



Children's Advocacy Institute
University of San Diego School of Law

2023
Annual Report



2023 CAI Annual Report

This annual report covers the activities of the Children’s Advocacy Institute (CAI) between January 1, 2023 and December 31, 2023.

CAI is part of the nonprofit University of San Diego School of Law. Contributions to CAI are tax-deductible to the extent the law allows.

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Table of Contents

2	History and Purpose
3	Executive Director’s Message
6	Academic Program Highlights
8	Advocacy & Public Education Highlights
8	<i>Protecting Federal Benefits for Foster Youth</i>
11	<i>Protecting the Financial Futures of Foster Youth</i>
11	<i>Promoting Social Media Corporate Responsibility for Children</i>
13	<i>Protecting Postsecondary Student Consumers</i>
14	<i>Enhancing Family Finding Efforts for Foster Children</i>
15	<i>Ensuring Meaningful Services for Parents in Child Welfare Cases</i>
16	<i>Stopping the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children</i>
16	<i>Child Maltreatment and Gun Violence: Intersections and Interventions</i>
17	<i>Protecting a Child’s Right to Assert Constitutional Claims When Abused by Public School Officials</i>
18	<i>Championing a Child’s Right to Counsel</i>
18	<i>Eliminating Child Abuse and Neglect Fatalities and Near Fatalities</i>
19	Leadership, Collaboration, & Special Projects
21	Funders
23	CAI Council for Children
24	CAI Team
24	Photo Credits
25	Help CAI Help Kids



History and Purpose

In 1989, Professor Robert C. Fellmeth founded the Children's Advocacy Institute (CAI) as part of the Center for Public Interest Law at the University of San Diego (USD) School of Law. In 2021, the Center for Public Interest Law was renamed the Consumer Protection Policy Center (CPPC), and CPPC, CAI, and the Energy Policy Initiatives Center (EPIC) are now all part of the Centers for Public Interest Law (CPIL).

Staffed by experienced attorneys and advocates, and assisted by USD law students, CAI works to improve the status and well-being of children and youth. CAI engages in the academic and clinical training of law students in child advocacy, conducts research into child related issues, and provides public education about the status of children and of the performance of the state to advance their interests. CAI also engages in direct advocacy before courts, agencies, and legislatures to seek leveraged results for the benefit of children and youth. All of these functions are carried out from its offices in San Diego, Sacramento, and Washington, D.C. **CAI is the only child advocacy group operating at a law school, in a state capital, and in our nation's capital.** That presence has grown in importance as organized interests, with a focus on relatively narrow and short-term self-benefit, increasingly dominate public policy.

CAI is advised by the **Council for Children**, a panel of distinguished community, state, and national leaders who share a vision to improve the quality of life for children. CAI functions under the aegis of the University of San Diego, its Board of Trustees and management, and its School of Law.

CAI's academic program is funded by USD and includes the first faculty chair endowment established at the USD School of Law. In 1990, San Diego philanthropists Sol and Helen Price funded the **Price Chair in Public Interest Law**; the first and current holder of the Price Chair is Professor Robert C. Fellmeth, who serves as CAI's Executive Director. The chair endowment and USD funds committed pursuant to that agreement finance the course and clinic academic programs of both CPPC and CAI.

In 2014, the USD School of Law was pleased to establish the **Fellmeth-Peterson Faculty Chair in Child Rights**, which will assure the continuation of CAI as an educational part of USD and, hopefully, as a state, national—and perhaps someday, international—advocate for children. The chair is named in honor of Robert B. Fellmeth (father of CAI Executive Director Robert C. Fellmeth), and Paul Peterson, a longstanding supporter and inspiration for CAI from its beginning over 30 years ago. Nationally renowned child advocate (and CAI alumna) Jessica Heldman holds the Chair, serving as Fellmeth-Peterson Associate Professor in Child Rights.

Although its academic component has dedicated funding sources, **CAI must raise 100% of the funding to support its advocacy program each year, and does so from external sources such as gifts, grants, attorneys' fees, cy pres awards, etc.**



Executive Director's Message

The Children's Advocacy Institute (CAI) continues its operations within the Centers for Public Interest Law (CPIL), along with the Consumer Protection Policy Center (CPPC) and the Energy Policy Initiative Center (EPIC). Through our academic program, we have taught over 2,000 law students over the last 40 years. Those students are a special legacy we treasure, with the Juvenile Court Presiding Judge and leading Family Court judges in San Diego and Las Vegas among our graduates — in addition to countless others who pursued careers in public interest law and public service, and those who lend their legal skills to supporting vulnerable populations through pro bono work, and about whom we are so proud. Our research and advocacy component has uniquely focused on using the law to leverage change in our three substantive areas.

CAI's most recent work is presented in this 2023 Annual Report, which highlights many of our major campaigns and programs. I will single out one of those projects that has gained momentum at an unprecedented pace — our efforts to end the outrageous embezzlement of millions of dollars in federal benefits (*e.g.*, Social Security SSI (disability) payments and survivor benefits) belonging to children in foster care. These children warrant special attention and protection because we have made them *our* children — literally. Their legal parent is a state court judge, and every major decision about their lives and prospects rests with us. And we are not doing right by them.

After leaving foster care, these young people have tenuous prospects for adulthood. Our nation's median age of self-sufficiency is 26, not 18 or even 21. Young adults with no foster care history benefit greatly from parental and familial support and guidance during their transitional years. However, former foster youth typically lack such safety nets. And their fate in terms of poverty, unemployment, homelessness, et al. is a national scandal and shame.

A particularly vulnerable segment of youth in foster care — those with qualifying disabilities and/or those who have lost one or more of their parents — are eligible for the federal benefits mentioned above. These funds are entirely separate and apart from those provided by the state and federal government for their care. If properly managed on their behalf, such as in a

trust or special account, these benefits could help these young people bridge the transitional gap and allow them to achieve stability, safety, and well-being. They would have the means to rent an apartment, get reliable transportation that would help them get and keep a job, pursue higher education, and/or obtain a computer and other modern necessities.



But do you know what happens to the funds belonging to these youth? For several decades now, most state or county foster care agencies have been identifying foster youth eligible for such benefits and then applying to the Social Security Administration to serve as their representative payee. A necessary role where minor beneficiaries are involved, the representative payee is entrusted to receive, manage, use, or conserve the beneficiaries' funds in the child's best interest. But what do these agencies do when appointed to receive these benefits? They steal the funds and use them to reimburse themselves for the cost of foster care. In other words, they make these children pay for their own care. The funds never reach the children for whom they are legally intended. And most of these youth don't even know what's going on behind their backs because most jurisdictions don't require the agencies to notify the children, their parents, their attorneys, the Juvenile Court — or anybody who might intervene and try to get a different representative payee appointed.

I know this recount sounds unlikely, but it is the truth. But thanks to the work of CAI, led by our National Policy Director Amy Harfeld, it is starting to change here and across the nation. Several states and local jurisdictions have enacted legislation to end or curb this practice, and dozens more are somewhere in the reform process. CAI is also addressing this issue at the federal level, urging Congress and the relevant administrative agencies to clarify and enforce current law. And there's much more to this campaign of ours. Jessica Heldman, Fellmeth-Peterson Associate Professor in Child Rights, is leading a San Diego-based lawsuit challenging this practice, and Melanie Delgado, Senior Staff Attorney, led work on a 50-state report card illustrating to what extent each state's laws and policies allow or prohibit such takings. Here in California, CAI's Ed Howard helped put a bill on the Governor's desk after it received unanimous legislative support — but Governor Newsom vetoed it. To be sure, the state is facing a severe deficit, but that should not be used as an excuse to continue to embezzle millions of dollars from foster children. If his decision is not reversed, it will constitute a condemnatory act of child neglect in extremis and undermine his reputation and legacy.



