)*, *Population Association of America (2008)*, *Aage Sorensen Memorial Conference at Harvard University (2008)*, and *Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Working Group (2007)*.

Parental Imprisonment, the Prison Boom, and the Concentration of Childhood Disadvantage: *The Problem of Punishment Conference at the University of Virginia * (2009)*, *University of North Carolina Department of Sociology * (2008)*, *University of Minnesota Department of Sociology * (2008)*, *University of Massachusetts Department of Sociology * (2008)*, *Yale University Department of Sociology * (2008)*, *Office of Population Research Notestein Seminar Series (2007)*, *American Sociological Association (2007)*, *Population Association of America (2007)*, *Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Working Group (2007)*, and *Probing the Penal State Conference at the University of California-Berkeley * (2006)*.

Teaching and Advising (All pre-2020 activities at Cornell/Yale)

Incarceration and Inequality (F2020, Undergraduate).

Incarceration Nation (F2024, F2025, F2026, Undergraduate).

Confinement! (S2016, S2017, S2018, Undergraduate).

Demographic Techniques (S2015, S2016, S2017, S2018, Graduate).

Life in the Box (S2023, Undergraduate).

Mass Imprisonment and Urban Family Life (S2011, Undergraduate).

Orange Is the New Black (F2014, F2015, F2016, Undergraduate).

Punishment and Inequality (F2010, F2011, F2013, S2024, Undergraduate; S2021, S2024, Graduate).

Second-Year Paper Workshop (F2022, S2023, F2023, S2024, F2024, S2025, Graduate).

Senior Essay and Colloquium for Nonintensive Majors (S2011, Undergraduate).

Stats I (F2011, Graduate).

Stats II (S2012, Graduate).

Views from the News (S2016, Undergraduate).

Workshop in Advanced Sociological Writing and Research I (F2013, Graduate).

Workshop in Advanced Sociological Writing and Research II (S2014, Graduate).

Predoctoral Fellows and Placement: *Clayton Covington* (2019-2022; Placement: Harvard University Department of Sociology), and *Alexandra Gibbons* (2022-2025; Placement: Harvard University Department of Sociology).

Committees Chaired and Placement: *Garrett Baker* (2025 [Co-Chair], Duke University School of Public Policy and Department of Sociology; Placement: Postdoctoral Fellow in the Duke University Department of Sociology), *Allison Dwyer Emory* (2017 [Co-Chair], Cornell University Department of Sociology; Placement: Postdoctoral Fellow in the School of Social Work at Rutgers University-Newark), *Erin McCauley* (2021 [Chair], Cornell University Department of Sociology; Placement: Assistant Professor of Sociology in the Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences at the University of California San Francisco), *Samuel Snelson* (Ongoing [Co-Chair], Duke University Department of Sociology), *Ruth Wygle* (2024 [Co-Chair], Duke University Department of Sociology; Placement: Research Manager in the North Carolina Department of Adult Correction), and *Youngmin Yi* (2020 [Co-Chair], Cornell University Department of Sociology; Placement: Assistant Professor of Sociology at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst).

Other Committees: *Erika Braithwaite* (2017, McGill University Department of Epidemiology), *Valerio Bacak* (2015, University of Pennsylvania Department of Sociology), *Bridget Brew* (2019, Cornell University Department of Sociology), *Caitlin Daniel* (2017, Harvard University Department of Sociology), *Frank Edwards* (2017, University of Washington Department of Sociology), *Luzan JadKarim* (Ongoing, Duke University Population Health Sciences Department), *Matthew Lawrence* (2014, Yale University Department of Sociology), *Chase Montagnet* (2023, Rutgers University School of Criminal Justice), *Amelia Pittman* (Ongoing, Duke University Department of Sociology), *Kathleen Powell* (2019, Rutgers University School of Criminal Justice), and *Celene Reynolds* (2019, Yale University Department of Sociology).

Postdoctoral Fellows and Placement: *Martin Eiermann* (2021-2024; Placement: Assistant Professor of Sociology at the University of Wisconsin Madison), *Tasseli McKay* (2020-2024; Placement: Assistant Professor of Social Medicine at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill), and *Alexander F. Roehkrasse* (2018-2021; Placement: Assistant Professor of Sociology and Criminology at Butler University).

Service to Journals

Consulting Editor: *American Journal of Sociology* (2019-2021)

Deputy Editor: *Demography* (2017-2019, 2019-2022, 2022-2025, 2025-2028)
Sociological Perspectives (2020-2022)

Editorial Board: *Demography* (2013-2016, 2016-2019)
Law and Society Review (2014-2016, 2026-2028)
RSF: Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences (2020-2023)
Social Currents (2022-2024)
Social Forces (2014-2017, 2017-2020, 2020-2023, 2024-2027)
Social Problems (2011-2014)
Social Psychology Quarterly (2016-2018)
Sociological Forum (2016-2018, 2019-2020)
Sociological Perspectives (2023)

Editorial Committee: *Annual Review of Criminology* (2022-2026)
Epidemiologic Reviews (2018 issue on Prisoners' Health)

Other Professional Activities

2026	Member. ACC Academic Leaders Network.
2026	Chair. NIH Panel on Institutional Research Training Grants & Research Education Programs in the Behavioral and Social Sciences.
2025-2028	Member. Duke University Academic Programs Committee (APC).
2024-2026	Member. Duke Campus Institutional Review Board.
2024-2025	Member. Duke Sociology Executive Committee.
2024	Chair. Duke Search Committee for the Director of the Social Science Research Institute.
2024	Member. Duke Sanford School Criminal Justice Policy Search Committee.
2022-2025	Member. Duke University Population Research Institute (DUPRI) Executive Committee.
2022-2024	Member. Duke Trinity Curriculum Development Committee.
2021-2022	Member. Correctional Association of New York Advisory Council.
2021	Member. ASA Inequality, Poverty, and Mobility Distinguished Book Award Committee.
2019-2020	Member. ASA Crime, Law, and Deviance Section Nominations Committee.
2019-2020	Faculty Advisory Board. Cornell University CIPA.
2018-2020	Co-Chair. Provost's Review of the Social Sciences at Cornell University.
2018-2020	Member. PAA Dorothy S. Thomas Award Committee.
2018-2019	Member. ASA Children and Youth Section Distinguished Career Award Committee.
2018-2019	Chair. Cornell University PAM Faculty Recruitment Committee.
2018-2019	Member. Cornell University PAM Chair Recruitment Committee.
2018-2019	Core Faculty. Cornell University CIPA.
2018	Member. Cornell University Sociology Graduate Awards Committee.
2018	Scientific Review Panel. NIH (NICHD) CAPSTONE Centers for Multidisciplinary Research in Child Abuse and Neglect (P50).
2018	PAA Session Organizer. Mass Incarceration and Inequality in the U.S.
2017-2020	Member. Research Advisory Committee. Cornell University.
2017-2019	Member. National Science Foundation Sociology Dissertation Advisory Panel.
2017-2019	Member. Cornell University PAM Undergraduate Curriculum Committee.
2017-2018	Member. Cornell University PAM Faculty Recruitment Committee.

2017 Member. Organizational Structures Committee. Provost's Review of the Social Sciences at Cornell University.

2017 Member. Search Committee. Senior Vice Provost for Research and Vice President for Technology Transfer, Intellectual Property, and Research Policy at Cornell University.

2017 ASA Inequality, Poverty, and Mobility Session Organizer. Social Exclusion.

2017-2020 Faculty Mentor. McNair Scholars Program.

2016 Scientific Review Panel. NIH (NICHD) Social Sciences and Population Studies A (SSPA).

2016 Scientific Review Panel. NIH (NICHD) CAPSTONE Centers for Multidisciplinary Research in Child Abuse and Neglect (P50).

2016 Member. Cornell University PAM Graduate Admissions Committee.

2016 Chair. Rhodes Postdoctoral Fellow Selection Committee. Cornell Population Center.

2016 Chair. Reception Committee. ASA Section on Children and Youth.

2015-2020 Cornell Population Center Advisory Committee.

2015-2019 Cornell University PAM Executive Committee.

2015 Chair. Reception Committee. ASA Section on Children and Youth.

2015 Member. Cornell University PAM Graduate Admissions Committee.

2015 PAA Session Organizer. Demography of Crime and Punishment.

2015 Member. ASC Outstanding Article Committee.

2014-2017 Secretary/Treasurer. ASA Section on Inequality, Poverty, and Mobility.

2014-2017 Faculty Fellow. Court-Kay-Bauer Hall.

2014-2017 Co-Director. Finger Lakes Regional Branch of the Scholars Strategy Network (SSN).

2014-2016 Council Member. ASA Section on Children and Youth.

2014-2016 Co-Chair. Cornell University PAM Faculty Recruitment Committee.

2014-2015 Advisory Committee. National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect.

2014- Affiliated Researcher. Children's Data Network.

2014 Member. William Pickens Prize Committee.

2014 PAA Session Organizer. Incarceration and Labor Market Outcomes.

2014 PAA Discussant. Families Living Apart in the United States.

2013-2015 Co-Director. Criminal Justice Working Group of the Scholars Strategy Network (SSN).

2013-2014 ASC Division on Corrections and Sentencing Awards Committee.

2013-2014 ASA Sociology of Population Section Committee on Nominations.

2013-2014 Yale University Sociology Department Graduate Student Admissions Committee.

2013-2014 Organizer. Center for Research on Inequalities and the Life Course (CIQLE) Workshop.

2013 ASA Sociology of the Family Section Graduate Student Paper Award Committee.

2013 ASA Crime, Law, and Deviance Session Organizer. Social Consequences of Incarceration.

2013 ASA Crime, Law, and Deviance Program Committee.

2013 ASA Session Organizer. Punishment and Inequality.

2012 Invited Participant. Workshop on Health and Incarceration. Co-Sponsored by the Institute of Medicine's Board on the Health of Select Populations and the National Academy of Sciences Committee on Law and Justice.

2012 ASC Session Organizer. Author Meets Critics for Becky Pettit's *Invisible Men*.

2012 Commentator. Yale Symposium on Inequality.

2012 ASA Discussant. Stratification.

2012 Member. Mildred Priest Frank Memorial Prize in Sociology (1984) Committee.

2011- Member. Scholars Strategy Research Network (SSN).

