

National Center for Policy Analysis
DAILY POLICY DIGEST
Friday, August 23, 2002

FATHERS FACE GENDER BIAS IN FAMILY COURTS

Fathers are far more likely than mothers to suffer gender bias in family courts. Once custody is lost, divorced dads are often at the mercy of both custodial mothers and family courts, say observers.

Among the problems faced by noncustodial dads are blocked or unenforced visitation orders. Uncorroborated accusations are also often used to deny fathers sole or shared custody. Often a custodial mother moves away in order to use geography as a means to distance her children from the father. In addition, rigid, often excessive child support payments and expensive legal fees often leave a father ill-prepared to fight for shared custody.

According to research:

- o Mothers represent 85 percent of all custodial parents.
- o A Stanford University study of divorced couples found mothers were granted full custody of children four times as often as fathers in contested custody cases.
- o An analysis of Virginia cases found 95 percent of custody battles are won by mothers.
- o Studies in Utah and Ohio found fathers seeking custody are successful only about 10 percent of the time.

Many experts think shared parenting is the solution to sole physical custody, which is the norm in the vast majority of cases. Shared parenting allows children to retain the ongoing emotional, physical and financial support of both parents.

Source: Dianna Thompson and Glenn Sacks, "Fathers Bear the Brunt of Gender Bias in Family Courts," Insight, August 19, 2002.

For more on Divorce <http://www.ncpa.org/iss/soc/>

National Center for Policy Analysis
"Making ideas change the world"
<http://www.ncpa.org>

This message is sent by us only to Policy Digest subscribers. If someone forwarded this message to you and you like what you see, please subscribe to this list.

To modify your subscription status, please visit:
<http://www.ncpa.org/subscrib.html>

If you have any problems or questions, please contact us at:
ncpa@ncpa.org

NCPA is a servicemark of the National Center for Policy Analysis. We are an independent public policy institute and are not affiliated with any other organization, trade association or corporation.