CAI's vital work on this campaign, and some of our other highlights from 2023, are discussed in more detail in this Report.

Our work is as vital as ever, and as difficult as ever. To close out my message, I would like to present a short op-ed I wrote that was published in *The Messenger* on July 28, 2023; it provides insights into one of the primary challenges we face as child advocates.

Most human violence and misery is attributable to a single flaw deep within the human species: group allegiance. We formulate “packs,” or groupings, and then elevate their respective importance with lies and self-praise, and then seek domination of — or even the complete elimination of — perceived rival packs.

The appeal of group loyalty and commitment to one's own pack is the root cause of most evil that humans perpetuate on each other, if not on the world and its future altogether. These group identities exist in varied forms — with nation obeisance the most severe. Here, we create extreme allegiance, and sometimes a hatred of a substantial number of our counterparts elsewhere as well. But nations are not the only such grouping.

First, consider religion. Most religions are not founded on notions of discrimination against (or cruel treatment of) alternative theories of creation. The originators of the Muslim faith, or those of Buddhism, Hinduism, Christianity or Judaism, did not advocate intolerance and cruelty to others — whatever the involved grouping. Jesus of Nazareth hardly focused on the denigration of other moral leaders, or on cruelty to anyone. Most leaders and founders of religions internationally were similarly open-minded about the name-labeling and allegiance of those they sought to teach. The categorical rejection of any grouping based on religious ties is hardly part of sacred practice.

A second human pack-grouping is race or ethnicity. There may be differences between the many ethnic variations of humanity, but DNA technology indicates they are not overwhelming. There is far more commonality among ethnic variations than there are differences. But human packism has taken a large toll in irrationally distinguishing among them. As with racism traditionally, the distinctions are most often the result of disadvantages suffered from financial or weaponry advantages of one group vis-à-vis others, with exaggerated and sometimes libelous labeling used to justify the victimization of others.

Third, consider gangs. Stimulated by societal rejection, poverty and uncertain paths to success, such packs form and then engage in criminal and violent behavior — especially with regard to other gangs. These are groupings where “machismo” is transcendent and where those exercising cruelty to others can often involve people similar in age and ethnicity.

Fourth, sexual orientation. Some persons identify with a gender different from the one they were assigned at birth or have an attraction to their own. Assuming these preferences are not imposed forcefully, why do we care? There is simply no reason. The escalating culture wars and contempt for “woke” culture (whatever that means) underlines this manifestation of human evil. Certainly, such choices are best not imposed by others. They’re also best not mandated by the state — which has many more relevant duties to occupy time and resources.

Fifth are the nation-states mentioned above. This may be the most severe, irrational and damaging packism of all.

The laudable relative tradition of America is its diversity and its relative tolerance for packs outside our own. Our strength is very much that diversity; it allows us to maximize our performance without visiting war and death upon the many ethnic, religious, and other packs within our borders. Pride in our rejection of packist obeisance and of inter-pack hostility properly manifests our proudest virtue.

Professor Robert C. Fellmeth

*Price Professor of Public Interest Law, University of San Diego School of Law
Executive Director, Children's Advocacy Institute*



Academic Program Highlights

General Overview. One of CAI’s primary responsibilities is to educate the next generation of child advocates. The USD School of Law is honored to have been endowed with the Fellmeth-Peterson Faculty Chair in Child Rights, which will assure the continuation of CAI as an educational part of USD and as an effective advocate for children. The chair is named in honor of Robert B. Fellmeth (father of CAI Executive Director Robert C. Fellmeth) and Paul Peterson, a longstanding supporter and inspiration for CAI from its beginning over 30 years ago. CAI is honored to have USD School of Law and CAI alumna Jessica Heldman serve as the Fellmeth-Peterson Associate Professor in Child Rights.

CAI’s teaching of Child Rights and Remedies has been a fixture of the USD School of Law for over three decades. The treatise for the course is also called *Child Rights and Remedies*, co-written by Prof. Fellmeth and Prof. Heldman (who taught the course in Fall 2023). Now in its 4th edition, the text is being considered for possible adoption and use by dozens of professors at law schools across the nation; we hope to see widespread adoption of it as a text in the near future.

Child Rights and Remedies is taught as a traditional lecture and discussion course, utilizing role play to help students develop their critical thinking skills. The course is supplemented by CAI’s Child Advocacy Clinic, which provides three unique clinical opportunities for our law students. Our Dependency and Youth Justice clinics are court-based clinics that allow our students to serve as counsel in Juvenile Court proceedings under the supervision of practicing attorneys. Students obtain certification from the State Bar through its Practical Training of Law Students program, allowing them to do the work of a practicing attorney — introduce evidence, perform direct and cross examination of witnesses, draft and argue motions, and much more. We also offer a Policy Clinic in which law students work with CAI staff on various real-world policy advocacy projects, including legislative and regulatory advocacy, test litigation, and researching and drafting reports.

Because of the interest in and importance of CAI’s classes and clinics, the USD School of Law has designated “Child Rights” as a concentration that can be placed on the law school graduation diploma if students take a minimum number of units in our academic program and related offerings. An increasing number of law students are applying to the Law School seeking this concentration. Over the past six years, over 20 USD Law students have graduated with this distinction, demonstrating their commitment to this educational focus.



Law students who graduated from our programs inspired us to create and expand our inspirational “Changemaker Wall.” Featured in our conference room, this display features numerous CAI graduates now working as child advocates in different respects. We anticipate this number will steadily grow over the next few years, as an increasing number of USD Law School applicants explicitly mention CAI as a reason for attending this school.

2023 Academic Highlights. In May 2023, CAI recognized three graduating law students for their ex-

ceptional work on behalf of children and youth. CAI presented the 2023 James A. D’Angelo Outstanding Child Advocate Award to Stella Gerson, Mackenzie McCoy, and Jadwyn Parrish. These students participated in CAI’s Child Advocacy Clinic and engaged in other child advocacy opportunities in which they protected and promoted the rights and interests of countless children and youth. These passionate, dynamic, and effective individuals will undoubtedly lead the next generation of child advocates.



(L-R) Stella Gerson, Jadwyn Parrish, Prof. Jessica Heldman, Mackenzie McCoy

Also in May 2023, CAI presented the 2023 Joel and Denise Golden Merit Award in Child Advocacy to Kelsey Castanho. This award is presented annually to a second-year law student who has already started to use their developing legal skills to benefit system-involved children. Soon after starting law school, Kelsey joined the student organization Advocates for Children and Education, volunteering for the Representatives for Youth in Academic Affairs program, through which she provides special education advocacy for youth involved with the San Diego County Juvenile Court. This experience put her on the path of pursuing special education law, where she will continue advocating for vulnerable low-income students in San Diego County.

In Spring 2023, CAI welcomed 14 students to its Youth Law course, and in Fall 2023, CAI welcomed 28 students to its Child Rights & Remedies class. Over the course of the calendar year, 19 students participated in CAI’s various clinical offerings.

Pre-Law Internships. During 2023, CAI provided Pre-Law Internships to an impressive group of undergraduates from universities such as USD, Stanford, UCLA, Boston College, and SDSU. Interns worked with CAI staff to support several of our ongoing campaigns and projects. CAI offers these internships to upper-division undergraduates considering a legal education to introduce them to public interest careers they can pursue in the legal profession, and specifically to the child advocacy opportunities uniquely offered by USD School of Law.

