



IN THIS ISSUE:

- Video Message from Executive Director

Greetings from Deborah Son

As we transition into fall, we acknowledge the changes that come with the season: back-to-school, new clerkships, and of course pumpkin spice flavored everything.

- FVAP UPDATES

- New Staff
- Legal Victories
- In The News
- Staff Spotlight
- Law Clerk
Program

One thing remains the same: FVAP is steadfast in its mission. Our staff have been diligently and tirelessly working to ensure justice for survivors and their children.

Watch this video to learn more about me, FVAP's ongoing work, and how FVAP remains committed to its mission amid all seasons of change.

**Warmly,
Deborah**



Message from Deborah Son

Executive Director

NEW STAFF

DEVELOPMENT
DIRECTOR



THAO DANG WELDY

she/her/hers

DEVELOPMENT &
GRANTS COORDINATOR



LUCIA ROMO

she/her/hers

FVAP welcomes its first full-time Development Director, [Thao Dang Weldy](#) and [Lucia Romo](#) as Development & Grants Coordinator!

Thao and Lucia joined FVAP in July and have since already applied for FVAP's first ever Washington-state grants, submitted a collaborative grant proposal to improve housing stability of survivors in rural communities in California, and are applying for money to invest in FVAP infrastructure that will ensure long-term sustainable operations.

Learn more about them by clicking on their names (underlined in orange) above.



FVAP is dedicated to breaking the cycle of abuse and creating a world that is better for future generations. We accomplish this by overturning dangerous trial court decisions and setting new legal standards when we win appeals for our clients. So far in 2023, FVAP has won 7 appeals and authored 2 amicus briefs.

Click on each case name to learn how we helped each survivor access the protection they deserve.

California
[Gonzalez v. Gonzalez - Denial of DVRO](#) | Amicus, Unpublished

California
[Renee A. v. Robert A.](#) | Unpublished

California
[T.W. v. M.S. - Child Support Appeal](#) | Unpublished

California
[T.W. v. M.S. - DVRO Renewal Appeal](#) | Unpublished



Washington State Supreme Court Unanimously Decides to Broaden Access to Civil Remedies for Child Sexual Abuse Victims

Amicus, Published
September 2023

We are pleased to report Washington State Supreme Court's decision in [Wolf v Washington](#) which unanimously decided to broaden access to civil remedies for child sexual abuse victims. In partnership with Washington Defender Association, Sexual Violence Law Center, and Legal Voice, FVAP filed an [amicus brief](#) to highlight the higher rates of abuse children of color experience in the foster care system and the need for services and support for children to process and recognize past trauma before they can identify possible legal remedies.

Court of Appeals Criticizes Lower Court for Narrow View of How Abused Women Should Behave

Published
June 2023

The [Vinson v. Kenny](#) case establishes legal precedent that **threats do not need to be threats of physical violence to constitute abuse under California law**. This clarification broadens the scope of what can be considered abusive behavior and sets an

California Court Clarifies Definition of Abuse May Include Coercive Control and Financial Control

Published
August 2023

The Court of Appeal reversed the lower court's decision in [Hatley v. Southard](#). This important victory has far reaching impacts for survivors. (1) It clarifies that experiences of **being isolated and controlled**, even without physical abuse, can be abuse under the law—this includes controlling, regulating, or monitoring someone's movements, communications, and finances, as well as taking away someone's car or phone, or isolating someone from their support system (e.g., a child) or employment. (2) It directs lower courts to **consider requests for financial support**, potentially providing crucial financial assistance to survivors, **even if a restraining order is denied**; and (3) directs lower courts to provide better support for self-represented survivors to **ensure fair legal proceedings** for all individuals. Overall, this case sets new legal standards that better protect and empower survivors of domestic violence to advocate for their rights, stability, and safety in the future.

FVAP is thankful to have co-counseled this matter with Morrison & Foerster, LLP.

California Appellate Court Affirms Reasonable Fear of Future Abuse

important legal standard for future cases involving domestic violence. This decision underscores that **survivors should not be denied restraining orders solely based on their continued contact with their abusers**, because responses to abuse can vary widely among individuals. This case challenges stereotypes and misconceptions about how survivors of domestic violence should behave. There is no one "correct" way for an abused person to respond to their situation, and **judgments about their actions should not be used to deny them protection**.

FVAP is thankful to have co-counseled this matter with Latham & Watkins, LLP.

Should Not Be Dismissed

Published
May 2023

In [Michael M. v. Robin J.](#) the appellate court reaffirmed that survivors should not be required to show recent acts of abuse or violations of a restraining order to renew it. Additionally, the case underscores that even if a survivor's motives are questioned, their reasonable fear of future abuse should not be dismissed citing that **"anger and fear are not mutually exclusive"**. This decision should reduce barriers for survivors to renew their domestic violence restraining orders when they have valid reasons to fear for their safety, regardless of past violations or timing-related concerns. Ultimately, it strengthens protections for survivors seeking legal safeguards against their abusers.

FVAP is thankful to have co-counseled this matter with Covington & Burling LLP.



STAFF SPOTLIGHT:

The Office of Child Abuse Prevention has announced FVAP employee, [Arati Vasan](#), has been appointed to California's Mandated Reporting to Community Supporting Task Force.

FVAP is also pleased to announce that Deputy Director [Monica LaBoskey](#) has been selected to participate in OneJustice's Executive Fellowship Program in California.

[Cory Hernandez](#) was recently reappointed to the Judicial Council of California, Family and Juvenile Law Advisory Committee and the Protective Order Working Group subcommittee.

Learn more about how Arati, Monica, and Cory are building non-profit capacity and informing systems change to center families and survivors by visiting their staff profiles on [our website](#).



Celebrating Our Law Clerks & Fellows!

Each year, FVAP has the privilege of working with some great law clerks. This Summer FVAP was supported by **Eliana Greenberg** (University of California, Berkeley School of Law), **Brooke Purtill** (University of Nevada, Las Vegas, Williams S. Boyd School of Law), and **Michael Savell** (University of Washington, School of Law). We thank them for lending their talents to FVAP! Their work will have a lasting impact on survivors in California and Washington.

This Fall, we welcome law clerks **Katy Daley** (Seattle University School of Law) and **Kaumron Eidgahy** (University of California, Berkeley School of Law) and **Elissa Gray**, Equal Justice Works Fellow, sponsored by Greenberg Traurig, LLP and The Clorox Company Foundation.

Law Clerk Program

FVAP hosts law clerks in California (Spring / Summer / Fall) and Washington (Summer / Fall). Learn more on [our website](#).



Donate to FVAP

Your gift enables us to:

- Provide **free legal representation** to oppressed survivors in low-income and rural communities

- Hold California and Washington **courts accountable** to keep families safe
- **Train** California and Washington attorneys, judges, and domestic violence advocates how to protect children and domestic violence survivors
- **Mentor** law students to become the next generation of effective, passionate legal advocates on behalf of survivors
- Change law by **setting new legal precedent** that prioritizes the safety of children and survivors



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