2011-2014 Co-Director. New Haven Regional Branch of the Scholars Strategy Network (SSN).

2011-2014 Yale University Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship (SURF) Program.

2011-2012 Yale University Department of Sociology Faculty Recruitment Committee.

2011-2012 Yale University CIPE Research Fellowships for Juniors Committee.

2011 ASC Discussant. New Longitudinal Data on Parental Incarceration and Child Wellbeing.

2011 PAA Session Organizer. Demography of Punishment and Demography of Crime.

2010-2014 Faculty Fellow. Ezra Stiles Residential College. Yale University.

2010-2012 Faculty Mentor. Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship Program (MMUF). Yale University.

2010-2012 Organizer. Center for Research on Inequalities and the Life Course (CIQLE) Workshop.

2010-2011 Undergraduate Affairs Committee. Yale University.

2009 ASA Sociology of the Family Section Graduate Student Paper Award Committee.

2006-2007 Graduate Student Advisory Committee. Princeton University Department of Sociology.

EXHIBIT 7

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF MARYLAND
NORTHERN DIVISION

CANDACE LOVETT, *et al.*, on behalf of themselves and all others similarly situated, *Plaintiffs*, v. BALTIMORE CITY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES, *et al*., *Defendants*.	Case No. _____

E PERT REPORT AND DECLARATION OF PROFESSOR ME AN FEELY

I. BAC ROUND

1. I am an Associate Professor at the University of Connecticut School of Social Work. My work examines mental-health and behavioral outcomes for children involved in the child-welfare system, with particular attention to prevention-oriented and systems-level interventions that reduce risk and promote stability for children and families.

2. I earned my Ph.D. and a Master's degree in social work from the eorge Warren Brown School of Social Work at Washington University in St. Louis, where my dissertation examined relationships among social skills, mental health, and behavior in child welfare-involved populations. I also hold a Master's degree in clinical investigation from the Washington University School of Medicine, and a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Notre Dame.

3. I have served as Co-Principal Investigator, evaluator, and consultant on multiple research projects related to child-welfare outcomes, including Centers for Disease Control and Prevention-funded initiatives examining the prevention of adverse childhood experiences and the impact of public policies on child maltreatment and intimate-partner violence. My grant-funded research also includes statewide needs assessments and feasibility studies addressing early childhood systems, maternal and child health, substance-use-treatment utilization (meaning how often and in what ways people receive care or services for alcohol or drug use), and home-visiting programs.

4. I am a widely published scholar, and my work addresses the relationships among employment policy, childcare subsidies, caregiving supports, and child-maltreatment risk, as well as the effectiveness of child-welfare services, parent-training interventions, and system-reform efforts. My research has been published in journals such as *ial e i e e ie* , *ild en and t e i es e ie* , *ild alt eat ent*, *nal f a il i len e*, and *nal f t e iet f ial esea* . I also have authored and co-authored book chapters on child mental health policy and evidence-based practice in child welfare.

5. In addition to my academic scholarship, I write policy reports and guidance for state and community agencies on home-visiting systems, prevention of child abuse and neglect, and policy coordination. I also served on the Publication Committee of the American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children.

6. A copy of my *i l itae*, including a list of all publications authored in the past 10 years, is attached as Exhibit A.

7. Counsel for the plaintiffs in this case, which challenges child-removal practices in Baltimore City, have asked me to provide my expert opinion. I am providing this report on behalf of the plaintiffs and the classes of similarly situated individuals they seek to represent.

8. I have reviewed various documents and resources in preparing this report, a list of which is attached. I reserve the right to supplement my opinions based on my review of additional relevant materials.

9. I am being compensated at 200 hour for my work and 100 hour for any travel.

II. OVERVIE

10. In forming my opinions, I rely on findings from multiple studies authored by interdisciplinary researchers and scholars concerning child-welfare systems and my 20 years of experience studying those systems. The vast majority of studies cited have been published in peer-reviewed journals or peer-reviewed books, with high-quality standards. Study locations range widely, covering many states and local jurisdictions. The research methodologies employed across these studies are also diverse. They span from detailed qualitative analyses based on interviews with children, parents, and child-welfare workers, to large-scale quantitative evaluations, using sophisticated and cutting-edge analytical models of statewide administrative records. It is also a multidisciplinary endeavor. The studies offer perspectives from the fields of social work, sociology, economics, public administration, and public health. This is an effective combination, as it provides both the top-down aggregate assessment of child-welfare systems and the fine-grained experiential information useful to understanding what might be behind certain statistical relationships.

11. This diversity in research methodologies and jurisdictions studied, and the relative consistency of results about the impacts of and experiences with family separation, suggest that the relationships are robust—that is, we would expect the findings to be generalizable to other jurisdictions like Baltimore City, unless new research emerges to suggest otherwise.

12. Plaintiffs' counsel have asked me for my professional opinion on the following questions:

a. What are the consequences or potential harms of removing children from their parents
b. What does research show about the impact of material-assistance programs on child-welfare outcomes
c. What does research show about the impact of other evidence-based programs on child-welfare outcomes

13. My detailed opinions regarding each of these questions are set forth below. In short, removals are harmful for children's development and mental health. When the government increases access to material support for at-risk families—like food assistance, child tax credits, childcare vouchers, or housing—child welfare improves and removal can be avoided. And multiple evidence-based programs, many of which are available in Maryland, help parents successfully avoid removal and keep children in the home.

14. My opinions are always developing as new information or data becomes available. Thus, the opinions set forth below are subject to updates as new evidence comes to light.

III. OPINIONS

A. Removing Children From Their Homes Causes Trauma and Harm, Such That It Should Only Happen hen Necessary

15. Removing a child from their home should be a last resort, employed only when they cannot safely remain with their primary caregiver. Unnecessary removal can create avoidable, long-term problems for children and families by disrupting the child's developmental processes.

16. Child-development research, specifically in the area of attachment, supports maintaining the initial parent-child bond when possible, particularly for very young children. Research has extensively documented that attachment to parents and caregivers, and particularly a child's attachment to a primary caregiver, plays a significant role in healthy child development (National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2004). The type and severity of the harm of separation varies based on the child's age, with particular risk of damage to attachment for very young children because they are still developing foundational attachment and emotional regulation and laying the groundwork for early learning, physical health, and healthy brain development

(National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2004). Rupturing their primary attachment during this sensitive period of development can cause long-term problems in many areas of development (obak Madsen, 2008).

17. Children who are removed from their homes also experience worse mental-health outcomes compared to the general population. Across multiple studies in multiple countries, mental-health outcomes of children removed to foster care are worse than comparison groups of similar demographics and no better than similarly situated children involved in Child Protective Services (CPS) who remain in the home (Dubois-Comtois et al., 2021).

B. Providing Families with Material Support Effectively Avoids Avoid Removal

18. Families living at or near poverty are more often reported for neglect because they struggle to meet children's basic material needs (Sedlak et al, 2010). Families who have the resources to consistently provide adequate shelter, clothing, food, childcare, and medical care will rarely be reported to child welfare agencies for neglect. Conversely, families who cannot provide those resources, or who provide those resources inconsistently, are more likely to be reported (Conrad-Hiebner Byram, 2020). Importantly, just because a family has been reported for neglect does not mean that removal is required to keep a child safe.

19. Poverty also increases a family's contact with mandated reporters, like social workers or other government employees (Fong, 2017 Fong, 2020). That increased exposure makes it more likely that impoverished families will be reported for neglect, even if the circumstances are commonplace and there is a very low risk of harm to the child (Fong, 2020).

20. Across the board, the evidence shows that when parents living at or near poverty receive material support, they better meet their children's basic needs, are less likely to be reported for neglect, and are less likely to have a child taken from them (Farrell et al, 2018 Berger et al, 2017 Johnson-Motoyama et al, 2022 Maguire-Jack et al, 2022). Parents receiving cash support describe being able to pay for licensed childcare, transportation to get to medical appointments, purchase weather-appropriate clothing, buy healthier food, and purchase food after Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits are exhausted (Lyons et al., 2026). Each of these expenses involves an issue that could bring the family into contact with CPS and can lead to removal. Increased resources reduce the likelihood of CPS intervention.

21. Studies have also examined the effects of various types of material support, finding that a variety of programs are effective at reducing both reports of neglect and the likelihood that a report will be substantiated (Maguire-Jack et al, 2022 Johnson-Motoyama et al, 2022).

22. Social-safety-net programs are widely known to reduce incidence of child maltreatment. In a recent systematic review that examined high-quality studies concerning the effects of such programs—programs like Medicaid, SNAP, Earned Income Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit, and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children—

researchers found that these programs resulted in fewer children experiencing abuse and neglect (Palermo, et al. 2024). A study looking at the Earned Income Tax Credit, for example, found that an exogenous increase in income is associated with a measurable reduction in neglecting behaviors and CPS involvement, particularly among low-income single-mother families (Berger et al., 2017). And for children younger than 6, accepted reports of neglect dropped in states that expanded Medicaid compared to states that did not expand the program, following the adoption of the Affordable Care Act (Brown et al., 2019).

23. Other policies that increase family resources, like paid family leave, also have been associated with a reduction in child maltreatment reports. A study looking at the impacts of paid family leave on infants under age 1 found that paid family leave reduced removals by 46 percent, reports of maltreatment by 14 percent, and substantiated reports of maltreatment by 22 percent (Bullinger et al., 2026).

24. Supportive housing programs also reduce the likelihood of child maltreatment and child removals. A 5-year randomized trial comparing supported housing (where the rental assistance and housing support is provided alongside case management, mental health, and other services), intensive supported housing (supported housing plus therapeutic services, like family-teaming and vocational counseling), and ordinary child-welfare services (i.e., no supported housing services), found that the supported housing and intensive supported housing both resulted in fewer removals from the home (Farrell et al., 2018).

25. Research also shows that providing cash support or other resources to at-risk parents who have been reported for child maltreatment may immediately reduce the risk of harm to the child and the likelihood that the child is removed. Indeed, qualitative studies find that unrestricted caregiver directed funds are used to address resource scarcity problems that keep children safer (Lyons et al., 2026).