Advocacy & Public Education Highlights

PROTECTING FEDERAL BENEFITS FOR FOSTER YOUTH

Much of CAI's 2023 advocacy in support of transition-age foster youth focused on efforts to protect foster youths' federal benefits, such as Social Security Disability (SSI) and Survivor (OASDI) benefits, from diversion by state or county foster care agencies. Regrettably, although these benefits belong to the youth and are required to be spent or conserved pursuant to their best interests, agencies routinely use these funds to reimburse themselves for the youth's cost of foster care. Funds that could be used to provide critical resources or services to a disabled foster youth or conserved for their use during the difficult transition to self-sufficiency are being taken and used to pay a debt these children do not owe, while compromising their chances to have stability and become self-sufficient after leaving care.

During 2023, and with funding from the Walter S. Johnson Foundation, the Partnership for America's Children, the May and Stanley Smith Charitable Trust, the Blavin Family Fund, and others, CAI was able to significantly expand its multifaceted national campaign to inform the public, policymakers, and advocates how to protect and promote the proper use of funds and assets belonging to youth in foster care, both on an individual basis and through systemic policy reform. Led by CAI's Amy Harfeld, this project is aimed at prohibiting foster care agencies from intercepting children's federal benefits and using them to reimburse themselves for the cost of foster care and ensuring the funds are used as intended — to pay for current unmet needs of the youth and/or be conserved to address their future needs. This effort continued to involve several fronts and activities, including the following:

California Legislation. Based on CAI's sustained leadership and advocacy on this issue, an impressive coalition of child advocacy organizations joined us in 2023 to co-sponsor legislation to prohibit this practice in California. Among other things, [AB 1512 \(Bryan\)](#) would have required counties to ensure that a foster child's benefits are not used to pay for, or to reimburse the placing agency for, any costs of the child's care; and would have required the placing agency to promptly notify the child, the child's attorney, and the child's parents or guardians, of any application for benefits administered by the federal SSA made by the agency on the child's behalf.

AB 1512 was California's chance to join other ground-breaking states in acknowledging that this practice is wrong and must be stopped. The bill did not get a single "no" vote from legislators. The bill did involve a cost, since counties would no longer be able to steal the money of abused and neglected children to balance their books. Despite the fact that this money belongs to the children, not the state, Governor Newsom vetoed it based on the state's budget deficit. However, CAI and its fellow bill champions committed to revisiting the issue in 2024, and are now co-sponsoring [AB 2906 \(Bryan\)](#), which would require, when a county serves as the representative payee for a foster youth receiving federal Social Security survivors benefits, to ensure that their benefits are not used to pay for, or to reimburse the county for, any costs of the child's care and supervision, and would require counties to notify the child, their attorney, and parents or guardians, if an application for survivors' benefits has been made on the child's behalf. At this writing, AB 2906 has passed out of the Assembly and is pending in the Senate.



Congressional Advocacy. Knowing that federal legislation could end this practice once and for all across the nation, CAI has been advocating for such action for almost two decades. In 2007, Rep. Pete Stark (D-CA) introduced the Foster Children Self-Support Act, which would have, among other things, banned the use of federal benefits paid to representative payees on behalf of foster children to reimburse foster care maintenance payments by states. However, this bill was not enacted. Since then, Rep. Danny Davis (D-IL) has introduced similar legislation, the Protecting Foster Youth Resources to Promote Self-Sufficiency Act, in 2016, 2018, and 2022. These bills were not enacted, and CAI spent much of 2023 ensuring that a new iteration of this measure will be introduced in 2024.

National Report Card. In 2023, CAI compiled extensive state-specific data and related information regarding the practice of foster care agencies intercepting and diverting federal benefits belonging to eligible foster youth. Specifically, CAI researched, analyzed, and graded the laws and policies of all states and the District of Columbia. It included its findings in a report expected to be released in Spring 2024. CAI's Melanie Delgado and Elisa Weichel, together with CAI consultant Emily Reinig and several CAI law students, led efforts to analyze state information and draft this much needed report.

Collaboration with Lived Experience Advocates. CAI works with foster youth lived experience advisors and practitioners who have worked on their behalf, who are willing to share about the impact of this troubling practice. This effort has revealed disturbing and compelling narratives that help bring life to this issue for policymakers, the media, and the public. The lived experience advisors we have connected with have played critical roles in formulating our priorities and advancing this advocacy.

Education, Training, and Collaboration. CAI educates and trains stakeholder communities in California and across the country on best practices to preserve the benefits of foster youth, as well as ways to advocate for the protection of their assets. We identified dozens of contacts around the country who are working to protect the assets of foster youth or are interested in doing so; this extensive list of contacts includes advocacy and direct service organizations, state and federal legislators and legislative staff, dependency attorneys, judicial officers, social workers, CASAs, disability advocates, and more. CAI provided education, training, and technical assistance in over a dozen states in 2023.

Resources and Referrals. In response to the deluge of requests for information, legislative updates, and best practices from advocates, policymakers, media, and other stakeholder groups, CAI's Katie Gonzalez continued to develop our [comprehensive website](#) for this campaign. This site includes an overview of the issue; applicable federal law and policies; comprehensive media coverage; quotes from impacted youth; federal, state, and local reform efforts; practice and self-help tools; policy advocacy tools; and litigation and case planning information.





Public Education. CAI National Policy Director Amy Harfeld is regarded as the leading authority on this issue, and our staff is constantly interacting with media from across the nation, having been interviewed and quoted by, and supplied background info to, several media outlets, including NPR, CBS, the Imprint, CalMatters, and numerous local news organizations.

Executive Branch Advocacy. CAI has met with the White House officials several times, requesting assistance and support in advancing administrative and legislative policy reform on this issue. CAI has also engaged in extensive direct administrative advocacy on this issue, particularly with two key federal agencies — the Social Security Administration (SSA) and the Administration for Children and Families (ACF). We persistently urged SSA and ACF to take meaningful administrative action to prohibit states from using foster children's federal benefits in a manner contrary to their best interests, and provided extensive proposed rule and policy changes, with lived experience advisors leading many of our calls. We have held multiple meetings, and provided extensive proposed language for the requested reforms.

Technical Assistance. CAI leads and supports efforts to propel action on this issue within California

and nationwide, providing technical assistance to advocates and policymakers in dozens of states and cities. In addition to our work in California, CAI has contributed to efforts in Alaska, Arizona, Connecticut, Hawaii, Illinois, Colorado, Massachusetts, Vermont, Minnesota, Nebraska, New Jersey, New Mexico, Oregon, Texas, Vermont, Washington, as well as Los Angeles, Philadelphia, New York City, and the District of Columbia.

Litigation. CAI is also attacking this issue through litigation. In 2023, the Children's Advocacy Institute, along with pro bono co-counsel Sheppard, Mullin, Richter & Hampton LLP, filed a lawsuit against San Diego County Child Welfare Services (CWS) on behalf of two former foster children who were entitled to \$25,000 in Social Security Survivor benefits after the death of their father. The lawsuit alleges that while serving as representative payee, CWS improperly used the children's benefits in a manner violating federal and state law, in violation of the County's fiduciary duties, and contrary to the children's best interests. Also during 2023, the Alaska Supreme Court heard oral arguments in litigation challenging this practice; CAI is participating as an amicus in that proceeding. It is anticipated that the court's opinion may take one to three years to be issued.

