

FOLLOW-UP PETITION AND PUBLIC NOTICE

Stop Harming Our Children. Period.

Prepared July 2026 | Follow-up to the public petition on the weaponization of time against Maine's children

Core petition statement: When the State knows children are being harmed by delay, coercion, and alienation, and turns a blind eye, it becomes complicit in the harm.

Notice

To the People of Maine, the Maine Legislature, the Governor, the Maine Judicial Branch, the Board of Overseers of the Bar, DHHS/OCFS, law enforcement, prosecutors, the press, and every officeholder who claims to serve the public:

Grow the hell up.

The people of this state do not need one more cycle of childish political theater, cheap shots, hollow talking points, procedural games, or institutional self-protection from people entrusted with public power.

This is a follow-up petition and public notice. The prior petition warned that time is being weaponized against Maine's children. This notice adds the point the political class keeps refusing to face: the damage being tolerated now will surface 10, 20, and 30 years from now in the next generations. [1]

Stop harming our children. Period.

This Is About the Next Generations

This is not about last year's rates, or the year before. This is about what today's failures are setting in motion 10, 20, and 30 years from now.

Childhood trauma does not stay in childhood. The CDC states that adverse childhood experiences can have long-term negative impacts on health, opportunity, and well-being. CDC examples include violence, abuse, neglect, household substance-use problems, household mental-health problems, instability due to parental separation, and household incarceration. [2]

CDC further explains that toxic stress from ACEs can change brain development and affect how the body responds to stress, and that ACEs are linked to chronic health problems, mental illness, and substance misuse in adulthood. [2]

That is the point. If the state keeps allowing children to be loaded with instability, coercive dynamics, chronic stress, litigation fatigue, and prolonged parent-child rupture, the state is not merely failing them today. It is seeding future public-health, public-safety, and family-collapse costs that will be paid by the next generations.

The Evidence Is Not Subtle

In CDC's 2023 national youth data, preventing ACEs was associated with estimated reductions of 89.4% for attempted suicide, 85.4% for seriously considering suicide, 84.3% for current prescription opioid misuse, and 65.2% for carrying a weapon at school. [3]

NIH reported in 2024 that people exposed to high childhood adversity were more likely than those with low childhood adversity to die by suicide or substance use in middle adulthood. NIH also reported that family instability was associated with a 92% higher likelihood of death by suicide and a 50% higher likelihood of death from substance use, while poverty combined with parental separation was associated with an 85% higher likelihood of death from substance use. [4]

The National Institute of Justice states that child abuse and neglect increase the risk of later antisocial behavior, violence perpetration, and crime in adulthood. In the Lehigh Longitudinal Study summarized by NIJ, abuse measured when children were 18 months to 6 years old was linked to self-reported criminal involvement three decades later. [5]

So spare the public the comforting lie that these are isolated private family matters with no larger social cost. The empirical record says otherwise. The bill comes due later. It comes due in suicide risk, addiction risk, overdose vulnerability, violence, criminal-system contact, incarceration, broken trust, broken families, and another generation asked to survive what adults refused to stop.

Alienation, Coercive Control, and State Complicity

When selfish, morally underdeveloped adults weaponize the state's systems through delay, coercive control, intimidation, and prolonged parent-child alienating conduct, that is not an abstract procedural problem. It is harm. It is abuse.

Maine law now defines abuse in the protection-from-abuse framework to include compelling a person by force, threat of force, coercion, or intimidation either to engage in conduct from which the person has a right to abstain or to abstain from conduct in which the person has a right to engage. [6]

Maine law also states that, except when a court determines that a child's best interests would not be served, it is the public policy of this State to assure minor children of frequent and continuing contact with both parents after separation and to encourage parents to share child-rearing rights and responsibilities. [7]

The terminology around 'parental alienation' remains contested in some legal and clinical settings. This petition does not depend on a diagnostic label. It depends on documented conduct and child impact. Recent research on parental alienating behaviors reported significant correlations between exposure to those behaviors and increased parental rejection, reduced parental acceptance, and elevated symptoms of PTSD, depression, and suicidal ideation. The study notes that further longitudinal research is needed to establish directionality, but the associations are too serious for courts and lawmakers to ignore. [8]

A 2022 qualitative study likewise concluded that exposure to parental alienating behaviors in childhood can have a profound impact on mental health later in life. [9]

That means the state no longer has the luxury of ignorance. When the state knows what childhood trauma does, knows what coercive control is, knows parent-child contact is public policy unless contrary to best interests, and still turns a blind eye while delay and alienation damage children, the state becomes complicit in it.

