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Legal Victory for Immigrant Survivors and Non-English Speakers



Last June, you may have seen [FVAP's Executive Director, Erin Smith](#), giving a glimpse into the story of [FVAP client, Mina*](#), as part of a [TV news segment](#).

Mina is an immigrant survivor from Iraq whose abuser was granted joint custody of their son. This dangerous trial court decision came even after Mina had been physically abused, prevented from learning English, and was thrown out in the middle of the night with her son without any money or food. As part of the trial court's decision to allow joint custody, one reason given was that Mina did not speak English as well as her abuser did.

We are happy to share that the Court of Appeal overturned the ruling that English language fluency can be used as a reason to grant custody. English language fluency will now be joining the short list of 6 other prohibited reasons for custody rulings: race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, relative economic position, and working motherhood. Although we disagree with other parts of the Court of Appeal's ruling and continue to believe joint custody should not have been awarded, the ruling on English language fluency is a landmark decision and a big step in the right direction to protecting immigrant survivors of domestic violence and their children. (Also, [FVAP's successful work to pass California legislation, AB 2044](#), which went into effect on January 1, 2019, nullified many of the parts of the decision that we disagree with.)

[Read the published opinion in Mina's case.](#) Thanks to [FVAP's co-counsel in representing Mina in the appeal, Horvitz & Levy and Legal Aid Society of San Diego.](#)

FVAP Represents Survivor Unjustly Denied Long-term Restraining Order



On February 19, [FVAP](#) Senior Attorney [Shuray Ghorishi](#) presented oral argument to the **Court of Appeal in Orange County**, representing a survivor of domestic violence who was wrongly denied a long-term restraining order. The abuser had a temporary restraining order against him, and because he violated it a number of times and committed more abusive acts, the survivor sought out a long-term domestic violence restraining order to protect herself for up to 5 years (compared to the shorter term for temporary restraining orders). Unfortunately, the trial court refused. The ruling was unjust and left the survivor in harm's way – so [FVAP](#) appealed. We hope that a victory in this case will help this survivor get justice and pave the way for more survivors to get a long-term restraining order the first time around.

Thanks to **Jones Day** and **UC Irvine Domestic Violence Clinic** for co-counseling this appeal with [FVAP](#).

February is Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month



Did you know 23% of women and 14% of men will have experienced intimate partner violence before the age of 18?

Even though those are staggering numbers, there is a lot teens and their parents can do to address the problem, in many cases before it begins. For one, teaching teens about healthy relationships and making and respecting boundaries can make a huge difference for them and their future partners.

Learning the signs of abuse is helpful, too. There are many resources online like [Love is Respect](#) and [Break the Cycle](#) that provide resources for teens and parents including a list of what behaviors to look for. And while some signs of abuse seem easy to spot, others, like excessive texting by an abusive partner constantly checking in, may not be.

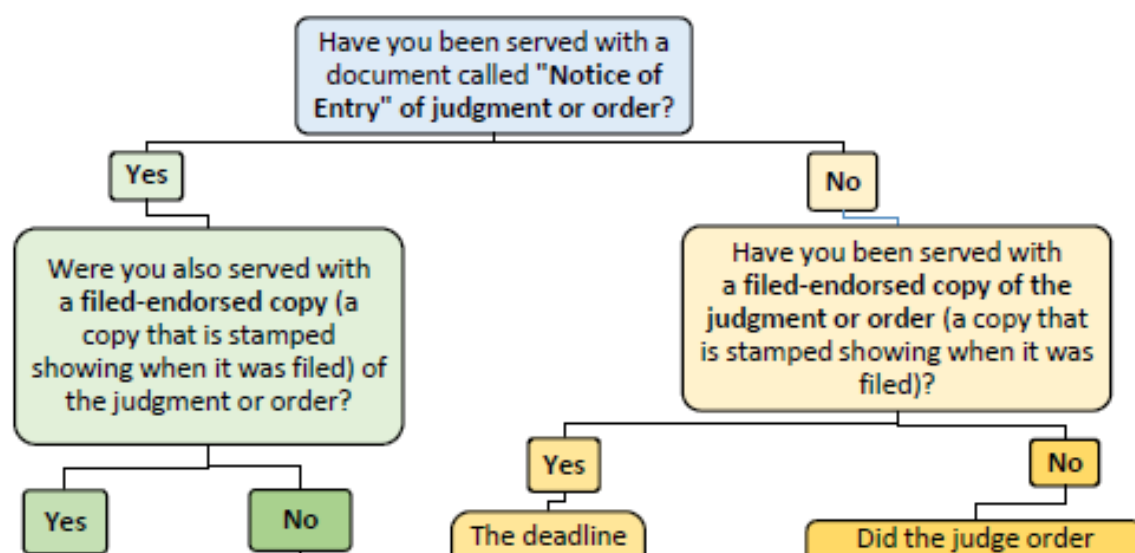
Support teens all year long whether that be by sharing what you know about teen dating violence or wearing orange attire in solidarity.