PROTECTING THE FINANCIAL FUTURES OF FOSTER YOUTH

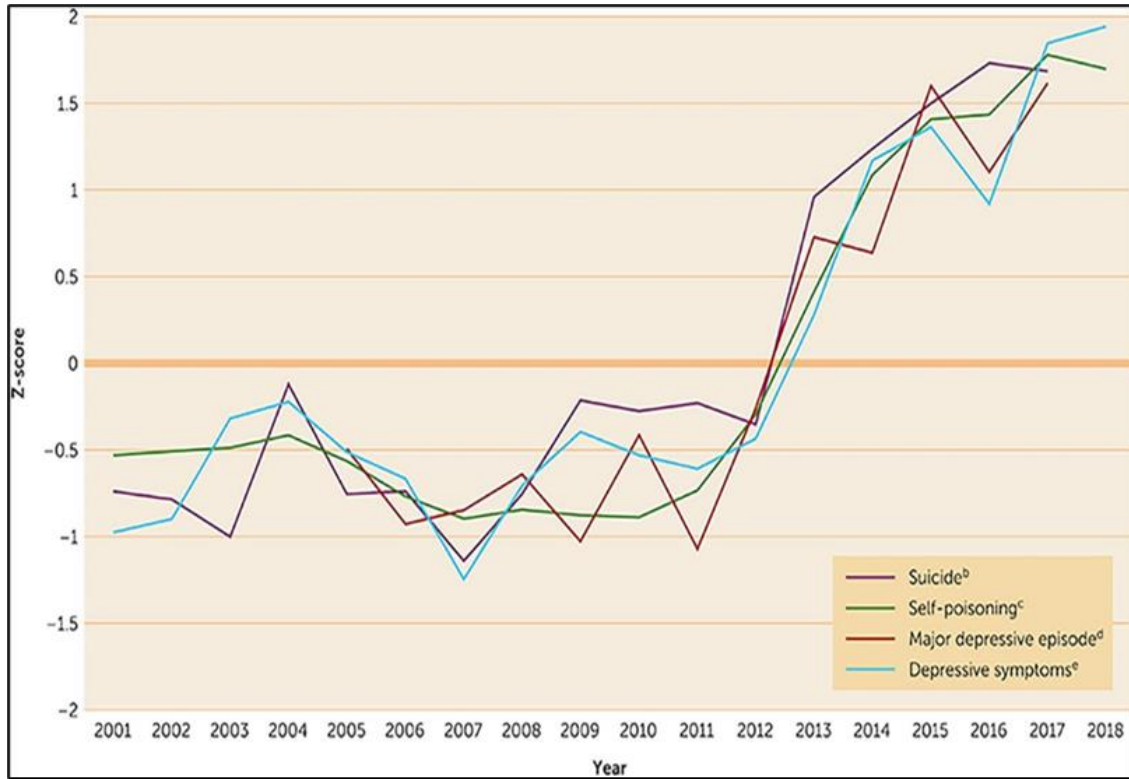
During 2023, CAI continued its efforts to help protect current and former foster youth from identity theft and other financial perils. Following up on its 2022 county-wide inventory, interviews, and related research to determine what resources and assistance exist to help foster youth deal with identity theft and related issues, in 2023, CAI helped draft legislation to address this issue head on. Specifically, CAI helped draft [AB 2935 \(Maienschein\)](#), which was introduced in early 2024. Co-sponsored by CAI, the bill would require a credit reporting agency (CRA) to block and stop reporting information on a foster youth's credit report if such information is shown to exist following a specified inquiry and requires CRAs to automatically lift a security freeze when a foster youth turns 18. At this writing, AB 2935 has passed out of the Assembly and is pending in the Senate.

In addition, CAI successfully instigated an investigation by the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) at the federal Administration for Children and Youth (ACYF) on ACYF's shortcoming in meaningfully overseeing or enforcing the provisions of the Child and Family Services Improvement and Innovation Act and the Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act. These laws require states to conduct annual credit checks for children aged 14 or older in foster care and to help these children interpret and resolve any inaccuracies identified in credit reports. With a surge in reports of identity theft, CAI is concerned that credit checks and the resolution of credit reports may not be occurring as required by federal law. CAI brought this to the attention of OIG and as a result, an investigation was opened. The results are expected to be released in 2024.



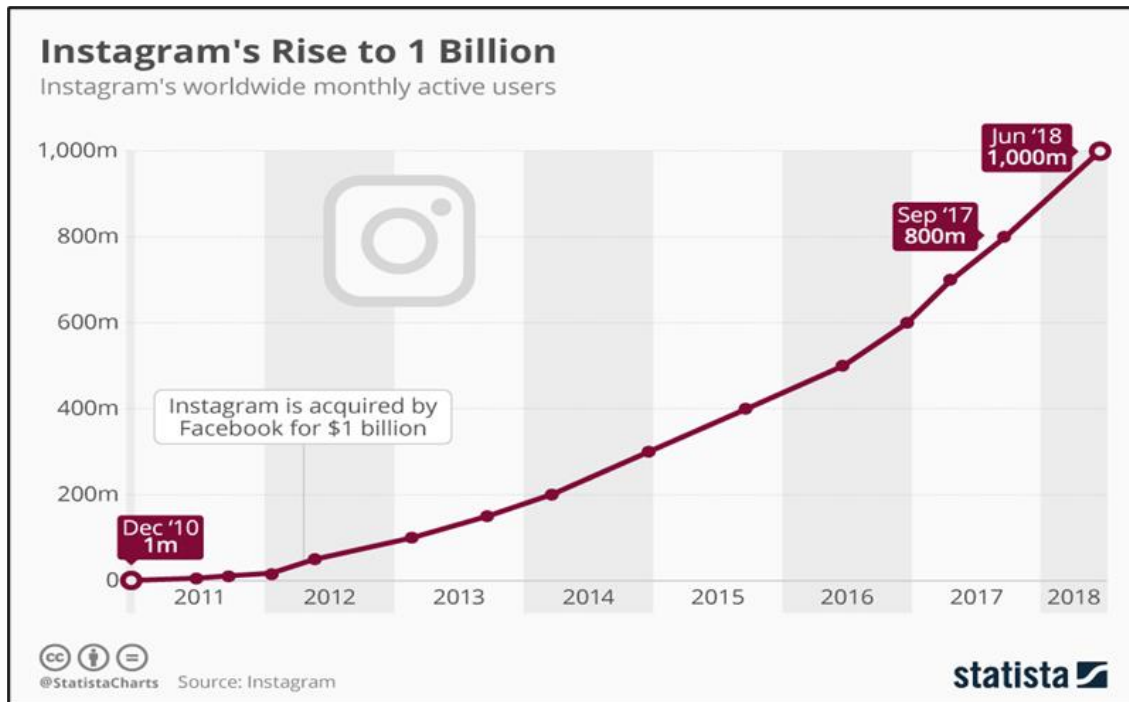
PROMOTING SOCIAL MEDIA CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY FOR CHILDREN

In 2023, CAI continued to lead state efforts in California and nationally to prevent three corporations – Meta, Snap, and TikTok -- worth billions from knowingly damaging an entire generation of children mentally, emotionally, and physically. Suicides, child sex trafficking and abuse, bullying, death from drugs laced with fentanyl, eating disorders, etc., all recently spiked in ways never seen before. The spike perfectly coincided with the sharp and dramatic rise in the use of social media by children. Everyone from the Surgeon General to President Biden, to GOP leaders, to research scientists, to medical professionals, to the Facebook whistleblower sharing disclosures from Facebook itself, all agree that social media practices that use neuroscience, and the use of AI to keep children's eyes online as long as possible to see as many ads as possible, are in significant part to blame. The following two charts tell the story:



INCREASES IN DEPRESSION, SELF-HARM, AND SUICIDE AMONG U.S. ADOLESCENTS
Indicators of poor mental health among U.S. girls and young women, 2001–2018 (pre-COVID-19)

This never-before-seen spike in suicides among teen girls has occurred during this exact same time frame as the following:



INSTAGRAM'S WORLDWIDE MONTHLY ACTIVE USERS
2011–2018

CAI's legislative and related publicity efforts to protect children from the harms of social media have directly led to the enactment of two landmark bills, one in Utah addressing social media addiction, and the other in California — CAI-co-sponsored [AB 1394](#) by child-champion Assemblymember Buffy Wicks, a first-in-the-nation law addressing social media's documented and utterly repugnant role in knowingly facilitating sex trafficking and abuse of children. Indirectly, CAI's efforts have led to the California Legislature broadly and ambitiously taking up this generationally-urgent cause, with the result being that ever more and ever more ambitious bills are being introduced and passing with bi-partisan support, and fury.