26. Material support provides immediate relief to families, resulting in rapid decreases in reports of maltreatment. State-level reports of maltreatment decrease in the period immediately after tax refunds are distributed, and higher payments lead to larger reductions in reported maltreatment. For every additional 1,000 per child in refunds, state-level rates of reported maltreatment decrease by 5 percent (ovski, et al., 2022). Similarly, calls to the Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline immediately decreased by 13.8 percent following the disbursement of child-tax-credit advance payments that were distributed monthly during the COVID-19 pandemic (Merrill-Francis, et al. 2024). And, in the four days immediately following child-tax-credit advance payments, emergency department visits associated with child maltreatment also went down (Bullinger Boy, 2023). The immediacy of the response to the payments indicates that parents take immediate and significant steps to fill gaps in meeting children's basic needs when they have additional resources.

27. By providing material support to low-resource families who have been reported for neglect, Baltimore City could avoid the harm of unnecessary removals and provide parents with

the help they need to care for their children. Evidence suggests that these material supports would help parents to take immediate steps to mitigate risk factors for neglect.

28. Maryland's own documents indicate that material support is available. In the most recent Maryland Child and Family Services Plan (the document Maryland must submit to the federal government every five years describing its current efforts, goals, and plans for preventing child maltreatment and promoting child-welfare system goals of safety, permanency, and well-being), Maryland identifies cash assistance as part of the array of available Prevention Early Intervention services and Flexible Funds for Placement Prevention as part of their Home-Based Intervention services (Social Services Administration, 2024). This means that Maryland is already providing or able to provide some level of material support and flexible funding to at-risk families.

29. Additionally, the state may be able to reallocate federal Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) funds for Baltimore City to provide material assistance to families in need. Maryland currently uses 20- 25M in TANF funds for local child welfare services. (Department of Legislative Services, 2024, p. 25).

C. Evidence-Based Programs Are Also Effective At Reducing Removals

30. States across the country also successfully rely on evidence-based programs as an alternative to removal to protect at-risk children while keeping families together. Evidence-based programs generally refer to programs that have been proven through scientific study to address a range of family, caretaker, and child needs. These programs help parents develop or improve skills, address underlying mental-health issues that can create challenges for families, and provide more intensive and comprehensive in-home support to families.

31. The federal government promotes these programs via the Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA), through which states are entitled to federal funds matching the state money spent on certain, highly rated evidence-based programs used to prevent children being removed to foster care. These programs include Healthy Families America, Functional Family Therapy, Parent-Child Interaction Therapy, Nurse-Family Partnership, and Multi-Systemic Therapy. Many of these programs put counselors or other providers in the home with a family multiple times per week. These programs are successful in helping parents avoid reports and removals. They are also less expensive than removing a child and placing the child in care (Washington State Institute for Public Policy, 2024).

32. Each state develops their own FFPSA plan that defines groups who are eligible for FFPSA funds. In the Maryland FFPSA plan, families eligible for FFPSA funds fall into one of nine candidate categories—including families in unsafe living conditions and families with prior child-welfare interactions (Social Services Administration, 2019). Families who are eligible for evidence-based programs under the Maryland FFPSA should first receive these services in an attempt to avoid removal.

33. Four federally funded evidence-based programs are available to local departments of social services in Maryland under the FFPSA, but the state's data shows that the programs go largely under-utilized. For example, in FY 2023, only eleven families in two counties received

services under the Parent-Child Interaction Therapy program. *ne* in Baltimore City received *an* services through FFPSA (Maryland Department of Human Services, 2023).

34. In addition to services available under the FFPSA, there are multiple other evidence-based programs that receive capped federal funding or are state-funded. Several of these programs operate in Maryland. According to the 2025-2029 Maryland Child and Family Services Plan, there are 16 evidence-based programs available in Maryland (Social Services Administration, 2024). These programs include Homebuilders Model and Sobriety Treatment and Recovery Teams, both of which involve contact with families multiple times per week to support families, monitor progress, and regularly assess for safety concerns.

35. Another federal funded evidence-based program that can prevent child abuse and neglect is the Maternal Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) Program. This program is available in Baltimore City, but is under-utilized compared to community needs, as identified in the Maryland MIECHV Program Statewide Needs Assessment Update (2025). Maryland reported that Baltimore City provides home visiting services for only 14 percent of the families it estimates are in need. In contrast, three Maryland counties serve more families than the reports identifies as in-need and eligible. Compared to the rest of Maryland, Baltimore City serves families at the second-lowest rate even though Baltimore City has the greatest number of families with risk factors.

36. Where evidence-based programs are widely utilized, particularly in connection with material support, states are able to effectively avoid child removals. For example, entucky and Indiana have successfully kept more children in their homes by offering evidence-based intervention-services program, in conjunction with providing flexible funding to families, as part of maltreatment prevention efforts (rewal- k, 2024).

37. entucky has created a Family Preservation and Reunification Services program that serves families where there is a risk of removal to foster care (entucky Department for Community Based Services, 2026). They provide several intervention services, including Functional Family Therapy, Motivational Interviewing, Parent and Child Interactive Therapy, Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, and the Homebuilders Model, which support parents and families in developing better interaction and management skills, addressing past trauma, and helping families problem-solve urgent situations and increase immediate home safety. They also provide families up to 1,500 in cash to support any concrete needs (entucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services, 2026). Combining these supportive services and skill building programs with flexible funds to address gaps in material needs, entucky maintains a high percentage of children in their homes for a year after services end (Huebner, 2008).

38. Indiana offers evidence-based programs and flexible funds through Indiana Family Preservation Services (INFPS), which provides support for families with a substantiated maltreatment case to allow the child to remain in the home safely. In the INFPS, families receive case-management support, including regular visits to monitor safety, and at least one evidence-based program that addresses an identified need (Indiana Department of Child Services, n.d.). The state has seen a substantial decrease of 4,300 children in out-of-home placement since initiating this service combination (rewal- k, 2024). Importantly, the response to the program for substantiated cases was measurable in the short-term, rather than a subtle population-level change over a long period of time, suggesting families have a prompt and positive response to the intervention (oodwin et al, 2023).

39. Baltimore City can likely prevent removals by using evidence-based programs that are already available in the state.

I declare the foregoing is true and correct.

Meg Feely
Meg Feely (Nov 23, 2026 11:59:19 EST)

Professor Megan Feely

23/11/2026

DATE

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entucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services. (n.d.). *P e enti n and e iden ed ased a ti es*. https: www.chfs.ky.gov agencies dcbs dpcw Pages PEBP.aspx

entucky Department for Community Based Services. (2026, September 9). . *a il ese ati n and e nifi ati n se i es P* . Standards of Practice Manual. https: manuals-sp-chfs.ky.gov C1 Pages C1-16-Family-Preservation-and-Reunification-Services-(FPRS).aspx

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EXHIBIT A

Megan Feely, PhD, MSW, MSCI
Curriculum Vitae

University of Connecticut • School of Social Work
38 Prospect • Hartford, CT 06103
Megan.feely@uconn.edu

CV Table of Contents with Links

Contents

EDUCATION 2
FACULTY APPOINTMENT 2
AWARDS & HONORS 2
FUNDED RESEARCH 3
Graduate Research Assistant 4
Competitive Fellowships 4
PUBLICATIONS 5
Peer Reviewed Published Articles 5
Book Chapters 7
Reports and other publications 8
PUBLIC SCHOLARSHIP 8
PRESENTATIONS 9
Invited National Presentations 9
Peer-reviewed presentations 9
Peer-reviewed workshops 12
Other presentations 13
TEACHING 13
PRACTICE EXPERIENCE: WORK & INTERSHIPS 14
UNIVERSITY SERVICE 15
PROFESSIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE 15

EDUCATION

2016 **Ph.D in Social Work**
George Warren Brown School of Social Work
Washington University, St. Louis, Missouri
Dissertation Title: *Exploring the Relationships between Social Skills, Mental Health and Behavior in a Child Welfare-Involved Population.* Chair: Patricia L. Kohl, Committee: Derek Brown, Ph.D., F. Brett Drake, Ph.D., Shenyang Guo Ph.D., Ramesh Raghavan, M.D, Ph.D.

2016 **Master of Science in Clinical Investigation**, School of Medicine
Washington University, St. Louis, Missouri
Thesis: *Well-Being Deficits in the Child Welfare Population: Estimates and Recommendations*

2007 **Master of Social Work**
George Warren Brown School of Social Work
Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri
Research Specialization thesis: *Permanency for Children in Foster Care Represented by a CASA program: Factors Related to the Final Placement of Children from Foster Care*

2002 **Bachelor of Arts**
University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Indiana
Senior Thesis: *Persons with Developmental Disabilities in the Criminal Justice System: Legal, Religious and Pragmatic Responses.*

FACULTY APPOINTMENT

2023-Present **Associate Professor,**
School of Social Work University of Connecticut

2016 - 2023 **Assistant Professor**,
School of Social Work University of Connecticut
Concentration, Community Organizing

AWARDS & HONORS

2021 Nominated for Faculty Career Mentor of the Year

2019 Best Research Paper for Disruption Call by National Foundation to End Child Abuse Now (EndCAN)

2019 Selected as one of Connecticut Women's Educational and Legal Fund (CWEALF) Women of Achievement

2015 The 3rd Haruv Institute International PhD Workshop on Child Maltreatment, Jerusalem, Israel, October 11-14, 2015 (stipend and accommodations)

2015 TL1 Predoctoral Outstanding Citizenship Award, Institute for Clinical and Translational Science, Washington University School of Medicine

2015 Summer Research Institute, National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY, June 8-11th (all expenses except travel)

2006 AmerenUE Community Service Intern stipend

2005-2007 Walter Kohen Scholarship, George Warren Brown School of Social Work

FUNDED RESEARCH

Active

2024-2027 EmPwR: Empower Parenting with Resources.

William T. Grant Foundation. "Unconditional Cash Transfers and Child Maltreatment." Megan Feely (Co-PI), William Schneider (Co-PI), Ann-Marie Garran (Co-I), and Emily Bosk (Co-I) (~$600,000).

Doris Duke Charitable Foundation. "EmPwR: Empower Parenting With Resources." Megan Feely (Co-PI), William Schneider (Co-PI), ($245,000).

