

1100 Center Avenue
Conway, Pa. 15027
September 9, 1991

Thomas Caltagirone, Chairman
House of Representatives
Box 201
Capitol Building
Harrisburg, Pa. 17120-0028

ATTENTION: DAVID KRANTZ

Dear Mr. Krantz:

We are sending you some of the laws that were taken into the hearing I had on August 19, 1991. The hearing officer would not take these into consideration or recognize them.

He did not let me present all of them to him to fully prove my case. Also these are some of the complaints taken to the Court Administrator. As you can see, they speak for themselves. If you need any further information, please feel free to contact me at:

Martin Decanini
1100 Center Avenue
Conway, Pa. 15027
(412) 869-7787

Sincerely,

Martin Decanini
Martin Decanini

September 9, 1991

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Because it is a financial and physical impossibility to be here personally, please accept this letter in my behalf.

I am a divorced father who has since remarried and fathered a second family of two children. A little over a year ago I received a serious back injury at my job which has prevented me from working. This has reduced my total income to an impossible level which has drastically changed the standard of living for my family. I still have the same fixed financial obligations each month but not the same income to meet these obligations. I have gone from a \$14 an hour job to a \$310 disability check every two weeks, which will soon be running out. I have applied for Public Assistance to put food on our table. My ex-wife has also remarried. Both my ex-wife and her spouse are currently working. My ex-wife has the earning capacity of an electrician, which she has trained for and her spouse is working as a mechanic. I petitioned the court for a decrease in child support payments for my child to my previous marriage. My current wife and I prepared for this hearing by researching the laws in the law library. I went into this hearing with the laws I had researched and confidence. I came out feeling disrespected, belittled, stripped of all rights and self-worth. I wasn't allowed to fully prove my own case at this hearing. When my ex-wife deviated from the purpose of this hearing, I questioned this. The hearing officer, Mr. Begley, told me to shut up and let her continue. This happened several times. Every time my ex-wife said something, he said he would recognize it. When I showed him the laws I researched, he said he would look at them. I asked him to put in writing why he wasn't recognizing these laws, he said he didn't have to. When I asked for his supervisor, Dawn Johnson, to come in and monitor this hearing, my ex-wife asked if she could leave. Mr. Begley told her to go, saying "This hearing is over" and I was told to get out. This hearing lasted at best 15 minutes. When I protested the fairness of this hearing and asked to see Dawn Johnson, Mr. Begley told me that I couldn't see her.

Intimidating tactics such as calling four sheriff's deputies to escort me and my family out were used. This caused much emotional distress to my oldest daughter by my second marriage. These tactics are used regularly by the Domestic Relations Department of Beaver County and are unnecessary and uncalled for. I have since filed for exceptions to Mr. Begley's recommendations and am awaiting a hearing with the Judge. I feel the recommendations impose an unreasonable burden on me and adversely affects the children of my second marriage. Mr. Begley also stated I am in arrears and expected an additional \$5.00 payment towards these. I have been able to prove that I am not in arrears. I can't retain an attorney to represent me because of my current financial status. I have gone to Neighborhood Legal Services only to be turned away because of budget cuts. There is no legal representation available to me or other fathers in my position.

PAGE 2
MARTIN DECANINI

I feel the laws should be my representation but I find in the domestic relations hearings of Beaver County this is not so. The problem lies in the lack of recognition of equality during these hearings. I am a father who has accepted my financial responsibilities to my child assigned to me by the court for the past 14 years as records will show. I am temporarily disabled and asking for a temporary reduction in child support payments. Why aren't my pleas for help being heard? Why isn't equality under the law being recognized for fathers? All I am asking is to give my family the dignity of living on the income it's trying to survive on which is \$620.00 per month.

Martin Decanini

Martin Decanini
