

**DivorceCorp**

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**Corruption and Victory**

Thank you.

My name is Ned Holstein. I am the Founder of National Parents Organization. I expect that Joe will soon overtake us, but at this point, we are the largest family court reform organization in the country.

We have brought alimony reforms to California and Connecticut.

We have defeated bills against shared parenting in Massachusetts, California and Illinois.

We have reformed the GAL law in Connecticut.

We have reduced excessive child support guidelines in Massachusetts (twice), Ohio, Indiana and California.

We have helped disabled parents win joint custody in Arizona, California and Indiana.

Imagine—they were telling parents in wheelchairs that they could not possibly have custody or shared custody because they were in

a wheelchair---when there are hundreds of thousands of wonderful parents in wheelchairs!

We have protected military parents in Arizona, California, Texas, Georgia, Indiana, Nevada and Ohio. No longer do they come home from serving their country and find their children taken from them.

We have defeated moveaway bills in California.

And more — I have a more complete list here for anyone who wants one after the talk.

I am so happy to be here among this faithful remnant of those who perceive a great injustice in our society and want to do something about it. Being at the end of the program, I thought it would be useful to do some summing up.

You have already heard from many learned and wise speakers. I really have little to add to much that has been said.

So I am here to talk about the human heart.

When I listen to the wonderful people at this conference, I hear sadness. It feels as if the world is broken.

It seems that bad things happen to good people

Children suffer

I hear pain.

I hear the pain of the parent who has not seen her daughter in three years. It makes me think of Norman Cousins, who wrote that death is not the greatest loss in life. The greatest loss in life is what dies inside us while we live.

I hear the pain of Job:

**“Days of misery stretch out before me**

**I go about dejected and friendless**

**I rise in the assembly, only to appeal for help**

**The wolf is now my brother**

**The owls of the desert have become my  
companions”**

And I wonder why this is.

The two bright and thoughtful speakers who have preceded me have given us part of the answer. They have told us about one of the oldest forms of corruption— raw money corruption. History tells us that this is a cancer that keeps coming back.

And then I have heard about the court functionaries, most of whom are decent human

beings, but some of whom snicker behind closed door at this mother's crude motions to the court begging for help.

This is moral corruption, and it is not new either.

Then I think about the salt they rub in the wound. That's when they explain to you **why** you can see your child only twice in a month. The reason is.....imagine this.....that the little boy who leaps into your arms with gladness and holds you so tight it hurts.....*is better off without you.*

How did this come about?

There was a time when the reason was that children were the property of fathers. And this was evil. Then there came a time when the reason was called “the tender years doctrine.”

But when gender bias became illegal, they cooked up a disguise for the tender years doctrine and called it the “best interests of the child.”

But nobody noticed that they actually went much further. You see, the male prerogative, and then the tender years doctrine, were simple rules devised to answer a simple question:

should the child go to someone with a Y chromosome or someone with two X chromosomes?

This was binary— one or the other, yes or no, left or right.

Nobody noticed that “best interest of the child” suddenly opened up unlimited opportunities to control your family life. No longer X or Y, but now it was violin lessons or football, Easthampton or Westhampton, vegan or gluten-free, Dr. Smith or Dr. Jones.

This was a power grab, power over your family, control over you. And power resulted in what it always results in, power corruption.

How did this come about in this majestic country, the single brightest beacon of liberty ever known in this world?

I began to wonder, would John Locke have endorsed the idea that a judge, who is after all an agent of the King whose ultimate authority comes from the barrel of a police officer's gun, would John Locke have agreed that this agent of the King could simply take your child away?

Would David Hume rejoice to hear that the King's agent can order you to pay enormous sums of money to another person based on a formula that the people did not vote on, that as Prof Comanor taught us is a monument to intellectual corruption and also a certain amount of money corruption— except he used nicer language— and that requires a fixed level of support of one's children for only some of the people—separated or divorced parents— and not for everyone else?

Would Thomas Paine, author of the Rights of Man, flip cartwheels to learn that the King's agent can enter your home without a warrant

and with no evidence of wrongdoing and evict you on 10 minutes notice and say it is ok because it is “only” a civil matter?

And what about Thomas Jefferson, who told us that we have certain inalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and pursuit of happiness? Why didn't Thomas Jefferson mention the kids too?

Because it would never in a million years have crossed that fertile mind that someday the King's agent, perhaps aided and abetted by an “expert” who as Dr. Childress taught us is often unqualified and may know nothing about family

systems, that the King's agent would be empowered to take your children.

And this is intellectual corruption

So we have money corruption

Moral corruption

Power corruption

And intellectual corruption

And so there is suffering.

And most of it is delivered by people who, like you and me, want to do what is best for children and fair and just. I believe that only a few suffer

from money or moral corruption. But I believe almost all suffer from power corruption and intellectual corruption. Because most of them genuinely believe they are good people doing good work. Power corruption and intellectual corruption are often invisible to those who exercise it.

But this is not the first time that corruption in some form has spread over our land. It has happened many, many times before.

And while Locke and Hume and Wollingstonecraft and John Adams, from my part of the country, and those great Virginians

Paine and Jefferson and George Mason and James Madison and Patrick Henry and of course the incomparable George Washington, who lived and died within a two hour walk of this spot, while they could not even imagine the current corrupt state of affairs, they built us a system designed to tear out corruption root and branch.