IL Department of Children and Family Services. Support for "EmPwR: Empower Parenting With Resources. ($3,950,000)

2025-2027 Connecticut Department of Children and Families, University of Connecticut School of Social Work Performance Improvement Center (PIC), ($1,138,260) Co-PI

Completed

2020-2025 Connecticut Department of Children and Families, University of Connecticut School of Social Work Performance Improvement Center (PIC), Co-PI

2017-2020 Connecticut Department of Children and Families, University of Connecticut School of Social Work Performance Improvement Center (PIC), Co-Investigator

2020-2023 Center for Disease Control, Preventing Adverse Childhood Experiences: Data to Action, Awarded to Connecticut Office of Early Childhood, ($1,500,000) million, Co-PI of evaluation

2020-2023 Center for Disease Control, Impact of public policies on child maltreatment and Intimate Partner Violence, awarded to Prevent Child Abuse America, ($1,050,000) million, Consultant

2019-2020 Connecticut Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) Statewide Needs Assessment
Connecticut Office of Early Childhood, Co-PI

2018-2020 Exploring Mechanisms of Women's SUD Treatment Utilization in Connecticut: A Research Feasibility Study.
University of Connecticut, School of Social Work & DMHAS Seed Grants 2018, $4,000; 2019, $6,000
Co-Principal Investigator

2018 Dean's Incentive Award. *Mapping Critical Services for Connecticut Differential Response Cases*. Funded, $4,000
Co-Principal Investigator

2018-2019 *Quality Parenting Initiative, Implementation Evaluation Study*. Annie E. Casey, PI-Ericka Lewis, University of Maryland, Baltimore. Role: Developed the measures protocol and contributed to conceptualization of study methodology.

2017 Dean's Incentive Award. Supporting young adult parents with significant mental health needs: Child and parent outcomes from an innovative perinatal support program. Funded, $4,000
Principal Investigator.

Scholarship Facilitation Fund. Understanding the Relationship between the activities of Court Appointed Special Advocates and the Well-Being of Children in Foster Care. Funded, $2,000

2013-Present *Developing a Well-being Measure for Children in Foster Care.*
Collaborative project with Voices for Children, a St. Louis child advocacy agency
Principal Investigator

2012-2016 *The complexities of well-being for child welfare involved children: Comorbidity of health, cognitive, emotional and social deficits*
Thesis project for Master of Science in Clinical Investigation

Graduate Research Assistant

2015-2016 *Intervening in child neglect: A microsimulation evaluation model of usual care*
Administration for Children and Families
(90 CA1832). P.I. Dr. Melissa Jonson-Reid ($736,919)

2010-2016 *Preventing Conduct Disorder Among Children in the Child Welfare System*
National Institute for Child Health and Human Development
(1R01HD061454-01A1). P.I. Dr. Patricia Kohl ($2,050,300)

2012-2013 Research Assistant
The Institute of Clinical and Translational Sciences (ICTS)
Dissemination and Implementation Research Core (DIRC)
NCRR/NIH UL1 RR02499

Competitive Fellowships

2013-2015 **Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago**
Fellowship for the Promotion of Child Well-being,
Award $50,000

2012-2015 **Institute of Clinical and Translational Sciences (ICTS)**
Washington University in St. Louis
Clinical Research Training Program Pre-doctoral Fellowship
NIH National Center for Advancing Translational Science
(UL1 TR000448, sub-award TL1 TR000449)
Three years of full-funding for doctoral stipend and travel

2011-2012 **Center for Mental Health Services Research**
Washington University in St. Louis
NIMH Mental Health Services Research Training Program Fellowship

(T32 MH19960); P.I. Dr. Enola Proctor
Full-funding for doctoral stipend and travel

PUBLICATIONS

Peer Reviewed Published Articles

1. Carlson, P., Feely, M., Moore, T. & Loveland, E. (2026). Community Environment has similar risks for subsequent maltreatment reports as risk factors: The impact of structural disadvantage on child protective service involvement. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, Advance online publication. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2026.108414
2. Schneider, W., **Feely, M.** & Kang, J. (2024). Maternal Employment Patterns and the Risk for Child Maltreatment. *Social Service Review*. 98(1), 34-92.
3. Kang, J., Schneider, W., **Feely, M.**, & Al-Shayeb, O. (2024). Maternal employment patterns and the risk for child maltreatment: Evidence from the Future of Families and Child Wellbeing Study. *APSAC Advisor*, *37*(3), *4-11*.
4. Kohl, P. L., Dunnigan, A., Markovitz, L., **Feely, M.**, Lewis, E. M., Seay, K. D., Lanier, P., Federoravicius, N, Auslander, W., Guo, S. & Jonson-Reid, M. (2023). Improving child behavior through parent training in child welfare services: A mixed-methods study of families receiving in-home services. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 155, 107269.
5. Lewis, E. M., Murugan, V., **Feely, M**., Williams, K. A., Sermon, M. C., & Farooq, S. (2024). Quality Parenting Initiative: Engaging Diverse Stakeholders as Champions for Child Welfare Systems Reform. *Journal of the Society for Social Work & Research, 15*(3), 569-590.
6. Maguire-Jack, K., Park, Y., **Feely, M.**, Schneider, W., Pace, G. T., Klika, J. B., & Thibodeau, E. (2023). Childcare subsidy employment and copayment requirements and child maltreatment. *Child Maltreatment*, 29(4), 612-624. https://doi.org/10.1177/10775595231218174
7. Bullinger, L. R., Klika, B., **Feely, M.,** Ford, D., Merrick, M., Raissian, K., Rostad, W. & Schneider, W. (2023). Paid Family Leave: An Upstream Intervention to Prevent Family Violence. *Journal of Family Violence*, *39*(3), 471-481.
8. Williams, K. A., Lewis, E. M., & **Feely, M.** (2023). Stay just a little bit longer: A scoping review of foster parent engagement in the US., *Children and Youth Services Review*, 146, 106814.
9. Lewis, E. M., Murugan, V., **Feely, M**., Williams, K. A., Sermon, M. C., & Farooq, S. (2024). Quality Parenting Initiative: Engaging Diverse Stakeholders as Champions for Child Welfare Systems Reform. *Journal of the Society for Social Work & Research, 15*(3), 569-590
10. Klika, J. B., Maguire-Jack, K., **Feely, M**., Schneider, W., Pace, G. T., Rostad, W., Murphy, C. & Merrick, M. T. (2022). Childcare subsidy enrollment income generosity and child maltreatment. *Children*, *10*(1), 64.

11. Maguire-Jack, K., Hardi, F., Stormer, B., Lee, J. Y., **Feely, M.,** Rostad, W., Ford, D., Merrick, M.T., Murphy, C. & Klika, J. B. (2022). Early childhood education and care policies in the US and their impact on family violence. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 142, 106653.
12. **Feely, M.,** Carlson, P., Kurz, B. & Pierce, J. (2022) The efficacy of a voluntary, community-based program in preventing recurrence of child maltreatment: Community Support for Families*, Journal of Public Child Welfare*, DOI: 10.1080/15548732.2022.2101173
13. **Feely, M.** (2022). Changed for the Better: The Modifiable Maltreatment Factors Framework. *Societies*, 12(1), 21.

    Article link
14. Bullinger, L.R., Raissian, K.M., **Feely, M.** and Schneider, W.J., 2021. The neglected ones: Time at home during COVID-19 and child maltreatment. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 131, 106287.

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15. Bullinger, L.R., Boy, A., **Feely, M**., Messner, S., Raissian, K., Schneider, W. and Self-Brown, S., (2021). "Home, but Left Alone: Time at Home and Child Abuse and Neglect During COVID-19" *Journal of Family Issues.* *https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0192513X211048474*

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16. **Feely, M.,** Bosk, E.A. That Which is Essential has been Made Invisible: The Need to Bring a Structural Risk Perspective to Reduce Racial Disproportionality in Child Welfare. Race and Social Problems 13, 49–62 (2021). https://doi.org/10.1007/s12552-021-09313-8 *Equal contributions by both authors.*

    *****In the press UCONN Today**
17. **Feely, M.,** Raissian, K., Schneider, W. & Bullinger, L. (2020). The social welfare policy landscape and child protective services: Opportunities for and barriers to creating systems synergy. In "Toward a Better Approach to Preventing, Identifying, and Addressing Child Maltreatment." The *ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 692 (November): 140–161. *Equal contributions by all authors.*
18. Bosk, E.A., & **Feely, M.** (2020). The Goldilocks Problem: Tensions between Actuarially Based and Clinical Judgment in Child Welfare Decision Making. *Social Service Review*, 94(4), 659-692. https://doi.org/10.1086/712060
19. Loomis, A.*, **Feely, M**., Kennedy, S. (2020). Measuring polyvictimization in foster youth research: A systematic review. *Child Abuse & Neglect*. 107, 104588. DOI: 10.1016/j.chiabu.2020.104588
20. Elsaesser; C., Katz, C., **Feely, M**., Mordecai, L. (2020). Early child abuse and the effects of subsequent witnessed violence: Results from a national high risk sample. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal*, 38(1), 91-99. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10560-020-00667-3
21. Carlson, P.M., **Feely, M**., Kurz, B., Lin, H., Ives, M., Rogers, E., Pierce, J., Nilson, N.*****

(2020). Connecticut's Family Assessment Response system. *Journal of Public Child Welfare*, 1-24. https://doi.org/10.1080/15548732.2020.1746479