While California has enacted several important bills like AB 1394, many other ambitious bills have died. However, governors in many states have championed or signed social media reform bills mirroring CAI's efforts to hold platforms broadly accountable

for profiting from addiction, eating disorders, death from fentanyl, suicide, and sex trafficking and abuse.

California's most wide-ranging law addressing child privacy, the Age-Appropriate Design Code Act, has been enjoined, and CAI helped author an amicus curie brief from child advocacy groups seeking reversal in the Ninth Circuit.

The litigation tide is turning, however. Two California courts have recently and persuasively rejected Big Tech's efforts to have cases pressing negligence-based, personal injury claims against the platforms thrown out of court. The state court trial judges have allowed these claims to proceed to discovery, where far more reform-driving evidence will likely be revealed. So, too, has a federal district court permitted discovery on a host of consolidated claims. And appellate courts across the nation are more than ever before refusing to entirely dismiss lawsuits pressed by Big Tech against reform laws and personal injury lawsuits.

PROTECTING POSTSECONDARY STUDENT CONSUMERS

CAI, together with the USD School of Law's Consumer Protection Policy Center and Veterans Legal Clinic (collectively referred to as the USD Team), has engaged in significant state and federal public education and policy reform efforts over the last decade to protect vulnerable student consumers — including foster system-involved youth and veterans — from unfair and predatory tactics by the private for-private postsecondary industry. Highlights of our 2023 efforts include the following:

Monitoring and Participating in CSAAVE's Implementation of 2022's AB 1731 (Davies). This CAI co-sponsored 2022 bill requires the California State Approving Agency for Veterans Education (CSAAVE) to gather specific information to determine whether an education business should be entrusted with a veteran's future and hard-won, one-time benefits (Ch. 380, Stat. of 2022). Specifically, the bill required CSAAVE, on or before January 1, 2024, to establish regulations requiring postsecondary educational institutions to provide specified information to CSAAVE as part of an application for approval or renewal. In September 2023, CSAAVE issued its notice of proposed rulemaking, and in October 2023, CAI's Ed Howard led the USD Team in drafting extensive comments responding to the proposed regulations. In addition to laying out the substantial background and legislative intent underlying AB 1731 and providing various technical suggestions, CAI provided numerous substantive comments that would strengthen, clarify, and protect the regulations from potential legal challenges. In November 2023, CSAAVE issued modifications to its proposed regulatory package, incorporating substantially all of the USD Team's suggestions. At this writing, the regulations await review and approval by the Office of Administrative Law.

BPPE. CAI continued to monitor the Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education (BPPE), theoretically one of the strongest state-based regulatory entities given its statutory authority. Among other things, CAI's Melanie Delgado continues to serve on the BPPE Advisory Committee as one of its three Consumer Advocate members; the Committee examines BPPE's oversight functions and operational policies, advises with respect to matters relating to private postsecondary education, and provides assistance as may be requested by the Bureau. Also, CAI's Ed Howard continued in his role as a trusted behind-the-scenes advisor to DCA leaders who oversee BPPE, especially on matters regarding the BPPE's funding—a critical facet of whether it can fulfill its function.

ENHANCING FAMILY FINDING EFFORTS FOR FOSTER CHILDREN

In December 2023, CAI released [*No Family for the Holidays in Sacramento*](#), an investigative report documenting how Sacramento County lags far behind almost all major California counties in placing foster children with family members. The report notes that both federal and state law recognize that kinship care is preferable for children needing out-of-home placements, rather than placement with strangers. In California, kinship care includes relatives and non-relative extended family members (NREFMs, which are adult caregivers with an established familial or mentoring relationship with the child).

Aside from returning a child safely to the care of their parents, perhaps the best thing we can do for foster children is place them with relatives or NREFMs. All the outcome data show foster children do far better when placed with familiar families rather than with strangers.

Thus, California law repeatedly instructs counties and the California Department of Social Services to strive to place children with relatives or NREFMs. It also tasks county social workers with making required efforts to identify and locate any relatives or NREFMs of the child, to determine whether they are willing and able to take custody of the child on a temporary or, if parental rights are ultimately terminated,

permanent basis. However, according to the Berkeley California Child Welfare Indicators Project, as of July 1, 2023, just 32.7% of California foster children were placed with a relative or NREFM. Regrettably, Sacramento County—where our state laws are executed, passed, and overseen—has a kinship care placement rate of just 18.5%, the worst among the state’s major counties.

Highlighting the fact that with the laws being the same throughout all of California’s counties, and with family devotion to their child relatives being the same throughout all of California’s counties, the broad disparity between how successfully counties abide by state family placement mandates means both (i) the better performing counties and the poorer performing ones are not sharing best practices and (ii) there is insufficient attention paid to this issue at the county leadership level.

The report concluded that in the shadow of the State Capitol, we are failing our children. “No child should be apart from family, especially during the holidays,” said CAI Senior Counsel Ed Howard, who, with USD law student Ashley Baadsgaard, authored this report. “As we celebrate with our loved ones, let’s all please take a silent moment of thought and prayer for those children living in our state’s capital,

surrounded by powerful people who could help them, who we have failed; who in this time of joy are children who feel deeply unloved, abandoned, and, horribly, all alone.”

CAI’s report was featured in extensive coverage by [*KCRA 3 in Sacramento*](#), and led to the 2024 introduction of [*AB 3217 \(Bryan\)*](#), which would require each county to annually review data comparing the statewide average rate of foster youth placed with relatives, for comparison with the county’s placement rate; require the county welfare director, if a county’s rate is less than the statewide average, to communicate with counties with the highest placement rates to compare best practices; and require, if a county has a rate of placing children with relatives below the statewide average, the board of supervisors to include the topic for discussion on the agenda of a board meeting. At this writing, AB 3217 passed out of the Assembly with no “no” votes and is pending in the Senate.





ENSURING MEANINGFUL SERVICES FOR PARENTS IN CHILD WELFARE CASES

In late 2023, CAI was instrumental in efforts to draft legislation to ensure that parents involved in the child welfare services system are receiving meaningful help while they attempt to reunify with their children. In child welfare judicial proceedings, troubled parents are offered services to help them reunify with their children. Drug and alcohol problems? The parents will be offered counseling. Neglect? The parents will be offered parenting instruction. Violence? The parent will be offered anger management counseling.

The way it works in most cases, if a parent successfully finishes their services, their child will be sent home. If they don't, the child will be placed into foster care. In other words, families live or die, and the safety of children, entirely depend on these services working.

In early 2024, the [Los Angeles Times](#) issued a bombshell, first-in-the-nation report that was based upon and which verified CAI Senior Counsel Ed Howard's research revealing that, in the words of *The Times*:

“The state does not ensure that parent education programs [in dependency proceedings] meet any sort of standards, allows parents facing abuse allegations to take classes that experts have deemed low quality, and cannot provide research evidence for half the programs listed in a state-funded database meant to act as a key tool for local officials to ensure child safety.”