America has rooted out corruption and despotism over and over again. And we too shall do it.

Confronting America's original sin called slavery, Frederik Douglass, the freed and self-

educated slave told us in 1857 what we must do.  
He wrote some of my favorite words:

**“Power concedes nothing without a demand.  
It never did, and it never will. Find out just  
what people will submit to and you have  
found out the exact amount of injustice and  
wrong which will be imposed upon them.  
These will continue until they are resisted.....  
The limits of tyrants are prescribed by the  
endurance of those whom they oppress.”**

80 years later the great civil rights leader A.  
Philip Randolph, in the generation just before  
Martin Luther King, knew that the job was not

yet done, and reminded us **“Freedom is never granted, it is won. Justice is never given, it is exacted. Freedom and justice must be struggled for by the oppressed...”**

That is our calling here today, and we will do it.

I know that many in this room today feel a bit of hopelessness, that the forces against us are too great for us. Many have tried and been beaten down. The prophet Isaiah captured how many feel:

**“Why should you be beaten anymore?**

**Why do you persist in rebellion?**

**Your whole head is injured,  
Your whole heart is afflicted.”**

So we must remember Ronald Reagan saying,  
“Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!”

Did anyone actually think it would come down  
anytime soon? But it did come down, 25 years  
ago almost to this day.

The natural history of social reform is  
Defeat, defeat, defeat.....victory

So let me tell you six reasons that we will absolutely, guaranteed, without any doubt whatsoever win our struggle.

- 1) First, gender roles have converged in America. So what we want seems natural to most people.
- 2) Second, public opinion overwhelmingly supports our core belief of parental equality.  
Various polls and surveys, as well as formal research by Sanford Braver in Arizona, support this claim. And in Massachusetts, National Parents Organization mobilized hundreds of

volunteers to get signatures, the result of which was a ballot question a few years ago that went before 700,000 voters. It asked whether shared physical custody of children should be the usual and customary outcome if both parents are fit and there has been no domestic violence. Over 86% of the voters said “Yes!” And by the way, you can’t get 86% of the vote unless women, as well as men, overwhelmingly support the issue.

3) Third, as Dr. Bergstrom taught us yesterday, the research evidence supports what we most want— equality in access to our children.

2014 has been a watershed year in our research understanding of what is best for children after parental separation or divorce. Three separate groups of child development researchers and mental health practitioners have issued comprehensive reports in 2014, and in each case they have concluded, based on hundreds of research projects over several decades, that children do best on multiple measures with shared parenting. Richard Warshak's conclusions were signed on to by 110 experts. The International Council for Shared Parenting had about 100 experts from over 20 countries, mostly

Europe, and AFCC, a large organization with its greatest strength in North America concluded similarly. Moreover, yesterday you heard Dr. Bergstrom's presentation, in which she taught us that shared parenting, which is practiced widely in Sweden, produces better outcomes for children than single parenting. Finally, in 2014, Jennifer McIntosh retracted her claims that the Australian experience of shared parenting was negative for children.

- 4) The fourth reason is that America truly is a democracy. An energized public will always defeat special interests.

5) The fifth reason, believe it or not, is The LAW. Because what happens in family courts today is not the Law. As Ron Palmer taught us yesterday, the **real** law is that we are endowed with certain inalienable rights, with life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. That is the REAL law.

Right about now is when someone says, “Those people only care about their adult rights, they don’t care about the children.”

So I want to make it clear that I believe fervently in children’s rights— most of all, the

right to the loving care of two fit parents. If this is not a natural right, then what is? No better substitute has ever been found for children than two loving, fit parents— not foster care, not the kibbutz, not the orphanage, not group homes, and certainly not judges and social workers, who will not be there for your child when she is running a fever and vomiting at 3:00 am. The only exception is for the small minority of children whose parents are clearly warped.

6) THE SIXTH REASON I KNOW WE WILL WIN IS THE MOST POWERFUL REASON. The power of **truth** is on our side. As Dr. Childress taught us, children

are DESIGNED to bond to two parents.  
They are WIRED that way. They NEED  
us for their very survival. And we will not  
fail them.

National Parents Organization has made a  
million mistakes. Wrong turns, blind alleys,  
dead ends. But we have learned from our  
mistakes, and each year we are bigger and  
better. And although we have so far to go, we  
have had many victories, and there will be more.

If we can do it, so can you. I hope you will want  
to work together with us, we will welcome you  
and will help you in your state. But if you want

to work it your own way, that is fine too. We all have similar goals.

In 2015, our central initiative will be to mandate shared parenting in temporary orders. If the judge knows nothing about the child at that point, how can she or he presume to make a temporary custody order in the best interest of the child? Even though it makes sense, we will have many losses with this, but we will have some wins in some states. But the next year we will have more wins, and the year after that still more.

Willpower, determination, and tenacity— these are the greatest forces in human affairs. With the power of perseverance, and the truth behind us, and the good sense and fundamental sense of fairness of the American people, we will largely win over those who disagree with us, learning from them in the process, because they have part of the truth too. We will bring back the REAL law, we will empower parents above the King’s agents, we will rescue our children and mend their broken hearts, and in those so familiar words, we will be able to say— help me here—“Free at last”— help me now, you know the words, “free at last, free at last, thank God almighty we are free at last!”