22. Lewis, E., Hooley, **Feely, M.,** C., Lanier, P.J., & Kohl, P.L. (2020). Engaging child welfare involved families in evidence-based interventions to address child disruptive behavior disorders. *Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders*, 28(1), 43-51. https://doi.org/10.1177/1063426618806253
23. Seay, K.D., and **Feely, M.,** (2020). "Assessment of the validity of the AUDIT factor structure in parents involved with child protective services." *The American Journal of Drug and Alcohol Abuse. 46(5), 546-552. https://doi.org/10.1080/00952990.2020.1722685*
24. Bullinger, L., **Feely, M.,** Schneider, W. Raissian, K., (2020) Heed neglect: Disrupt child maltreatment: A call to action for researchers. Special Issue of *The International Journal of Child Maltreatment.* 3, 93-104. https://doi.org/10.1007/s42448-019-00026-5 *Equal contributions by all authors.*
    a. ***Awarded Best Research Paper for Disruption Call by National Foundation to End Child Abuse Now (EndCAN) : ***In the press UConn Today
25. **Feely, M.,** Seay, K.D., Loomis, A.M. (2019). Harsh physical punishment as a mediator between income, re-reports and out-of-home placement in a child protective services-involved population. *Children and Youth Services Review,* 103, 70-78. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2019.05.032
26. Werkmeister-Rozas, L., Ostrander, J. **Feely, M.,** (2018). Inequalities in US child protection: The case of sex trafficked youth. *Social Sciences.* 7(8) 135. doi:10.3390/socsci7080135
27. Kennedy, S. C., Mennicke, A. M., **Feely, M.** & Tripodi, S. J. (2018). The relationship between interpersonal victimization and women's criminal sentencing: A latent class analysis. *Women & Criminal Justice.* 28(3), 212-232. https://doi.org/10.1080/08974454.2018.1441774
28. **Feely, M.,** Seay, K. D., Lanier, P., Auslander, W., & Kohl, P. L. (2018). Measuring fidelity in research studies: A field guide to developing a comprehensive fidelity measurement system. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal*, *35*(2), 139-152 DOI 10.1007/s10560-017-0512-6
29. Lewis, E. M., **Feely, M**., Seay, K. D., Fedoravicis, N., & Kohl, P. L. (2016). Child welfare involved parents and Pathways Triple P: Perceptions of program acceptability and appropriateness. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 25(12), 3760-3770. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-016-0526-2

Book Chapters

1. Lanier, P., **Feely, M.,** & Fraser, M. E. (2021). Child mental health policy. In W. J. Hall, P. Lanier, J. M. Jenson, & M. W. Fraser (Eds.), Social policy for children and families: A risk and resilience perspective (4th ed., pp. 139-186). Sage.
2. Okpych, N.J., & **Feely, M.,** (2021). "Evidence-based Practice in Child Welfare". In *Introduction to Child Welfare: Building a Culturally Responsive, Multisystemic, Evidence-Based*

Approach, edited by Michele Hanna, Rowena Fong, Nancy Rolock, and Ruth McRoy. San Diego, CA: Cognella Press.

3. Werkmeister-Rozas, L., **Feely, M.,** Ostrander, J. (2019). How social workers influence policy in the United States: A case study. In Ute Klammer, Simone Leiber, Sigrid Leitner Editors. *Social Work and the Making of Social Policy* (37-51). Bristol, UK. Policy Press.
4. Seay, K.D., Byers, K., **Feely, M.**, Lanier, P. Maguire-Jack, K., & McGill, T. (2015). Scaling up: Replicating promising interventions with fidelity. In D. Daro, A. Cohn Donnelly, L. Huang, and B. Powell (Eds.), *Advances in Child Abuse Prevention Knowledge: The Perspective of New Leadership*. New York: Springer.
5. Proctor, E. K., Powell, B. J., & **Feely, M.** (2014). Measurement issues in dissemination and implementation science. In R. S. Beidas & P. C. Kendall (Eds.), *Dissemination and Implementation of Evidence-Based Practices in Child and Adolescent Mental Health*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Reports and other publications

Okpych, N. J., **Feely, M**., Lester-Harriat, R., Berthold, S. M., & Urcinas, N. (2021). Triumphs and travails of building a fully online social work field evaluation system. *Field Educator*. 11(2).

Article Link

Obstacles and Opportunities for Effective Community Involvement in Healthcare Governance in Central Asia (Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan) Ellen Frank-Miller, **Megan Feely**, Kyle Pitzer, Ivy Blackmore, Katoyon Faromuzova, Marifat Abdullaeva, Saltanat Childress, and Gautam N. Yadama Washington University and ACTED (Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan) June 15, 2016

Measurement Toolkit for implementation and process evaluation of the Quality Parenting Initiative, used nationally, primary developer and author

Connecticut Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Statewide Needs Assessment. Connecticut Office of Early Childhood, University of Connecticut – Office of Early Childhood Research Partnership, October 1, 2020, primary author

PUBLIC SCHOLARSHIP

Feely, Megan, Kerri M. Raissian, William Schneider, and Lindsey Rose Bullinger. 2021. "Creating systems synergy across the social welfare policy landscape." *Focus on Poverty* 37(2):21-28

Article Link and Classroom Supplement

Home Visiting in Connecticut: Current Status, Future Directions. Report prepared by the University of Connecticut School of Social Research Unit for use by community agencies applying to the Office of Early Childhood Request for Proposals for the Home Visiting System. September 1, 2020

Raissian, K., **Feely, M.,** Fong, K. (2019, November). *A paradigm shift: Using micro and macro data to disrupt norms. Connecticut Data Collaborative Conference.* Presentation. New Haven, Connecticut.

Feely, M., Raissian, K., Schneider, W., Bullinger, L. (2020). Practical steps to prevent child neglect in the COVID-19 pandemic. *APSAC Alert*. 11(3). *Equal contributions by all authors.*

Feely, M. & Raissian, K. (2019, October). *Poverty and child maltreatment*. Connecticut Department of Children and Families, Family Assessment Response and Community Support for Families Annual Meeting. Presentation. Middletown, Connecticut.

PRESENTATIONS

Invited National Presentations

Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science and Institute of Research on Poverty, Panel Webinar, We Can Do Better: Cross-System Approaches for Addressing Child Maltreatment. March 23, 2021

Fedele F. and Iris M. Fauri Memorial Lecture, School of Social Work, University of Michigan, Economic Policy and Child Welfare invited, October 7, 2021

Peer-reviewed presentations

Feely, M., Schneider, W., & Nadon, M. (2026, January 14–18). *Understanding systems, understanding families: Child welfare caseworkers' perceptions of structural inequality and attribution to families* [Oral paper presentation]. 30th Annual Conference of the Society for Social Work and Research (SSWR), Washington, DC, United States.

Thiruvenkadam, N., Felten, G., **Feely, M.**, Carlson, P., & Bosk, E. (2026, January 14–18). *Exploratory study on caseworkers' identified challenges and workarounds in engaging families having limited English proficiency* [Oral paper presentation]. 30th Annual Conference of the Society for Social Work and Research (SSWR), Washington, DC, United States.

Garran, A. M., & **Feely, M.** (2026, January 14–18). *Expanding child welfare caseworkers' perspectives to incorporate structural poverty into individual case management practice: The Empwr program training* [Oral paper presentation]. 30th Annual Conference of the Society for Social Work and Research (SSWR), Washington, DC, United States.

Feely, M., Carlson, T., & Felten, G. (2025, January). *Earlier identification of families at risk of chronic maltreatment: An integrative review*. Paper presented at the Society for Social Work and Research (SSWR) Annual Conference, Seattle, WA

Carlson, T., & **Feely, M.** (2025, January). *The impact of structural disadvantage on child protective service recurrence* [Conference presentation withdrawn]. Society for Social Work and Research (SSWR) Annual Conference, Seattle, WA. [withdrawn]

Schneider, W., Kang, J., **& Feely, M.** (2025, January). *Maternal unemployment patterns and risk and protective factors for child abuse and neglect*. Paper presented at the Society for Social Work and Research (SSWR) Annual Conference, Seattle, WA.

Feely, M., Schneider, W., & Kang, J. (February 4, 2025) *Maternal employment patterns and the risk for child maltreatment: Evidence from the Future of Families and Child Wellbeing Study* [Webinar presentation]. APSAC (American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children).

Feely, M., Schneider, W., & Kang, J. (2025, March 19). *Empower Parenting with Resources, EmPwR* [Webinar presentation]. Cash and Child Welfare Community of Practice, Urban Institute. Funded by the Doris Duke Foundation.

Bosk, E. & **Feely, M.,** (2022, May) *Constructing Risk: Actuarial-Based Risk Assessment and the Creation of the Risky Parent.* SRCD 2022 Special Topics, Construction of the Other: Development, Consequences, and Applied Implications of Racism, Prejudice, and Discrimination.

Feely & Bosk. (2021, January) Seeing Poverty: The Consequences of Economic Disadvantage for Increasing Risk on a Child Welfare Decision-Making Tool. Society of Social Work and Research. Virtual – COVID-19

Feely, M., Carlson, P., Pierce, J., Ives, M., Kurz, B. (2021, January) The Impact of Structural Disadvantage on Child Protective Service Involvement and Recurrence. Society of Social Work and Research. Virtual – COVID-19

Carlson, P., **Feely, M.,** Pierce, J., Ives, M., Kurz, B. (2020, January). *Roundtable on methodological issues and lessons learned with administrative data: A state child welfare example*. Society of Social Work and Research. Washington, D.C.

Pierce, J. & **Feely, M.** (2020, January). *Five years and counting…Implications of a child maltreatment data expungement policy*. Society of Social Work and Research. Washington, D.C.

Feely, M., Lewis, E., Endy, K., Lee, B. (2020, January). *Barriers and facilitators to implementing a community-engaged organizational change intervention to improve the foster care system*. Society of Social Work and Research. Washington, D.C. Poster.

Lewis, E. & **Feely, M.,** (2020, January). *Beyond inclusion. Addressing power and privilege in a community engaged intervention to improve foster care*. Society of Social Work and Research. Washington, D.C. Poster.

Loomis, A.*, **Feely, S.** (2019, October). *Measuring self-reported polyvictimization in foster youth research: A systematic review*. Council on Social Work Education, Annual Program Meeting. Denver, Colorado.

Feely, M., Okpych, N. J., & Urcinas, N. (2019, October). *Triumphs and travails of building a fully online field evaluation system*. Council on Social Work Education, Annual Program Meeting. Denver, Colorado.

Bullinger, L., **Feely, M.,** Schneider, W. Raissian, K., (2019, March) *Disrupting Child Neglect through Research on Macro-Level Factors: A Call to Action for Researchers*. National Foundation to End Child Abuse and Neglect National Summit. Denver, Colorado.