As Ed is quoted as saying, “[i]f nobody actually knows or is checking if these services are meeting any sort of base line, then the premise of our entire system is just one big question mark. At best, there’s an arbitrariness to the programs, and at worst, there’s no quality assurance.”

Introduced in early 2024, CAI-sponsored [AB 3145 \(Bryan\)](#) would require every service provider to have documented success at avoiding out-of-home placement or reducing the length of stay in out-of-home placement; require each service provider's outcomes at the time of the initial selection, and no less than every three years thereafter, to be reviewed; and prevent counties from deeming their programs to be successful if, in more than a third of cases, children returned home are again involved in the system in less than one year. At this writing, AB 3145 has passed out of the Assembly with no “no” votes and is pending in the Senate.



STOPPING THE COMMERCIAL SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN

During 2023, CAI's Jessica Heldman and Melanie Delgado completed their work with the Robert F. Kennedy National Resource Center for Juvenile Justice to provide technical assistance to Clark County, Nevada. Among other things, CAI provided on-site and off-site consultation and guidance in support of the County's Dual Status Youth CSEC Project, providing expert advisement and materials review as the County develops new policies and protocols to better serve exploited youth involved in the child welfare and youth justice systems.

CHILD MALTREATMENT AND GUN VIOLENCE: INTERSECTIONS AND INTERVENTIONS

In 2023, with the support of Hope and Heal Fund (a project of New Venture Fund), CAI launched a new project to research and produce a white paper presenting data and findings regarding the intersection of gun violence and child maltreatment and experiences in foster care. The report will provide a foundation for the development of strategies to reduce gun violence through interventions directed at this subset of individuals. CAI's Jessica Heldman and Melanie Delgado are conducting a comprehensive analysis of the potential link between experiencing maltreatment and foster care as

a child and gun violence later in life. CAI is in the process of identifying, reviewing, and documenting existing research exploring the potential link between gun violence (including self-harm and harming others) and an individual's history of abuse or neglect and experience within the foster care system.

The CAI team and law student researchers will expand upon any existing research by investigating questions such as how experiences of abuse, neglect, and trauma in childhood impact the manifestation of physical violence; whether particular types of

child maltreatment (e.g., physical abuse, exposure to domestic violence, abandonment, etc.) have a stronger association with later violence, specifically gun violence, as an adult; whether specific experiences within the foster care system correlate with increased risk of violence and self-harm, specifically using firearms; whether and why there is a disparate impact on communities of color; whether a correlation exists between an individual's access to firearms and a history of child maltreatment and foster care.

In addition to examining intersections, the CAI team will be identifying appropriate gun violence prevention interventions that have been applied to high-risk groups, to explore the potential impact such interventions might have for maltreated youth. In addition, the white paper will explore the role child welfare agencies and child abuse prevention programs could play in reducing gun violence among foster youth.



PROTECTING A CHILD'S RIGHT TO ASSERT CONSTITUTIONAL CLAIMS WHEN ABUSED BY PUBLIC SCHOOL OFFICIALS

In November 2023, CAI joined several other child advocacy organizations in asking the U.S. Supreme Court to grant certiorari in *S.B. v. Jefferson Parish School Board*, No. 23-440, and overrule Fifth Circuit precedent that precludes children in Texas, Mississippi, and Louisiana from asserting constitutional claims for physical abuse or excessive corporal punishment by public school officials. The case at bar involved a nonverbal girl with autism who was slapped by two different aides (neither of whom were disciplined) out of their anger and frustration in dealing with expected behaviors stemming from her autism.

As the amicus brief argued, the devastating real-world consequences of the Fifth Circuit's refusal to allow children to vindicate their federal constitutional right to be free from physical violence at the hands of public school officials are shockingly evident: half of all reported instances of corporal punishment in the United States occur in that circuit. Notably, the Fifth Circuit—and only the Fifth Circuit—refuses to protect the constitutional rights of vulnerable children. Under the Fifth Circuit's precedent, federal constitutional remedies are not available to child victims of physical violence perpetrated by public school employees if a state remedy is available.

Allowing school officials to inflict physical harm on public school children as a disciplinary measure, without recourse to federal courts, undermines the constitutional rights of children who are living in the Fifth Circuit. Amici urged the Supreme Court to grant certiorari and bring the Fifth Circuit into line with every other circuit court of appeals by holding that the U.S. Constitution protects the right of all public school students—wherever they may live—to be free from physical abuse inflicted by teachers and school staff, regardless of the availability of state remedies.

Regrettably, the U.S. Supreme Court denied certiorari on Jan. 8, 2024.

ELIMINATING CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT FATALITIES AND NEAR FATALITIES

Federal Advocacy. Although efforts to reauthorize the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act, including important new provisions regarding child abuse fatality prevention, fizzled out at the end of 2022, CAI worked diligently in 2023 to maintain conversations about revisiting this important reauthorization.

State Advocacy. CAI continued to raise awareness and support for strengthening and enforcing states' public disclosure requirements regarding child abuse and neglect fatalities and near fatalities; improve transparency and accountability within child welfare systems; and enhance the oversight and enforcement of child protection and child welfare laws. For example, CAI followed up on its efforts to enact 2022's [AB 2660 \(Maienschein\)](#), which would have required each county to establish an interagency child death review team, and to develop and adopt a protocol that may be used as a guideline by persons performing autopsies on children to assist coroners in the identification of child abuse or neglect; Governor Gavin Newsom vetoed AB 2660, citing possible costs. In 2023, CAI sponsored [AB 253 \(Maienschein\)](#), which

would have required the Attorney General to submit an annual budget that is sufficient to fund the State Child Death Review Council and to fund county child death review teams. CAI's Ed Howard worked tirelessly to address the concerns of Governor Newsom by requiring that the AG (currently responsible for leading the statewide team) simply include an amount in the office's budget request, which would start a necessary discussion about what such costs would be, are they reasonable, and how we might be able to reduce them. Regrettably, AB 253 was held in the Suspense File of the Assembly Appropriations Committee, where it died without a public vote.

Expertise and Technical Assistance. CAI continued to provide technical assistance to advocates seeking to improve individual state's public disclosure policies and practices regarding child abuse and neglect fatalities and near fatalities. For example, CAI's Amy Harfeld continued to serve as a resource for advocates in New Mexico and Maine on state and federal mandates regarding the public disclosure of child abuse and neglect deaths and near deaths.

CHAMPIONING A CHILD'S RIGHT TO COUNSEL



CAI continued to partner in advocacy across the country to advance a right to counsel for children in abuse and neglect proceedings. Right to counsel bills were advanced in New Hampshire, Florida, and Missouri. In addition, CAI played an active role in advancing federal policy to provide funding for civil legal representation for children and families in or at risk of entering the foster care system. This could include representation related to immigration, housing, or securing public benefits such as Social Security. CAI submitted public comments and a final rule will be released in 2024.

Leadership, Collaboration, & Special Projects

Promoting the Replication of Successful Child-Related Legislation. In 2023, CAI continued to populate its online repository of model state statutes covering a wide variety of issue areas related to children (child welfare, juvenile justice, education, health, etc.). The [Child Advocacy Bill Exchange](#) website provides easy access to examples of important legislation that can be referenced and replicated by advocates across the country. The website includes both the text of these provisions and the evidence supporting the laws, ideally providing the opportunity for national dissemination of policies that can be replicated in numerous state legislatures. This project was undertaken in conjunction with the new Policy Committee of the Partnership for America's Children (PAC). The website was developed with the help of a tireless and talented volunteer, Das Narayanadas.

