

FACTS members memo from Adele:

May 14, 2017

At our last meeting I suggested that we all send letters to the persons listed below, in order to emphasize our concern about the lack of Electronic Recordings in Family Court. Some can be emailed. Others have to be written and stamped for regular mail. Here is an example of something you can work with:

By allowing judges to determine whether or not electronic recordings are to be made in Family Court, and since most decide not to, these courtrooms are thereby ignoring the rights of our citizens to a fair and unbiased hearing. The constitution states that everyone is entitled to a juried trial. In family court, there are no juries and usually no one in the audience to witness what happens there, thereby making electronic recordings necessary to the rules of justice.

Family court hearings can be recorded, but only at the judge's discretion. According to our observations during 14 years of court watching, most family court judges choose not to record, and are thereby denying many impoverished litigants the right to a fair and impartial hearing and/or appeal. The use of court reporters is extremely expensive, as are the transcripts, and many pro se and even lawyered litigants can't afford them. Yet without them an appeal is not possible. All courtrooms including Family Courts should have mandatory electronic recordings that are made available to litigants at a nominal cost.

Mandatory Court recordings persons and addresses:

Barbara L Dawicke, Court Administrator, County Courthouse, WPB, Fl. 33401 -355-2431 561-355-2431,

Honorable Chief Justice Colbath “ ”

Honorable Laurel Moore Lee, Family Law Rules Committee Chair, Florida Bar, 651E. Jefferson St. Tallahassee, Fl. 32399, 850-561-5600,

Joyce A. Conway, Manager, PBC Clerk & Comptroller, Family Division, P.O. Box 3597, WPB Fl. 44302

Sharon Bock, PBC Clerk & Comptroller, Main Courthouse, 205 N. Dixie Highway, WPB Fl. 33401 – 561-355-6511

Mikalla Davis, FL. BAR, Attn'y Liason-Rules, 850-561-5663, mdavis@floridabar.org

Hampton Peterson, Executive Office, Legal Counsel & Ethics, 301 N. Olive Ave. WPB Fl. 33401, 561-355-1640, hpeterson@mypalmbeachclerk.com

Gabrielle Tollok, Fl. BAR Family Law Div., 651 E. Jefferson St. Tallahassee, Fl. 32399