Feely, M., Ives, M., Lin, H., Kurz, B. (2019, January). *Subsequent maltreatment reports: Risk and safety assessments as predictors of subsequent reports*. Society of Social Work and Research. San Francisco, California. Poster

Feely, M., Seay, K.D., Maguire Jack, K. (2018, June). *Exploring state-level variation and innovations in child maltreatment prevention policy and practice in three states*. American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children, New Orleans, LA, June 2018

Raissian, K.M., Bullinger, L., Schneider, W., **Feely, M.** (2018, June). *Using the NDANDS: Child File data to understand effective interventions in child maltreatment.* (Four-paper seminar). American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children, New Orleans, LA, June 2018

Feely, M., Kurz, B., Carlson, P., Ives, M., Pierce, J., Lin, H., Nilson, K. (January, 2018). *Risk, race/ethnicity and subsequent reports in a state's differential response system*. Poster presentation

at the Society for Social Work and Research 21th Annual Research Meeting, Washington, D.C.

Feely, M., Moergen, S. (January, 2018). *What are we telling the judge?: The development and piloting of a foster-care specific well-being assessment with a CASA agency*. Oral presentation at the Society for Social Work and Research 21th Annual Research Meeting, Washington, D.C.

Feely, M., Kennedy, S. C., Tripodi, S. J. (November, 2017). *The long reach of child abuse: Incarcerated women, histories of child abuse and child welfare involvement*. Roundtable presentation. American Public Health Association Annual Meeting & Expo. Atlanta, GA

Kennedy, S. C**.** & **Feely, M.** (October, 2017). *The relationship between interpersonal victimization and criminal sentencing: A latent class analysis.* Paper presented at the Annual Program Meeting of the Council on Social Work Education, Dallas, Texas.

Feely, M. & Kennedy, S. C. (October, 2017). *Complex trauma among incarcerated women: A latent class analysis of previous victimization.* Paper presented at the Annual Program Meeting of the Council on Social Work Education, Dallas, Texas.

Lewis, E. **Feely, M**., Dunnigan, A., Huseynli, A., Seay, K., Lanier, P. & Kohl, P. (January, 2017). *18-Month maintenance effects of Triple P with child welfare-involved families: A randomized trial of a behavioral parent training program.* Poster presentation at the Society for Social Work and Research 21th Annual Research Meeting, New Orleans, LA.

Lewis, E. Dunnigan, A., **Feely, M.,** Hooley, C., Lanier, P., Kohl, P. (January, 2017). *Child welfare involved families participation in Triple P: The role of the provider-client relationship on program engagement.* Oral presentation at the Society for Social Work and Research 21th Annual Research Meeting, New Orleans, LA.

Feely, M., Kohl, P.L. (June, 2016). *The need for positive discipline strategies among neglecting parents. Oral* presentation at the Society for Prevention Research 2016 Annual Meeting. San Francisco, CA.

Feely, M., Kohl, P.L., Drake, F.B., (January, 2016). *Child well-Being among child welfare involved children: Predictors of deficits across multiple domains*. Oral presentation at the Society for Social Work and Research 20th Annual Research Meeting., Washington, D.C.

Feely, M., Seay, K.D., (January, 2016) *The relationship of household income to further system engagement and service receipt in a child protective services-involved population*. Oral presentation at the Society for Social Work and Research 20th Annual Research Meeting., Washington, D.C.

Dunnigan, A**. Feely, M.,** Kohl, P.L., Auslander, W. (January, 2016). *Improving the Usability and Clinical Application of the Parent Anger Inventory: Implications for Research and Practice.* Poster presentation at the Society for Social Work and Research 20th Annual Research Meeting., Washington, D.C.

Feely, M., Kohl, P.L., Fedoravicius, N., Seay, K.D., Lewis, E.L. (2015, January). *Child welfare involved parents and pathways Triple P: Perceptions of effectiveness, acceptability and appropriateness.* Oral presentation at the Society for Social Work and Research 19th Annual Research Meeting, New Orleans, LA

Feely, M. & Kohl, P.L., (2015, January). *Does rural and urban residence matter?: Mental health need among child welfare involved children.* Oral presentation at the Society for Social Work and Research 19th Annual Research Meeting, New Orleans, LA

Hayes, M., Mienko, J., **Feely, M.,** Panlilio, C., Miyamoto, S. (2015, January). *The diffusion of federal social policy mandates: The case of CAPTA, 1974*. Oral presentation at the Society for Social Work and Research 19th Annual Research Meeting, New Orleans, LA

Seay, K.D. & **Feely, M.** (2014, October). *Latent structure of the Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test in female caregivers investigated for child abuse.* Poster presented at the Carolina Women's Health Research Forum, University of South Carolina School of Medicine, Columbia, SC.

Seay, K.D. & **Feely, M.** (2014, January). *A confirmatory factor analysis of the Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test in a national sample of caregivers involved with child protective services*. Poster presented at the Society for Social Work and Research 18th Annual Research Meeting, San Antonio, TX.

Feely, M. & Seay, K., Kohl, P. (2013, January). *The role of county poverty in mental health need for urban and rural children in a child welfare sample using multilevel modeling.* Poster presented at the Poster presented at the Society for Social Work and Research 17th Annual Research Meeting, San Diego, CA.

Threlfall, J. &**Feely, M.*** (2012, October). *Using GIS to align crisis nursery services with areas of concentrated poverty in three urban counties.* 5th Annual Conference Institute of Public Health, St. Louis, MO.

Feely, M. (2012, January). *Systematic Review of Behavioral Interventions for Foster Youth.* Oral presentation presented at the Society for Social Work and Research 16th Annual Research Meeting, Washington, D.C.

Peer-reviewed workshops

Feely, M., Beumer, A.R. (2015, June). *Developing and using well-being assessments to understand how our children are doing.* 2015 National CASA Conference, New Orleans, LA

Seay, K., Lanier, P., **Feely, M.***, Kohl, P. (2013, January). *From conceptualization to evaluation: A practical field guide to fidelity.* Workshop at the 2013 Annual Conference of the Society for Social Work and Research, San Diego, CA.

Feely, M. (2009, October). *Interpreting agency data, implementing a basic program evaluation in a CASA program.* Oral presentation at the CASA and Child Advocacy Center (CAC) Conference. Lafayette, Louisiana.

Feely, M. (2008, June). *Getting the most out of COMET and then taking it to the next level.* Presentation of process and results of unique program evaluation of a child advocacy agency, implementing an evaluation in other programs, National CASA Conference Washington, D.C.

Feely, M. (2009, April). *Making COMET work for you.* Interpreting agency data, implementing a program evaluation and utilizing agency data to improve program quality and enhance fundraising capacity. Oral presentation at the National CASA Conference. Denver, Colorado.

Aguilar, B., **Feely, M.** (2009, April) Co-instructor at National CASA database training, National CASA Conference. Denver, Colorado.

Feely, M. (2009, October) *COMET and Program Evaluation*. Training on CASA data management system. Lafayette, Louisiana.

***Presented or co-presented when not first author**

Other presentations

Feely, M. (2017, December). Child welfare policies: *How federal policies impact work in Connecticut.* Continuing Education through University of Connecticut School of Social Work.

Feely, M. & Seay, K.D. (2015, August). *Harsh physical discipline as a mediator between income, re-reports, out-of-home placement and service receipt.* Paper presented at the Economic Causes and Consequences of Child Maltreatment Conference sponsored by the Institute for Research on Poverty and Chapin Hall. Madison, WI

Feely, M. (2015, March). *Developing a well-being assessment for child advocates*. Oral presentation at the Doris Duke Fellowship mid-year meeting. University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA

Feely, M., Kohl, P.L. (2014, October). *Well-being for child welfare involved children: Social skills deficits.* Research Training Symposium and Poster Session. Washington University School of Medicine, St. Louis, MO

Feely, M. & Kohl, P.L. (2015, April). *Co-occurrence of well-being deficits with child welfare-involved children.* Poster presented at the National Institute of Health 7th annual National Clinical and Translation Sciences Predoctoral Programs Meeting. Washington D.C.

Feely, M., & Kohl, P.L. (2014, April). *Predictors of mental health need in a child welfare population: A rural and urban comparison*. Poster presented at the National Institute of Health 6th annual National Clinical and Translation Sciences Predoctoral Programs Meeting. Washington D.C.

Feely, M., Seay, K., Kohl, P. (2013, April). *Individual and county factors that relate to mental health need in a child welfare population.* Poster presented at the National Clinical and Translational Sciences Predoctoral Programs Meeting. Rochester, MN.

TEACHING

Summer 2017 Spring 2018 2019	Advanced Macro Practice University of Connecticut, School of Social Work
Spring 2017	Women, children, and families: Policies and programs University of Connecticut, School of Social Work
Fall 2016-2019	Program planning, development and evaluation University of Connecticut, School of Social Work
Spring 2016	Instructor, MSW Program Brown School of Social Work

Course: Evaluation of Programs and Services

Instructor, MSW Program
University of Missouri St. Louis
Course: Practice and Program Evaluation

Spring 2013 — Lab Section Instructor, Doctoral Program
Brown School of Social Work
Course: Advanced Multivariate Statistics/Structural Equation Modeling

Summer 2012 — Instructor, Doctoral Program
Brown School of Social Work
Course: Statistics Workshop
Two week intensive preparatory course for incoming PhD students

Fall 2011 — Teaching Assistant, Doctoral Program
Brown School of Social Work
Course: Social Work Theory and Knowledge

Summer 2011 — Teaching Assistant, MSW Program
Brown School of Social Work
Course: Differential Diagnosis

Spring 2012 — Teaching Assistant, MSW Program
Brown School of Social Work
Course: Social Economic and Political Environment

PRACTICE EXPERIENCE: WORK & INTERSHIPS

Individual and Agency Level Practice Experience

2005-2010 — Voices for Children. St. Louis, Missouri
- 2008-2010 Program Evaluation Specialist
- 2006-2008 Development Associate
- 2005-2006 VISTA Volunteer, Volunteer Recruitment

2007 — Social Work Internship. May-December
Parents as Teachers National Center, St. Louis, Missouri
Research and Evaluation Department

2006 — Social Work Internship. June-September
Voices for Children, St. Louis, Missouri

Community Level Practice Experience

2004 — Political Organizer, 2004 Presidential Election , August – November, America Coming Together (ACT), St. Louis, Missouri.

