

Boulder City Council Alters Parents' Legal Status from Guardians to Companions

Written by Matt Eroftime
Wednesday, 25 July 2012

In what legal scholars are calling a "bold move," the Boulder City Council voted 7-2 on Monday evening to change the city's municipal code so it will now refer to parents as the companions of their children instead of guardians.

The change of parental classification from guardians to companions of their children will have far-reaching consequences. As part of the new ordinance, if parents refuse to give their children money when asked by them, they can face up to six months in the county jail and a \$500 fine.



Boulder City Council Member Tim Plass stated at Monday night's meeting, "By passing this law, we are altering the master/servant relationship between parents and children that has prevailed for far too long in this community."

In response to Plass' comments, Randall Farkin, a Boulder parent critical of the proposed change, stated, "Master/servant relationship, are you on drugs? 99.8% percent of the children in this community are already spoiled little shits, my own children included. All you are doing is giving the inmates control over the asylum. "

In response to such criticism, Susan Anders, president of Defense of Children (CDA), an advocacy group based out of San Francisco and a driving force behind the new law, stated, "Let's be real about this. It is not like any parent in Boulder has any actual control over their children anyway. It is a well-known fact that by the time children in this community are old enough to talk; their parents are already trying to ingratiate themselves as their child's best friend. By the time they are teenagers, the children dictate virtually every decision the family

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makes."

One Boulder mother of two high-school-aged children agreed with Ms. Katz, stating, "I spend most of my weekdays driving my kids to wherever they tell me they need to go. Then, on the weekends, all they do is demand money so they can go do whatever it is they do. When I ask why they need \$500 for 'the movies,' they just roll their eyes. It's the same response when I find them at home with their friends drinking and shooting-up heroin. All this law does is codify the reality we have been living in for the past 15 years."

Anders believes that the change in parental status to companions represents a gradual shift away from child abuse and exploitation embedded in much of our culture.

"The idea is to shift the paradigm, to alter the mindset of people and society," she says. "As parents start to view their children not as something they need to protect, educate and help guide their challenges of life, but as life companions to have fun and party with, the next generation will grow up not viewing children as property available for exploitation."

In Anders' view, this will hopefully begin a massive cultural consciousness shift that will result in America's children being less self-centered, entitled and spoiled brats. "If the past 30 years has taught us anything, it is that the more we empower and befriend our children, the more successful they are as adults."

Yet not all Boulder parents share Anders' optimism about the effects of the law change. One Boulder father who asked to remain anonymous, because he feared ostracism from other Boulder parents, stated, "This is patently the most cockamamie piece of legislation ever passed by the Boulder City Council. It is hard enough trying to raise semi-normal and well-adjusted children in this town without giving them complete legal authority to disregard everything we say. What is the City Council going to do next? Make a law determining that I am companion of my pet dog?"

Anders quickly pointed out that Boulder City Council passed an ordinance in 2000 which changed the status of a pet owner from guardian to companion.