

Lucila Covington

Testimony to Texas Sunset Advisory Commission Review of Health and Human Services Enterprise Agencies, June 25, 2014

My name is Lucila Covington and our family now resides in San Antonio, Texas. Our family, and in particular our daughter Cecilia were victimized in Tarrant County. I have testified since 2010 on the issue of guardianship. DADS and APS were not there for us. DADS heard our concerns but only recommended to the group home to go to the courts. APS did not investigate BEFORE the court got involved. When APS finally reviewed our case in a hearing, the charges were found invalid. By then it was too late. Our nightmare had already begun. There was no justice in sight.

Our daughter is now returned and under our protection after a 4 year nightmare and over 400 thousand dollars of legal fees.

Not many families have the resources to protect their loves one from this kind of FORCED LEGAL ABUSE. We went through our retirement savings.

Our daughter's medical needs are **now** being met. FIBROMYALGIA AND OBSTRUCTIVE SLEEP APNEA was the cause of her headaches and extreme pain through out her body. The provider insisted that "You can't see pain". "She is not in pain." A video we made of her nocturnal problems was finally viewed in our last hearing and the judge was shocked at the obvious display. He commented "it is apparent she is in extreme pain".

Cecilia expressed herself by saying "something poking all over". Inexperienced staff surmised, no one was poking her. She was diagnosed by a sophomore college student in social work, her case manager, as having multiple personalities and a nurse with no prior experience working with the developmental disabled individuals. A six hour evaluation by a neurophysiologist did not reveal any disorders needing psychiatric treatment. This did not sit well with the provider. As a side note, I had been an occupational therapist for the past 40 years working specifically with the disabled population throughout the United States and abroad. I also worked in Richardson Texas with infants and had been a therapist in the Fort Worth ISD since 1981.

The director of the group home went to the court and APS to have our rights removed as Cecilia's legal guardian so she could be seen by a psychiatrist. Inept portrayal by the HCS staff of her demeanor influenced the psychiatrist to characterize Cecilia as having a range of

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diagnosis from Schizophrenia, Tactile Hallucinations, Autism, Mood Disorders, Impulse Control, and Seizure Disorder to name a few.

We recovered our daughter April 2013. We were now able to discuss her true symptoms with her doctors. This included a 3 day seizure study. She does not have seizures, does not need oxygen and does not need a cocktail of psychotropic drugs.

Six judges. The last one finally did the right thing. We did get our daughter back. We did not get justice.

This guardianship industry that has been created is not conducive to families. What is happening to family values in this State and in our country? **Get guardianship out of the courts. Parents need to be the designated decision maker** and not force the government to oversee every decision that parent's have always made.

Please do something to correct the injustice that destroys families, children, disabled and elderly. Review how APS and DADS evaluate cases and stop them from turning the cases to the court without a thorough review. Once in the court, the family has no recourse because of the expense. Do not let this injustice continue. Your decisions should assist not destroy.

Thank you for your time.