The Political Class Is Still Performing

While this evidence sits in plain view, Maine public life keeps drifting back into the same tired narratives: party conflict, campaign spectacle, officeholder self-preservation, and media horse-race coverage. Even child-welfare oversight can be consumed by procedural maneuvering.

In April 2026, a bipartisan child-welfare oversight bill died when the Legislature adjourned after both chambers had earlier passed it. WGME reported that the bill would have allowed members of the Government Oversight Committee to access certain confidential records when investigating deaths of children in the state's welfare system. [10]

That is exactly the failure pattern: the system knows children are being harmed, knows oversight is needed, knows transparency matters, and still allows political process to swallow urgency.

Why should the people of Maine tolerate one more year of this? Why should children bear the cost of adults who cannot work with urgency? Why should families keep paying for the vanity, cowardice, delay, and professional self-protection of officeholders and institutions that refuse to confront the damage they are helping preserve?

Who Profits From Failure

And who profits from systemic failure? Not the children. Not the parents who lose years they can never get back. Not the families financially, emotionally, and psychologically bled dry while process drags on.

Too often, the people least exposed to the harm are the ones still getting paid, still protected, still campaigning, still billing, still publishing statements, still managing appearances, and still treating generational damage like background noise.

Lawyers can rack up billable hours while families are drained by a broken family-court process. Politicians can use child welfare as a campaign talking point while refusing to reform legal ethics or hold the judicial system accountable. Media can cover the partisan horse race while structural neglect remains buried beneath the spectacle.

That is not public service. That is a failure economy. Children are being converted into collateral damage while adults with titles protect their own lanes.

Notice to Public Officers and Judicial Officers

Public office is not a stage for ego. A robe is not a shield from criticism. A law license is not proof of moral seriousness. A title does not convert delay into wisdom.

If you hold office, act like it. If you wear a robe, act like it. If you claim to serve the public, stop protecting appearances while families absorb the damage.

Delay is not neutral. Cowardice is not neutral. Institutional arrogance is not neutral. In child-impact matters, these things do damage.

If current officeholders cannot or will not confront family-court delay, coercive control, parental alienating conduct, youth trauma, addiction exposure, and child-welfare failures with urgency, transparency, and enforceable reform, they should be lawfully removed, replaced, or voted out as fast as the system permits.

Petition Demands

This follow-up petition demands public hearings and immediate reform work addressing: (1) family-court delay as child-impact harm; (2) coercive control and post-separation abuse in child-related cases; (3) parent-child contact implementation failures; (4) attorney conduct that turns delay into leverage; (5) judicial delay, ambiguity, and non-enforcement; (6) transcript, filing, and record-access barriers that make review theoretical; (7) data reporting on continuances, implementation failures, enforcement delays, and child-contact deprivation; and (8) independent review of state complicity when institutions turn a blind eye to conduct that harms children.

Every child-impact order should contain concrete implementation logistics: communication platform, time windows, exchange responsibility, record access, medical/school authorization access, enforcement deadlines, and a fast review mechanism. A child-related order that technically grants rights but functionally leaves implementation to the side benefiting from delay is structurally defective.

Every continuance, non-enforcement decision, or delayed review in a child-impact matter should require explicit child-impact findings. If a court delays, it should say what harm the delay risks and why that risk is justified. Silence should no longer be allowed to disguise harm.

Every legal-ethics system should treat intentional or reckless delay, nonresponse, ambiguity exploitation, and obstruction of child-related implementation as potential professional misconduct when those tactics foreseeably harm children or parent-child relationships.