Reaching Survivors in New Places: FVAP Launches First Pilot Program with Court Self-Help Center



Calculating Your Deadline to Appeal a California Family Law Order

Generally, the deadline to appeal a family law judgment or order is either 60 or 180 days.* You must serve and file a [Notice of Appeal form \(APP-002\)](#) by your deadline or you could lose the right to appeal your order. The following chart may help you determine your deadline to file a Notice of Appeal, based on [California Rule of Court, rule 8.104](#).



FVAP is happy to announce that we're partnering with the [Santa Clara County Self-Help Center](#) to launch our first-ever pilot program to distribute FVAP's newly created tip sheet: **Calculating Your Deadline to Appeal a California Family Law Order**. This tip sheet, which is also available on [FVAP's website](#), includes a flow chart showing the steps to calculate a deadline to appeal a family law judgment or order. FVAP has identified calculating deadlines to appeal as a particularly difficult step in the appeals process, and we hope that expanding the accessibility of our tip sheet on this topic will help survivors move through the appeals process with more efficiency.

As part of our new pilot, this tip sheet will be distributed at the Santa Clara County Family Justice Center Courthouse in the Restraining Order Help Center, the Family Law Facilitator's Office, and at Day-of-Court Clinics.

Battle of the Bands Sponsorships + Band Applications Now Available: June 20



Are you ready to rock out with [FVAP](#) on June 20? [Sponsorship applications](#) are now available so you can show the world you support survivors of domestic violence. Sponsorship comes with many publicity perks and reaches an audience of approximately 34,000 people. Sponsor by March 15 to get the full benefit of the publicity.

The [7th annual Banding Together to End Domestic Violence](#) will be held on June 20 at [The Chapel](#) in San Francisco. Tickets go on sale soon.

Spotlight: Welcome Our New Law Clerks

We are happy to welcome Sela Steiger and Kel O'Hara, our new law clerks, to the [FVAP](#) team.



Sela Steiger is in her second year at UC Davis School of Law. After graduating from Oberlin College in 2009, she worked for many years in primary education, as well as for several Bay Area nonprofits. Sela is dedicated to advocating for women, children and families, and is very excited to join the [FVAP](#) team this semester. She spent her 1L summer at the Children's Law Center of California working in dependency court. This summer she will be an intern at Public Advocates, serving on their Education Equity team.



Kel O'Hara (they/ them pronouns) is a Chicago native and third year law student at UC Berkeley who is passionate about providing trauma-informed support to survivors of domestic and sexual violence. They are particularly interested in advocating for student survivors and founded the Survivor Advocacy Project, an on-campus Title IX legal resource for Cal students, in 2017. Before law school, Kel spent several years as an emergency room crisis counselor and anti-violence organizer. Outside of work, Kel enjoys hiking, performing as a drag king, and being a cat dad.

Give Back with Your Taxes

You can make a charitable contribution to domestic violence services this year by electing to have a portion of your California state tax return be donated. Donations made this way will go to the California Domestic Violence Victims Fund to be disbursed to various nonprofit organizations that work to help survivors of domestic violence.

Fill in your donation on Form 540, Side 4, Line 14, Code 433.

Thank you for supporting survivors.

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