



**ASSEMBLY STANDING COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY  
ASSEMBLY STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL SERVICES  
ASSEMBLY STANDING COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING**

**SUBJECT:** The rights of children in court

**PURPOSE:** To examine the Court's role in custody, visitation and child support cases in New York.

**NEW YORK CITY**

Thursday, October 24, 2019, 10:00 a.m.  
Assembly Hearing Room 1923, 19th floor  
250 Broadway, New York, NY

**ORAL TESTIMONY BY INVITATION ONLY**

In recent years, there have been various discussions on ways to improve the New York Court System. One topic of discussion concerns ensuring the rights of children in court. This topic has been addressed in numerous ways, from bills restricting the use of restraints on children in the courtroom to groundbreaking legislation such as "Raise the Age". Consistent with the Assembly's determination to protect the rights of children, a hearing on the court's role in custody, visitation and child support cases is the first step to analyzing the current status of the system to learn where improvements can be made. Custody, visitation and child support cases require an analysis of what is in the best interest of a child. It is also important that those cases be completed in a timely manner. Advocates and litigants have pointed out that the current system does not comply with time requirements meant to protect the rights and serve the needs of children. Furthermore, the quality of training, the current use of forensic evaluations and the qualifications of those who decide what is in the best interest of the child are constant topics of dispute that require analysis and commentary from members of the public.

Persons invited to present pertinent testimony to the Committees at the above hearing should complete and return the enclosed reply form as soon as possible. It is important that the reply form be fully completed and returned so that persons may be notified in the event of emergency postponement or cancellation.

Oral testimony will be limited to five (5) minutes' duration. Witnesses are encouraged not to read their statements verbatim, but to instead summarize the key points raised therein. In preparing the order of witnesses, the Committees will attempt to accommodate individual requests to speak at particular times in view of special circumstances. These requests should be made on the attached reply form or communicated to Committee staff as early as possible.

Ten copies of any prepared testimony should be submitted at the hearing registration desk. The Committees would appreciate advance receipt of prepared statements.

In order to further publicize these hearings, please inform interested parties and organizations of the Committees' interest in receiving testimony from all sources.

In order to meet the needs of those who may have a disability, the Assembly, in accordance with its policy of non-discrimination on the basis of disability, as well as the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), has made its facilities and services available to all individuals with disabilities. For individuals with disabilities, accommodations will be provided, upon reasonable request, to afford such individuals access and admission to Assembly facilities and activities.

**Jeffrey Dinowitz**  
**Member of Assembly**  
**Chair**  
**Committee on Judiciary**

**Andrew Hevesi**  
**Member of Assembly**  
**Chair**  
**Committee on Social Services**

**Ellen C. Jaffee**  
**Member of Assembly**  
**Chair**  
**Committee on Children and Families**

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HEARING REPLY FORM

Persons invited to present testimony at the public hearing on the rights of children in court are requested to complete this reply form and mail, email or fax it to:

Kerry Mierzwa  
Counsel  
Assembly Committee on Judiciary  
New York State Capitol – Room 513  
Albany, New York 12248  
Email: Mierzwak@nyassembly.gov  
Phone: (518) 455-4313  
Fax: (518) 455-7250

- I plan to attend the following public hearing on the rights of children in court to be conducted on October 24, 2019.
- I have been invited to testify at the hearing. My statement will be limited to five (5) minutes, and I will answer any questions which may arise. I will provide ten copies of my prepared statement.
- I will address my remarks to the following subjects:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- I do not plan to attend the above hearing.
- I would like to be added to the Committees' mailing lists for notices and reports.
- I would like to be removed from the Committees' mailing lists.
- I will require assistance and/or handicapped accessibility information. **Please specify the type of assistance required:**  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

TITLE: \_\_\_\_\_

ORGANIZATION: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

FAX TELEPHONE: \_\_\_\_\_