

Connecticut Protective Moms  
Keeping Children Safe in Family Court



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## **Legislating Coercive Control: Jennifer's Law**

### **DV, Coercive Control and Family Court Experts to Interview**

## **1. Child Custody and Abuse Allegations in Family Court**

Joan Meier, JD  
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### **Child Custody Outcomes in Cases Involving Parental Alienation and Abuse Allegations**

Joan Meier is a Professor of Clinical Law and Director of the National Family Violence Law Center at the George Washington University Law School. Professor Meier has been a clinical law professor for 29 years at GW Law, where she founded three pioneering and nationally recognized interdisciplinary domestic violence clinical programs. She has published widely on domestic violence, custody, clinical teaching, criminal procedure, and various Supreme Court decisions. Her major study, “Child Custody Outcomes in Cases Involving Parental Alienation and Abuse Allegations,” funded by the National Institute of Justice, was completed in 2019. Its findings have been written about in scholarship and multiple media outlets including The Washington Post and The New Yorker.

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Danielle Pollack, Child USA Ambassador, and policy consultant for NFVLC, is an advocate for children and safe caregivers in the family court context. Her work focuses on systemic family court reform for improved outcomes for children and their protectors. She advocates on the federal, state, county, and individual levels. Her strategic advocacy on this issue entails research, public education, and policy reform. Activities include crafting model legislation, including Pennsylvania’s Kayden’s Law, in collaboration with top legal experts, bringing together leading thinkers and prosecutors to develop evidence-based court trainings, speaking engagements, engaging with press, documentary filmmaking, and consulting on individual cases.

## **2. Coercive Control**

Evan Stark, PhD  
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Coercive Control: The Entrapment of Women in Personal Life (Oxford, 2007)

Evan Stark is a sociologist, forensic social worker, a widely published author and an award-winning researcher with an international reputation for his innovative work on the legal, policy and health dimensions of interpersonal violence, including its effects on children. Dr. Stark's book, *Coercive Control: The Entrapment of Women in Personal Life* (Oxford, 2007) was named the outstanding book in the social sciences for 2007 by the American Publishers' Association and recipient of the "Choice" Award. American Library Association for "outstanding academic book reviewed in 2008. Evan's work on coercive control has helped shape policies on gender violence in several U.S. States, in the UK - Scotland, England, South Wales - Tasmania and other countries where he has worked, and laid the conceptual groundwork for new offenses involving 'coercive and controlling behavior.

Christine M. Cocchiola, IPA Advocate, DSW-c, NYU, 2022  
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### Policy Brief: Legislating Coercive Control - Jennifer's Law

Christine Cocchiola, LCSW is a tenured college educator in the field of social work. She began her career in social work as a Domestic Violence Sexual Assault Counselor for *Safe Haven of Greater Waterbury* at the age of 19 where she remains a volunteer. Her expertise is in the areas of intimate partner abuse, sexual abuse, trauma, and child maltreatment. She has developed and presented workshops on these topics, regionally and nationally, and has been a guest host on podcasts, educating on the topic of Coercive Control, Post Separation Abuse, The Trauma Bond, and Cognitive Dissonance. Presently the Department of Children and Families Intimate

Partner Abuse Consultant for the Safety Practice Model initiative, Ms. Cocchiola also has a private practice serving adolescents, families, and couples and is a divorce mediator. Her published work is on the impact of Coercive Control on child victims.

### **3. Domestic Violence, Family Court and Judicial Accountability**

Kathleen Russell  
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*The Center for Judicial Excellence is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization based in San Rafael, California. Our mission is to protect child abuse and domestic violence survivors in our nation's family courts and to foster accountability throughout the judicial branch. For 15 years, the Center has been a voice for vulnerable children and a catalyst for child safety. Every day, we honor the lives of more than 770 American children who have been murdered by a divorcing or separating parent. Their deaths must never be in vain.*

Kathleen is the Center's Founding Executive Director. She leads the Center's legislative advocacy work, including the passage of the nation's [first child safety in family law resolution through the U.S. House of Representatives in 2018](#) and numerous child safety bills in the California Legislature. Kathleen manages the national U.S. Divorce Child Homicide Research Project and works extensively with the news media to expose the national family court crisis that is devastating millions of families. Before co-founding the Center, Kathleen founded her own boutique political PR firm, which worked with clients in the social justice, Native rights, and economic justice movements for 15 years.