2004 — Union Organizer Trainee, January – June

	Organizing Institute, AFL-CIO, Alton, Illinois
2003	Director of Field Operations, New York City Metro Area Education and Campaign Associates

UNIVERSITY SERVICE

2018-present	Graduate Faculty Council, Social Work Representative
2011-2013	Washington University, Graduate Student Senate. Senator for Social Work.

PROFESSIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

2021-2023	American Professional Society of the Abuse of Children, Publication Committee
2020	Office of Early Childhood, RFP Data Working Group
2019-present	Data Oversight Committee, Hartford Data Collaborative
2014-present	Ad hoc Reviewer for Child Welfare, Journal for the Society of Social Work Research, Child Maltreatment, Children and Youth Services Review
2014	St. Louis Area K-8 Science Fair judge
2009-2010	National CASA Technology Committee. Member.
2009-2010	22nd Judicial Circuit Juvenile Court Improvement Project (CIP). Subcommittee member.
2006-2013	CASA volunteer for six teenagers in St. Louis City foster care.

EXHIBIT 8

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF MARYLAND
NORTHERN DIVISION

CANDACE LOVETT, *et al.*, on behalf of themselves and all others similarly situated, *Plaintiffs*, v. BALTIMORE CITY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES, *et al.*, *Defendants*.	Case No. _____

DECLARATION OF C.C. IN SUPPORT OF PLAINTIFFS' MOTION FOR PRELIMINARY INJUNCTION

1. My name is C.C., and I am nine years old. My mom is Regina Roland. I have two little sisters, R.R. and R.H.

2. I love my mom, and I know that she will always protect me. I also love my sisters, and I know how close they are with our mom. They play tickle together and spend a lot of time together.

3. My mom and I love going out to eat together, especially to get hot chicken from Dave's or pizza from Domino's. We also play games with balls, which is a lot of fun. My mom sometimes makes macaroni for me, which is one of my favorite foods.

4. When I was younger, I lived with my mom and my grandfather. But, one day, my mom left my grandfather's house, and me and my sisters stayed there without her.

5. I missed my mom when she was away, and I was sad that I didn't know how she was doing and I couldn't see her whenever I wanted.

6. Sometimes, when I was living with my grandfather, other kids would ask me where my mom was. That made me feel sad and angry because I didn't know what to say.

7. My sisters missed our mom as well, but I think they were too little to understand why she wasn't living with us. I wanted to protect them.

8. Eventually, we were able to live with my mom in a new home. I was glad to be with my whole family again, and I know my sisters were so happy to be back with our mom.

9. I'm worried when I go back to my grandfather's house that I will not be able to see or visit with my mom again for a long period of time. And I'm scared that someone will try to keep me and my sisters from being able to see my mom again whenever we want.

10. I hope that other kids don't have to feel like I did when I wasn't able to see my mom when I wanted.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct to the best of my ability.

Executed on November 3, 2026.

/s/ C.C.
C.C.

1. My name is C.C., and i am nine years old. My mom is Regina Roland. I have two, litter sitters, R.R. and R.H.

2. I love my mom and I know that she will always protect me. i also love my sitters and i know how close they are with our mom. They play tickle together and spend a lot of time together.

3. My mom and i love going out to eat together, especilly to get hot chicken from Dam or pizza from Dominos. We also play games with balls, wich is a lot of fun. my mom somtimes make macaroni for me wich is one of my favorite foods.

4. when i was younger, i lived with my mom and my grandfather. But one day, my mom left my granfathers house, and me and my sitters stayed there without her.

5. I missed my mom when she was away and i was sad that i didn't know she was doing and i coudnt see her whenever i wanted.

6. Sometimes, when i was living with my grangfather, other kids would ask me where my mom was. That made me feel sad and angry because i didnt know what to say.

7. My sitters missed our mom as well. but i think there were to young to understand why she wasnt living with us. i wanted to protect them.

8. Eventually, we were able to live with our mom in a new house. i was glad to be with our mom.

9. im worried when i go back to my grangfather house that i will not be able to see or visit my mom again for a long time. and im scared that someone will try to keep me and my sitters from being able to see my mom again whenever we want.

10. I hope that other kids dont have to feel like i did when i wasnt able to see my mom when i wanted.

C.C

11-13-26

EXHIBIT 9

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF MARYLAND
NORTHERN DIVISION

CANDACE LOVETT, *et al.*, on behalf of themselves and all others similarly situated, *Plaintiffs*, v. BALTIMORE CITY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES, *et al.*, *Defendants*.	Case No. _____

DECLARATION OF R.R. IN SUPPORT OF PLAINTIFFS' MOTION FOR PRELIMINARY INJUNCTION

1. My name is R.R.

2. I am six years old.

3. I like to play outside, play games, and eat candy with my Mom, my brother, and my sister.

4. My Mom reads me books before bed.

5. I want to keep living at my Mom's house.

6. When I was living with my grandfather, I missed my Mom.

7. When I miss my Mom, I am sad.

8. I love my Mom and Dad.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct to the best of my ability.

Executed on November 3, 2026.

/s/ R.R.
R.R.

1. My name is RR
2. I am 6 years old.
3. I like to:

P Play outside, play eams

and

eat

tae candy with my

mom woo zizter

4. my mom reads me pookz

before bed

5. I want to keep living at my

mom hoyze

6. when I was living with my grandfather,

imizzmymom

7. when I miss my mom

ziamzatp (sad)

8. ilovemymom

anp DaD♡



EXHIBIT 10

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF MARYLAND
NORTHERN DIVISION

CANDACE LOVETT, *et al.*, on behalf of themselves and all others similarly situated, *Plaintiffs*, v. BALTIMORE CITY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES, *et al.*, *Defendants*.	Case No. _____

DECLARATION OF R.H. IN SUPPORT OF PLAINTIFFS' MOTION FOR PRELIMINARY INJUNCTION

1. My name is R.H.

2. I am 5 years old.

3. I like living in my new house.

4. I like living with my Mom and Dad.

5. I like playing with my brother and my sister at the park.

6. I want to keep living with my Mom and Dad.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct to the best of my ability.

Executed on November 3, 2026.

/s/ R.H.
R.H.

1.) My name is RH

2.) I am Rea years old.

5

3.) I like living in my new house.

4.) I like living with my Mom and Dad.

5.) I like playing with my brother and my sister at the PARK.

6.) I want to keep living with my Mom and Dad.






brother
RH
baby sister
Sister
mom
dad

EXHIBIT 11

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF MARYLAND
NORTHERN DIVISION

CANDACE LOVETT, *et al.*, on behalf of themselves and all others similarly situated, *Plaintiffs*, v. BALTIMORE CITY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES, *et al*., *Defendants*.	Case No. _____

DECLARATION OF EITH BAUMANN

I. Background

1. My name is Keith Baumann.

2. I am an attorney, licensed to practice law in the state of New York.

3. I earned my Juris Doctor from Brooklyn Law School in 2007 and my Bachelor of Science from Northwestern University in 2001.

4. I am currently the Legal Director of the Family Defense Practice at The Bronx Defenders. We are a public defender office in New York City that provides family defense services to roughly 1600 new families each year, in the borough with the highest child-removal rates in the city. We represent parents primarily in dependency proceedings (what we call abuse or neglect proceedings), but our representation also extends to related legal matters affecting their families, including custody disputes, orders of protection, termination of parental rights proceedings, and other collateral petitions.

5. I have been at The Bronx Defenders since 2007. I became a supervisor in 2010. From 2015 to 2023, in addition to my duties as a supervisor, I served as Training Director,

developing and leading continuing legal education (CLE) programs on most aspects of representing parents in New York family abuse or neglect cases, including trainings around emergency shelter hearings (what we call §§1027 and 1028 hearings), trainings about pre-petition representation (what we call early defense), and trainings about representing parents at initial court appearances (what we call intake).

6. From 2023 to 2025, I served in an office-wide leadership position as Director of Holistic Defense and Training, leading the development and implementation of our holistic defense model and our office's professional development and training programs. In 2024 and 2025, I also led Defenders Academy, which is The Bronx Defenders' annual week-long intensive trial advocacy program, training nearly 300 defenders and advocates from New York City and across the country.

7. In my current role as the Legal Director, I develop and oversee our practice's legal strategies, conduct regular trainings, supervise attorneys and attorney supervisors, collect and track data on our cases and case outcomes, and participate in cross-stakeholder efforts to improve the court system in the city.

8. Over the course of my career, I have directly represented nearly 500 parents in the Bronx, supervised dozens of attorneys, trained hundreds more, and observed thousands of dependency and termination proceedings, including hundreds of initial removal hearings.

II. Key Features of Shelter Care Hearings in the Bronx

9. In New York, the hearing to determine whether a child will be placed or kept in state custody pending adjudication of allegations of abuse or neglect is called a "1027 hearing," because it is governed by N.Y. Family Court Act §1027.

10. State law requires the hearing to happen before the child is removed in most cases, or else immediately after. There is ongoing litigation challenging the emergency removal practices of ACS as unconstitutional, alleging that New York's child-welfare agency—the Administration for Children's Services, or ACS—has a policy, custom, and practice of taking children, without prior judicial authorization, in the absence of an emergency.

11. Regardless of whether the hearing occurs before or after removal, in the Bronx, hearings on whether separation or continued separation is necessary are often adversarial proceedings, often involving documentary evidence, live witness testimony, cross-examination, and closing arguments. The judge must make legal and factual findings on the record, and the order is immediately appealable as of right.

12. Initial removal hearings in New York prevent countless families from being separated. Nonetheless, these hearings fall far short of constitutional requirements, and we continue to fight vigorously for parents to have the full breadth of procedural and substantive protections required when their fundamental right to family integrity is breached by the removal of their child.

13. **Adversarial:** In the Bronx, initial removal hearings are often strenuously contested. They are in effect trials to determine whether the child should remain in their home pending adjudication of the abuse or neglect allegations. It is not a foregone conclusion that a child will be placed in state custody, or remain there; indeed, contested §1027 hearings result in many children remaining or returning home. Our attorneys contest removals even in complex medical cases involving a child's injuries and allegations of abuse. And we have significant success even at those more challenging hearings.