Closing

This is not about preserving egos. It is not about protecting offices. It is not about keeping the same broken people in the same broken rooms repeating the same broken script.

It is about whether Maine has enough adults left in public life to govern, judge, legislate, and practice law like the lives of children and families actually matter.

They do.

The harm is real. The research is real. The law is real. The delay is real. The next-generation consequences are foreseeable.

Stop harming our children. Period.

Source and Scope Note

This petition is an advocacy document, not legal advice and not a clinical diagnosis. It does not claim that every child exposed to adversity will develop the listed harms. It states the evidence-supported public-health point: when childhood adversity is allowed to accumulate across a population, the risk of later suicide, addiction, overdose, violence, justice-system contact, and adult death rises.

The petition uses 'parental alienating conduct' and 'parental alienating behaviors' as conduct descriptions, not as a dependency on any contested diagnostic label. The point is conduct, child impact, and institutional responsibility.

Sources

[1] **Prior petition/open-letter baseline.** Justin Tahai, 'The Weaponization of Time Against Maine's Children - Citizen Petition for Legislative Investigation and Public Hearings' (LinkedIn, June 2026).

<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/weaponization-time-against-maines-children-citizen-petition-tahai-ar5gc/>

[2] **CDC ACEs overview.** CDC, 'About Adverse Childhood Experiences,' updated Mar. 2, 2026. CDC identifies ACE examples including abuse, violence, neglect, household substance-use problems, household mental-health problems, instability due to parental separation, and household incarceration; CDC also describes toxic stress and long-term health effects.

<https://www.cdc.gov/aces/about/index.html>

[3] **CDC Youth Risk Behavior Survey 2023.** Swedo et al., CDC MMWR, 'Adverse Childhood Experiences and Health Conditions and Risk Behaviors Among High School Students - Youth Risk Behavior Survey, United States, 2023' (2024).

<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/73/su/su7304a5.htm>

[4] **NIH/NICHD mortality update.** NIH NICHD Science Update, 'Childhood adversity linked with higher risk of premature death by suicide and substance use in adulthood, NIH study suggests' (Nov. 7, 2024).

<https://www.nichd.nih.gov/newsroom/news/110724-childhood-adversity-higher-risk-premature-death>

[5] **National Institute of Justice.** NIJ, 'Pathways Between Child Maltreatment and Adult Criminal Involvement' (Oct. 11, 2017), summarizing NIJ-funded Lehigh Longitudinal Study findings. <https://nij.ojp.gov/topics/articles/pathways-between-child-maltreatment-and-adult-criminal-involvement>

[6] **Maine abuse definition.** Maine Revised Statutes, Title 19-A, Section 4102, defining abuse to include specified coercion or intimidation conduct. <https://legislature.maine.gov/statutes/19-a/title19-Asec4102.html>

[7] **Maine parental rights and responsibilities.** Maine Revised Statutes, Title 19-A, Section 1653, legislative findings and best-interest factors for parental rights and responsibilities, including public policy supporting frequent and continuing contact with both parents unless contrary to best interests. <https://legislature.maine.gov/statutes/19-a/title19-Asec1653.html>

[8] **Parental alienating behaviors study.** Hine et al., 'Prevalence and impact of parental alienating behaviors (PABs) in adults aged 18-25 in the United Kingdom,' *Frontiers in Public Health* (2026). <https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/public-health/articles/10.3389/fpubh.2026.1803173/full>

[9] **Parental alienating behaviors mental-health impact.** Verhaar, Matthewson & Bentley, 'The Impact of Parental Alienating Behaviours on the Mental Health of Adults Alienated in Childhood,' *Children* (2022).

<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC9026878/>

[10] **Maine child-welfare oversight bill.** WGME Staff, 'Lawmakers kill child welfare reform bill as legislature adjourns' (Apr. 29, 2026; updated Apr. 30, 2026). <https://wgme.com/news/local/lawmakers-kill-child-welfare-reform-bill-as-legislature-adjourns>