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**JUSTICE FOR CHILDREN WARNING: DON'T FALL FOR DISCREDITED
"PARENTAL ALIENATION SYNDROME DAY"**

(Houston, TX) – Justice for Children, one of the country’s leading child advocacy organizations, issued a warning to all 50 Governors and state legislatures against the latest attempt to legitimize a dangerous pseudoscientific theory by designating April 25th as “Parental Alienation Syndrome Awareness Day.” Judges, prosecutors, psychologists and child advocates have offered nearly unanimously agreement that parental alienation syndrome is “junk science” and a red herring argument used by abusive parents.

“Parental alienations syndrome has been debunked, disproven and discredited by every major group and association involved with child abuse cases,” said Tom Burton, General Counsel of Justice for Children. “Even with nearly unanimous agreement, defense attorneys continue to propagate this bogus theory in order to protect abusive parents.”

Seventeen US states have issued proclamations honoring April 25th as “Parental Alienation Awareness Day.” This year, PAS radicals have targeted Texas Governor Rick Perry with an online petition. Child advocates like Justice for Children warn that such honorary proclamations give dangerous legal legitimacy to this debunked pseudoscientific theory.

The Children’s Protection Alliance shares the story of Alanna Krause on its website.

“Finally, one day my father threw me into a stone wall at school and a teacher called Child Protective Services. He’s never said as much, but my father panicked. He had worked so hard to build a delicate set of lies and twisted truths to present himself as the well-meaning parent whose “unstable” ex-wife had given his troubled daughter “alienating parent syndrome,” resulting in abuse “delusions.” The truth was his worst fear.”

The public can learn more about parental alienation syndrome from the attached fact sheet or by visiting the Justice for Children website at www.justiceforchildren.org.

For over two decades, Justice for Children has been the country’s leading voice for abused and neglected children. JFC provides free legal support for abused children, sponsors legislation to increase children’s right, and exposes the systemic failures of bureaucratic child welfare agencies.

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Parental Alienation Syndrome: Debunked, Disproven and Dangerous Theory
Abusive Parents Commonly Use PAS to Shift Attention Away from their Abusive Actions

National District Attorneys Association: Parental Alienation Syndrome is “Unproven Theory That Can Threaten the Safety of Abused Children”

“PAS is an unproven theory that can threaten the integrity of the criminal justice system and the safety of abused children. It is not capable of lending itself to hard data or inclusion in the forthcoming DSM-V. In short, PAS is an untested theory that, unchallenged, can have far-reaching consequences for children seeking protection and legal vindication in courts of law. Prosecutors and other child abuse professionals should educate themselves, their colleagues and clients when confronting PAS in the legal realm.” (Source: National District Attorneys Association, Update - Volume 16, Number 6 & 7, 2003 “Parental Alienation Syndrome: What Professionals Need to Know”)

Parental Alienation Syndrome: “Unscientific Piece of Garbage,” “Not Research Based” & “A Great Injustice to the Family”

“Probably the most unscientific piece of garbage I’ve seen in the field in all my time. To base social policy on something as flimsy as this is exceedingly dangerous. PAS is not research-based, and it has done a great injustice to the family and the justice system. The criteria that Dr. Gardner has developed are virtually useless. He operates on the premise that if you say a lie often enough, people will believe it.” (Source: Dr. Jon Conte, a psychologist at the University of Washington, “Has Psychiatry Gone Psycho” April 26, 1999, Insight on the News)

Past President of American Psychiatric Association: “Junk Science Used Nationwide by Batters as a Courtroom Tactic to Silence Abused Children”

“Parental Alienation Syndrome has been used nationwide by batterers as a courtroom tactic to silence abused children by attempting to discredit their disclosures of abuse. This theory is not recognized as valid by the American Psychological Association, the American Psychiatric Association, or the American Medical Association. Parental Alienation Syndrome is not accepted as a psychiatric diagnosis, and has been rejected by the mainstream psychological community. Parental Alienation Syndrome is junk science; there is no valid research or empirical data to support this unproven theory.” (Source: Dr. Paul J. Fink, past president of the American Psychiatric Association, and Hon. Sol Gothard, retired judge and former faculty member for the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, Los Angeles Daily Journal, November 1, 2005)

Presidential Task Force on Violence and the Family: Parental Alienation Can Be Used by Violent Parent Against Victim

“Noting that custody and visitation disputes appear to occur more frequently when there is a history of domestic violence. Family courts often do not consider the history of violence between the parents in making custody and visitation decisions. In this context, the nonviolent parent may be at a disadvantage, and behavior that would seem reasonable as a protection from

abuse may be misinterpreted as a sign of instability. Psychological evaluators not trained in domestic violence may contribute to this process by ignoring or minimizing the violence and by giving inappropriate pathological labels to women's responses to chronic victimization. Terms such as 'parental alienation' may be used to blame the women for the children's reasonable fear or anger toward their violent father." (Source: American Psychological Association, "Report of the APA Presidential Task Force on Violence and the Family" 1996)

National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges: Parental Alienation Syndrome “Discredited by Scientific Community,” Should Be “Inadmissible in Court” & “Diverts Attention Away from the Behaviors of the Abusive Parent”

“The theory positing the existence of "PAS" has been discredited by the scientific community. In *Kumho Tire v. Carmichael*, 526 U.S. 137 (1999), the Supreme Court ruled that even expert testimony based in the "soft sciences" must meet the standard set in the *Daubert* case. "Parental Alienation Syndrome" does not pass this test. Any testimony that a party to a custody case suffers from the syndrome or "parental alienation" should therefore be ruled inadmissible. The discredited "diagnosis" of "PAS" (or allegation of "parental alienation"), quite apart from its scientific invalidity, inappropriately asks the court to assume that the children's behaviors and attitudes toward the parent who claims to be "alienated" have no grounding in reality. It also diverts attention away from the behaviors of the abusive parent, who may have directly influenced the children's responses by acting in violent, disrespectful, intimidating, humiliating and/or discrediting ways toward the children themselves, or the children's other parent..”

(Source: National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges. (2006). *Navigating Custody & Visitation Evaluations in Cases with Domestic Violence: A Judge’s Guide*, 2nd edition Page 24)

Professor of Pediatrics and Child Abuse Expert: Parental Alienation Syndrome is an “Atrocious Theory with No Science to Back It Up”

“Dr. Eli Newberger, a Harvard University Assistant Professor of Pediatrics, states, “This [parental alienation syndrome] is an atrocious theory with no science to back it up.” Harvard's Dr. Eli Newberger, an assistant professor of pediatrics and an expert on child abuse, said he's been called on by state child protection agencies to evaluate ambiguous disclosures of abuse in divorce cases and believes that PAS deflects any real investigation into such allegations.”

(Source: *Talan, J. Richard Gardner and Parental Alienation Syndrome: In Death, Can He Survive? Psychiatrist Richard Gardner’s theory Used by Parents in Child Custody Battles Gained Prominence -- And Critics. Newsday, 07/01/03.*)

American Medical Association Does Not Recognize Parental Alienation Syndrome

“PAS is not listed in the American Psychiatric Association’s Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM) as a psychiatric disorder and is not recognized as a valid medical syndrome by the American Medical Association, or the American Psychological Association.” (Source: *Dr. Jon Conte, a psychologist at the University of Washington, “Has Psychiatry Gone Psycho” April 26, 1999, Insight on the News*)