14. **Right to counsel:** New York City takes the right to counsel at §1027 hearings very seriously. Our attorneys are assigned at the first court appearance a parent attends, and we are sometimes even able to represent parents during an investigation before a case is filed. Early engagement narrows the issues and helps prevent unnecessary separations.

15. **In-person:** The §1027 hearings frequently take place in person. While virtual is available, it is disfavored. After COVID-19, the initial removal hearings were one of the first types of proceedings that the court started to require be conducted in person again. Judges reported that it was important to see the parents, caseworkers, and other witnesses to evaluate their credibility and better communicate about the case. We encourage our clients to attend hearings in person whenever possible, as we have found that their presence strengthens their participation and improves the quality and effectiveness of the proceedings.

16. **Time:** Initial removal hearings vary significantly in length. Some, for which the issues are straightforward, take about 45 minutes of court time to complete. Others are completed in several hours of court time.

17. **Burden of proof:** At these hearings, the burden of proof is squarely on ACS to prove imminent risk to the child that cannot be mitigated by court orders or reasonable efforts to support the family and try to avoid removal by the agency, and that, on balance, the imminent risk to the child is outweighed by "the harm removal might bring." *Nicholson* v. *Scoppetta*, 820 N.E.2d 840, 852 (N.Y. Ct. App. 2004).

18. **Discovery:** The Family Court can order ACS to produce expedited discovery before the §1027 hearing. This includes written case notes, police, school, and medical records, recordings and communications, and any other relevant records.

19. **Witnesses:** Often, ACS calls the caseworker who filed the neglect or abuse petition to testify live. Sometimes, despite what is alleged in the petition, ACS fails to make even a prima facie case that removal is justified. We often call our clients to testify because their voices and perspectives are essential to the court's understanding of their lives, their families, and the circumstances at issue. In more complicated cases, we offer live testimony from doctors, teachers, and/or police officers. When ACS workers testify, we cross-examine them about imminent danger, and we explore ways that reasonable efforts and court orders could mitigate any danger so that children can remain home safely. We also cross-examine them about what's best for the child, including the harms the child will experience from being separated from their parent and also the ways the agency has already failed the child after removal or would fail the child if the court ordered removal. For example, children may miss school in the days following their removal or struggle in a holding facility where they are forced to sleep alongside strangers. An ACS worker may testify that a child desperately wants to return home, or we may establish that ACS has failed to comply with court orders. This information is critical to the court's assessment of the harms of separation and whether a child would be better served by remaining at home, or returning home, with appropriate supports in place. Parents, family members, teachers, and community members testify about the bonds between children and their parents, the parents' strengths as caregivers, their knowledge and skills in meeting their children's special or medical needs, and the daily routines of family life that provide children with stability and security, and that would be disrupted by separation.

20. **Documentary evidence:** We routinely introduce documentary evidence at §1027 hearings. Primarily, this evidence is from service providers describing our client's personal growth. But this documentary evidence can also provide a powerful picture of the family: letters

from doctors, therapists, teachers, and others who know the family and can speak to the parent-child relationship; family photographs capturing moments of love and connection; and photographs of a child's bedroom, decorated just for them. Together, these materials bring the family's relationships and daily life into focus, while providing essential evidence that demonstrates why the harms of removal may outweigh any purported benefits.

21. **Experts:** We routinely offer expert testimony at §1027 hearings, particularly in cases with complex medical allegations, often centered on unexplained injuries. Judges have developed a deeper understanding of the medical science underlying alleged injuries, and many now recognize the value of hearing from medical experts early in the proceedings. These hearings have resulted in many children returning home, often followed by the prompt resolution of the underlying cases.

22. **Consideration of alternatives to removal:** At a §1027 hearing, the judge must consider whether alternatives to removal are available that would sufficiently mitigate any danger to the child. While we frequently challenge ACS's claim that a child faces imminent danger, we focus just as often on whether any identified danger can be mitigated through measures that allow the child to remain safely at home. These measures may include a parent immediately enrolling in services such as substance-use treatment or therapy, agreeing to refrain from certain behaviors, having a relative move into the home to provide additional support, regularly sharing information with ACS, or developing a concrete safety plan.

23. **Consideration of whether the harm of removal outweighs the risk of harm in the home:** The judge at a §1027 hearing must weigh the harms of removal against the risks of the child remaining at home. On this issue, we present evidence of the strong bonds, loving relationships, stability, and support that children enjoy within their families, and all that they

stand to lose through separation. Parents and family members testify about the daily rituals and routines of family life, the ways they nurture and care for their children, the bonds between siblings, and the particular needs of their children that they know best how to meet. For infants, we emphasize the critical early period of bonding and attachment between parents and their babies. We also emphasize the distress children experience when removed from their homes, and their often-desperate desire to return.

24. Just as importantly, we challenge the ever-present but rarely stated (and too rarely questioned) assumption that the state can provide a safer or more nurturing alternative. In reality, ACS often fails to arrange timely family visits, adequately address children's medical needs, maintain important family connections, or even comply with court orders intended to support children. Children may be placed with strangers, separated from siblings, and otherwise subjected to instability that compounds the trauma of removal. By exposing these failures, we demonstrate how removals create serious harm.

25. **Findings:** The judge at a §1027 hearing is required to make findings on the record by a preponderance of the evidence addressing whether ACS has met its burden to show that "removal is necessary to avoid imminent risk to the child's life or health." N.Y. Fam. Ct. Act §1027. And the court must make findings regarding "whether the imminent risk to the child can be mitigated by reasonable efforts to avoid removal," as well as balance the imminent risk to the child "against the harm removal might bring," and "specifically consider whether imminent risk to the child might be eliminated by other means." *Nicholson*, 820 N.E.2d at 852. These decisions are often written and immediately appealable.

III. Children, Families, and the System All Benefit from Contested Initial Hearings

26. Adversarial initial removal hearings are intended to serve two critical purposes. First, they are intended to help courts reach the correct decision about whether a child must be separated from their parent. These are among the most consequential decisions a court can make, and a prompt, meaningful hearing is intended to ensure that the court has the benefit of a developed evidentiary record and the opportunity to hear and evaluate competing positions. When parents prevail, these hearings prevent or shorten unnecessary family separations and the profound harm they cause. In many cases, these hearings settle with ACS withdrawing its request for continued removal and the parties agreeing to conditions that permit the child to return or stay home safely.

27. Second, regardless of the outcome, initial removal hearings promote judicial efficiency by bringing evidence to light early, testing allegations, and narrowing disputed issues. Parents and parties can focus their efforts on addressing those specific concerns illuminated by the hearing. Indeed, instead of prolonging proceedings, meaningful initial removal hearings can streamline subsequent litigation and facilitate resolution.

28. Based on my extensive experience, I believe that adversarial proceedings at the start of child-removal cases are not only feasible, but also essential to protecting children and ensuring that courts have the necessary information before them in making these consequential decisions.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

Keith Baumann (Nov 19, 2026 11:21:37 EST)

11/19/2026

eith Baumann

DATE

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF MARYLAND
NORTHERN DIVISION

CANDACE LOVETT, *et al.*, on behalf of themselves and all others similarly situated,

Plaintiffs,

v.

BALTIMORE CITY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES, *et al.*,

Defendants.

Case No. 1:26-cv-04889

[PROPOSED] ORDER GRANTING MOTION FOR A TEMPORARY RESTRAINING ORDER ON BEHALF OF NAMED PLAINTIFFS AND A CLASSWIDE PRELIMINARY INJUNCTION

Upon consideration of plaintiffs' motion for a temporary restraining order on behalf of the named plaintiffs and a classwide preliminary injunction, any responses thereto, and based on the arguments of counsel, the parties' submissions, and the evidence presented, the Court finds:

1. Plaintiffs are likely to succeed on the merits of their claims that defendants' conduct violates the Fourteenth Amendment of the Constitution;

2. Plaintiffs are likely to face irreparable injury absent preliminary injunctive relief; and

3. The balance of the equities and the public interest weigh in favor of an injunction.

Based on the foregoing findings, it is hereby **ORDERED** that:

a. Plaintiffs' motion for a temporary restraining order is **GRANTED**.

b. Until further order of this Court, defendants Baltimore City Department of Social Services, Brandi L. Stocksdale, and any agents and/or employee of either or both of those two defendants, are enjoined from seizing Ms. Lovett's or Ms. Roland's newborn babies, or Ms.

Roland's three older children, without prior notice and a hearing, absent imminent danger of severe or irremediable injury. Defendants may not keep any of Ms. Roland's children or the newborn babies in custody absent a prompt hearing that meets the requirements of substantive and procedural due process.

c. Plaintiffs' motion for a preliminary injunction is **GRANTED**.

d. Until further order of this Court, defendants Baltimore City Department of Social Services, Brandi L. Stocksdale, and any agents and/or employee of either or both of those two defendants, including Raven Smith and Adeniyi Afolabi, are **ENJOINED** from the following:

a. Removing children without notice and a pre-removal hearing or, if such a hearing cannot safely be held, an *ex parte* court order, absent an imminent danger of severe or irremediable injury to the child.

b. Keeping a child in BCDSS custody or otherwise enforcing a child's separation from their parents absent an order following a hearing that met the requirements of procedural and substantive due process, specifically:

i. The order was issued following a hearing that occurred prior to removal or, if no pre-removal hearing was provided, within 65 hours of seizure;

ii. Plaintiffs received written notice containing the date, time and place of the hearing, a clear statement of the purpose of the proceedings and the possible consequences, the allegations supporting removal and the agency's assertion that the child is a child in need of assistance, and a statement of the legal standard governing the hearing at least 24 hours before the hearing;

iii. At the hearing, plaintiffs had an opportunity to present and confront witnesses and documentary evidence;

iv. Any decision to remove a child or authorize continued separation is based on reliable evidence, excluding hearsay and attorney proffers; and

v. The decision to remove or authorize continued separation is based on an on-the-record finding, supported by clear and convincing evidence, that separation is necessary to protect the child from severe harm that outweighs the harm from ongoing separation.

Date: _____ _____

United States District Judge