Daniel Saunders, PhD  
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List of publications: <https://scholar.google.com/citations?hl=en&user=L5uCO3AAAAAJ>

Daniel Saunders, professor of social work, established one of the first intervention programs for men who batter and helped to establish crisis and advocacy programs for battered women in the 1970s. His research, teaching, and service center on the problems of dating and domestic violence. His specific studies focus on offender program evaluation, the traumatic effects of victimization, and the response of professionals and the public to dating and domestic violence. His research has been funded by the Centers for Disease Control, the National Institute of Mental Health, and the National Institute of Justice. In addition, he was awarded a Fulbright Scholars grant to conduct research at the Te Awatea Violence Research Centre, University of Canterbury, New Zealand. Professor Saunders' most recent projects involve an evaluation of supervised visitation programs for the children of battered women and a survey of child custody evaluators regarding their beliefs about domestic violence. Based on his publication record, a 2019 report listed him in the top 100 most influential contemporary social work faculty.

### **3. Legal Abuse - Litigation Abuse - Paper Abuse**

Susan Miller

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Paper Abuse: Documenting New Abuse Tactics- Legal Abuse Syndrome

Susan L. Miller is a Professor in the Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice at the University of Delaware. Her research interests include gender-based violence, justice-involved women, victims' rights, gender and criminal justice policy. She has published 10 books and many articles, mostly about gender and criminal justice policy, and articles about the intersection of victimization and offending among IPV survivors including a book, *Victims as offenders: The paradox of women's use of violence in relationships*. Dr. Miller's book, *After the crime: The power of restorative justice dialogues between victims and violent offenders*, won the national 2012 Outstanding Book Award presented by Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences. Dr. Miller's latest book, *Journeys: Resilience and growth for survivors of intimate partner abuse*, addresses resilience, growth, and self-efficacy of long-term survivors of intimate partner violence and abuse.

Dr. Miller's teaching focuses on gender and crime in a broad sense of the concept. Specifically, she regularly offers undergraduate courses such as Gender and Criminal Justice (cross-listed with the Women and Gender Studies Department; Social Justice in Film and Literature; Criminal Justice Policy; Crime Victims and Victims' Rights; a new course on Social and Restorative Justice; and a graduate seminar on gender, crime, and deviance. Dr. Miller studied at the University of Maryland (M.A., Ph.D.), and received her undergraduate degree at Rutgers University.

Peter Jaffe, PhD

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<https://www.ojp.gov/library/abstracts/understanding-womens-experiences-parenting-context-domestic-violence-implications>

Peter Jaffe is the Founding Director (1975-2001) and Special Advisor on Violence Prevention of the Centre for Children and Families in the Justice System of the London Family Court Clinic; member of the Clinical Adjunct Faculty for the Departments of Psychology and Psychiatry at the University of Western Ontario; former chair of the Board of Directors of the Battered Women's Advocacy Centre; and past Chairperson and a founding board member of the Board of Directors for the Centre for Research on Violence Against Women and Children. He gives presentations on violence and facilitates over 50 workshops a year for teachers, students, lawyers, judges, police, doctors, clergy and various community groups. Dr. Jaffe is the recipient of many awards and grants, author of numerous research articles, and co-author of four books dealing with children exposed to domestic violence.

## **5. Male Perpetrators of Violence Against Women**

Lundy Bancroft

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The Batterer as Parent

Why Does He Do That

Lundy Bancroft is an author, workshop leader, and consultant on domestic abuse and child maltreatment. His work focuses on three areas: Training professionals on best practices for intervening with male perpetrators of violence against women, toward the goal of promoting accountability and requiring change. Training professionals on the dynamics of emotional injury and recovery in children who are exposed to a man who abuses their mother, to prepare participants to offer the most effective and safe assistance possible to children and their mothers. Supporting healing and empowerment for abused women, with an emphasis on advocating for the human rights of mothers and their children

Barry Goldstein

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Barry Goldstein is a leading expert on Domestic Violence in the family court. He is the co-author with Elizabeth Liu of Representing the Domestic Violence Survivor REPRESENTING THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SURVIVOR, co editor with Mo Therese Hannah of DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, ABUSE and CHILD CUSTODY and author of SCARED TO LEAVE AFRAID TO STAY. He has been an instructor and supervisor in a NY Model Batterer Program since 1999. He was an attorney representing victims of domestic violence for 30 years. He now provides workshops, judicial and other trainings regarding domestic violence particularly related to custody issues. He also serves as a consultant and expert witness.

## **6. Protective Moms, Family Lawyers and DV Advocates Advocating for Family Court Reform - State by State**

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