Collaboration and Leadership. CAI continued to participate in the governance of major national and regional organizations, including Public Citizen, First Star, the Maternal and Child Health Access Foundation, and the National Association of Counsel for Children, where CAI's Amy Harfeld currently serves on the Board and the Policy Committee. This year, CAI's Jessica Heldman became a member of the Advisory Board for the new Innovation Center for Youth Justice at James Madison University.

We have continued as active members of the National Child Abuse Coalition, the National Mental Health and Child Welfare Coalition, the Coalition for Juvenile Justice, the Child Tax Credit Coalition, the Families Over Facilities collaborative, the Transition Age Foster Youth National Coalition, and the California Coalition for the Safety of Children's Health (CCSCH), headed by CAI's former policy advocate Steve Barrow.

CAI also continues to work closely with the Partnership for America's Children (PAC), where CAI's Bob Fellmeth previously served on the Board, as counsel, and as Chair of its Policy Committee. In 2024, CAI will ask new PAC Executive Director Marquita Little Numan to communicate to all members the availability of the model statute web site co-sponsored by CAI and PAC (<https://childadvocacyexchange.org/>). This will allow PAC members to replicate the models where feasible and to help add more model statutes to the site. Similarly, CAI is sharing with PAC members the pleadings in our case against the taking of foster child benefits due from Social Security monies due explicitly to them (discussed above).

Honoring Outstanding Child-Related Journalism. The [Price Child Health and Welfare Journalism Awards](#), administered by CAI since 1992, recognize excellence in journalism—specifically, significant stories, series, or bodies of work that advance the understanding of, and enhance public discourse on, child health and well-being issues, including but not limited to health, health care reform, child nutrition, child safety, child poverty, child care, education, child abuse, foster care, former foster youth, juvenile justice, and children with special needs. The recipient(s) of the 2023–24 awards will be announced in mid-2024.



Convening California's Child Advocates. In 2023, CAI's Melanie Delgado convened and chaired four meetings of our [Children's Advocates Roundtable](#), allowing members to share their policy priorities for the year and featuring timely and helpful discussions on a variety of child- and youth-related topics. With limited exceptions, Roundtable meetings are recorded and made available for viewing on CAI's website. Topics featured at CAI's 2023 Roundtable meetings included the following:

The March 2023 Roundtable featured *Policy Advocacy in a Difficult Budget Environment*, presented by Christian Griffith, Chief Consultant of the California Assembly Committee on Budget; *Social Media Bills: Creating Liability for Social Media Companies that Facilitate Harm to Children*, presented by Ed Howard, CAI's Senior Policy Advocate; *Preserving SSI and Veteran's Benefits for Foster Youth*, presented by Sabrina Forte, Director of Policy & Impact Litigation for the Alliance for Children's Rights; *Improving College Access for Students Facing the Greatest Barriers*, presented by Sarah Pauter, Senior Project Manager, Education, for John Burton Advocates for Youth; and *Child Care Rate Reform and Transitional Kindergarten*, presented by Stacy Lee, Chief Learning Officer and Senior Managing Director, Early Childhood, for Children Now.

The June 2023 Roundtable featured *Social Media Advocacy: Effectively Leveraging Social Media to Advocate for Policy Change*, presented by Nick Mirman, Partner, Cunningham Mirman Public Affairs; *California Budget Update and Outlook*, presented by Monica Saucedo, Senior Policy Analyst, and Laura Pryor, Senior Policy Fellow, California Budget And Policy Center; and *The Future of Juvenile Justice in California*, presented by Frankie Guzman, Senior Director Youth Justice Team, National Center For Youth

Law, Brian Richart, Chief Probation Officer, El Dorado County Probation Department, and Alisa Hartz, Counsel, Office of Youth and Community Restoration, California Health and Human Services Agency.

The September 2023 Roundtable featured *The Road to Proposition 1: Advocacy Triumphs and Challenges in Children's Mental Health*, presented by Adrienne Shilton, Director of Public Policy and Strategy, California Alliance of Child and Family Services, Adam Seiden, Director of Policy Advocacy and External Engagement, Children's Bureau of Southern California, Lishaun Francis, Senior Director, Behavioral Health, Children Now, and Angela Vazquez, Policy Director, Mental Health, Child Welfare, Justice-Involved Youth, Children's Partnership; and *Unveiling San Diego's Child and Family Wellbeing Department: A New Paradigm*, presented by Kimberly Giardina, Director, Child and Family Wellbeing, County of San Diego Health & Human Services Agency.

The December 2023 Roundtable featured *Social Media Legislation: Update and Next Steps*, presented by Ed Howard, CAI's Senior Policy Advocate; *SSI Legislation: AB 1512 - Update and Next Steps*, presented by Marisa Lopez-Scott, Senior Attorney, Youth Law Center; *LGBTQIA+ Protections in Foster Care (AB 407)*, presented by Tyler Rinde, Deputy Director of Child Welfare Policy; *Student Suspensions for "Willful Defiance" (Skinner, SB 274)*, presented by Laura Baeza, Policy and Organizing Manager, Alliance for Boys & Men of Color (ABMoC); *Minors: Consent to Mental Health Services (Carrillo, AB 665)*, presented by Dana Paycao, Senior Policy Associate, Health, National Center for Youth Law; and *Important Dependency Legislation 2023*, presented by Julie McCormick, Senior Policy Attorney, Children's Law Center of California.



Funders

We thank those who make our work possible, and in particular, the late Sol and Helen Price; Robert and Allison Price and their family; the late Paul A. Peterson and his family; and Louise Horvitz. Their vision of what we should be remains our charted course. We are also grateful to our Council for Children and our Dean and colleagues on the faculty of the USD School of Law, many of whom contribute to CAI.

We are also thankful for the generous grants, gifts, and other funding contributed or directed to CAI by the following individuals and organizations between January 1, 2023, and December 31, 2023, or in response to CAI's 2023 holiday solicitation. CAI is fortunate to have the personal backing of many highly respected individuals. Together, these funds support CAI's advocacy, outreach, and public education efforts at the local, state, and federal levels. Without them—*without you*—CAI would not be able to do what we do.

Larry Alexander	The Hon. Peter C. Deddeh
Travis Anderson	Michael R. Devitt
Association of California Life & Health Insurance Companies	Craig D. Dingwall
Alfred & Lynette Atallah	Cliff Dobin <i>In honor of Michala Dobrin; In memory of Joann Dobrin</i>
Anonymous Donors	Durkin Family <i>In memory of David X. Durkin</i>
Shay L. Barnes	Gary Edwards <i>In memory of Stephanie Edwards Diehl</i>
Jennifer Barnes	Suzanne Evans
Alephia Baxamusa	Brian & Nancy Fellmeth
Nancy L. Beattie	Bob and Julie D'Angelo Fellmeth <i>In memory of James A. D'Angelo</i>
William M. Benjamin, CFLS	Kevin D. Fialko
Alan Bersin & Lisa Foster	David & Julie Forstadt <i>In memory of James A. D'Angelo</i>
Blavin Family Fund at the Chicago Community Foundation	Stewart Frank <i>In honor of John Thelan</i>
Caroline G. Bolton	The Hon. Ronald F. Frazier
Cheryl Wootton Brierton	Brian Garmo
Alan & Susan Brubaker <i>In memory of James A. D'Angelo</i>	Linda & Roy Gayhart
Dana Bunnett	John Geddie
Matthew Buttacavoli	Beth Givens
California Community Foundation	John Goldenring, MD, JD
Paul P. Cannariato	Betsy Gopinath
Carlos Carriedo	Susan M. Gorelick
Gregory E. Catangay	Carolyn Griesemer
Dominic & Kristen Chenelia	Lori Guardiano-Durkin <i>In memory of David X. Durkin</i>
Tim Cohelan & Laura Buxton	Amy Harfeld
The Hon. D. Lynn Collet	
Margaret Dalton	
Steven B. Davis	

Edgar Hayden Jr
 The Hon. Judith F. Hayes
 Walter & Susan Heiser
 Jessica Heldman
 Patricia Hoff
 Hope and Heal Fund (a project of New Venture Fund)
 Blaise J. Jackson
 Walter S. Johnson Foundation
 The Hon. Sharon L. Kalemkarian
 The Hon. Leon S. Kaplan
 Robert F. Kennedy Children's Action Corps
 Josephine Kiernan
 Lynn Lasry & Allen Snyder
 Lynnae Lee
 James Madden
In memory of Janet Madden
 John Malugen
 Deborah T. Mancuso
 Elaine S. McCleaf
 K G McGuinness
 John & Betsy Myer
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 Charles D. Nachand
 Ralph Nader
 Sloane J. Needleman
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 Michelle D. Pena
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 Dr. Gary Richwald and Sue Bayley Foundation
 Harvey Rosenfield
 Ron Russo
 Safety Systems Foundation
 Gloria Samson
 Barbara Seaman

Elliot & Ann Segal
 Alan & Harriet Shumacher
In honor of Robert & Julie Fellmeth
 Alan Sieroty
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 Len Simon
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 Prof. Thomas A. Smith
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 Catherine Stephenson
 Lawrence R. Stidham
 John Thelan
 John T. Thornton
 Ed Ursin
 Nancy L. Vaughan
 Brigitta H. Whiting
 The Hon. Christopher Whitten
 Marjorie & Ya-Ping Zhou

While every effort has been made to ensure accuracy, we apologize for any mistakes or omissions.

A final note about Sol and Helen Price, that we have repeated each year, and which we shall continue to repeat. Their passing will never diminish our duty to represent their ideals for child representation — we strive to be an important part of their legacy. All of us at CAI feel their presence, and what they would want us to do is our guiding lodestar.

Similarly, we are eternally grateful to the late Paul Peterson and his entire family. Like the Price family, the Peterson family has been a crucial part of our history, and their generosity has been instrumental in allowing us to protect and promote the interests of children and youth, now and into the future.

CAI Council for Children

CAI is guided by the Council for Children, an advisory body that meets periodically to review policy decisions and recommend action priorities. Its members are professionals and community leaders who share a vision to improve the quality of life for children in California. CAI is also honored to have former Council members who served for many years remain a part of the Council as emeritus members. In 2023, the CAI Council for Children included the following members:

Council Members:

Bill Bentley

Child Advocate

Denise Moreno Ducheny

Attorney, Former State Senator

Anne E. Fragasso, Esq.

California Appellate Project, Staff Attorney

John M. Goldenring, M.D., M.P.H., J.D.

Health Plan Medical Director, Pediatrician and Adolescent Medicine Specialist, and Retired Attorney At Law

Hon. Leon Kaplan (Ret.)

Retired Judge, Los Angeles County Superior Court

David M. Meyers Solo Practitioner

Thomas A. Papageorge, J.D.

Special Prosecutor, Economic Crimes Division, San Diego District Attorney's Office

Sarah Pauter

Founder and CEO, Phenomenal Families

Gary F. Redenbacher, J.D., Council Chair

Attorney At Law

Gary Richwald, M.D., M.P.H., Council Vice-Chair *Medical & Public Health Director, Kulbersh Health Screening Services; Lecturer, Infectious Disease Epidemiology, USC Keck School of Medicine*

Gloria Perez Samson

Retired School Administrator

Tracy L. Simmons

Associate Dean of Admissions and Student Affairs, Howard University School of Law

John Thelan

Retired Senior Vice President, Costco Wholesale

Emeritus Members:

Robert Black, M.D.[†]

Birt Harvey, M.D.[†]

Louise Horvitz, M.S.W., Psy.D.

Licensed clinical social worker, individual and family psychotherapist

James B. McKenna[†]

Paul A. Peterson, J.D.[†]

Blair L. Sadler, J.D.

Past President and Chief Executive Officer, Children's Hospital and Health Center

Ann Segal

Consultant

Alan E. Shumacher, M.D., F.A.A.P.

Retired neonatologist; Past President of the Medical Board of California; President, Federation of State Medical Boards of the United States

Owen Smith

Past President, Anzalone & Associates

[†] Deceased



CAI Team

During 2023, CAI was extremely fortunate to have the following passionate and dedicated team of employees and consultants, all of whom contributed greatly to the work CAI did — and the achievements CAI made on behalf of children and youth across the state and nation:

CAI Staff

Melanie Delgado

*Senior Staff Attorney /
Director of Transition Age Youth Projects*

Robert C. Fellmeth

*Price Professor of Public Interest Law,
CAI Executive Director*

Katie Gonzalez

Associate Director, Centers for Public Interest Law

Amy Harfeld

National Policy Director

Jessica Heldman

*Fellmeth-Peterson Associate Professor
in Child Rights*

Ed Howard

Senior Counsel / Senior Policy Advocate

Ben Sims

Executive Assistant / Office Manager

Elisa Weichel

Administrative Director / Senior Staff Attorney

2023 CAI Consultants

Sarah Bryer

CM Public Affairs

Fenton Strategies

David Halperin

Tanisha Lewis

Sarah Pauter

Emily Reinig

Slowey McManus Communications

Stone Advocacy

CAI also benefits tremendously from the efforts of USD Law students, Pre-Law Interns, and volunteers who assist us with our research and advocacy.

And last, but certainly not least, CAI is grateful to have the guidance, assistance, and participation of several lived experience experts, advisors, and advocates — all of whom provide insights and expertise that significantly enhances our efforts to improve systems, research, policies, practices, and programs. These individuals inspire us to persevere in our work to protect the rights and interests of all children and youth.

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Help CAI Help Kids

We greatly appreciate your continued support of CAI's work. Here are a few different ideas for how you can help us help kids:

- ★ Make a tax-deductible donation to CAI online at law.sandiego.edu/caigift or for other donation options, contact us by phone or email (see below).
- ★ Participate in meetings of the **Children's Advocates' Roundtable** and/or follow the Roundtable activities on Facebook.
- ★ Volunteer to serve as an **Educational Rights Holder** for a San Diego County Juvenile Court-involved student.
- ★ For attorneys involved in class actions that result in a **cy pres distribution**, identify CAI as a potential recipient.
- ★ Join **Lawyers for Kids**, which gives attorneys, law students, and others in the legal community the opportunity to use their talents and resources as advocates to promote the health, safety, and well-being of children; assist CAI's policy advocacy program; and work with CAI staff on impact litigation or by offering expertise in drafting amicus curiae briefs.
- ★ Make CAI your charity of choice when using www.goodsearch.com to conduct online searches or www.goodshop.com when shopping online. GoodSearch is a Yahoo-powered search engine that donates about a penny per search to CAI each time you use it to search the Internet. GoodShop is an online shopping mall which donates up to 30% of each purchase to CAI. Hundreds of vendors — stores, hotels, airlines, and other goods and service providers — are part of GoodShop, and every time you place an order, part of your purchase price will go directly to CAI!
- ★ Purchase a **California Kids' Plate**, a special license plate featuring one of four special symbols: a star, a hand, a plus sign, or a heart. Proceeds support local and statewide programs to prevent child injury and abuse, as well as childcare health and safety programs.
- ★ Review the list of CAI's legislative priorities currently pending at the state and federal levels (see www.caichildlaw.org) and express support to your elected officials.



For information on these opportunities and all of CAI's activities, please visit CAI's website at www.caichildlaw.org, email us at info@caichildlaw.org, or call us at (619) 260-4806.



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