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LIBERTY COUNSEL'S MONTHLY ACTION/ALERT NEWSLETTER
"Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is Liberty." 2 Cor 3:17

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A Message from Mat Staver, our Founder and Chairman

I'M FROM THE GOVERNMENT AND I'M HERE TO TAKE YOUR CHILD!

"I feel like a prisoner," said 15-year-old Justina Pelletier, referring to her custody under the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families (DCF). In January 2013, she was a competitive figure skater. But a few weeks later, her life dramatically changed when she developed a severe flu and was taken to the Emergency Room at Boston Children's Hospital (BCH). When Justina's parents tried to discharge her, DCF stepped in and the family's nightmare began. You cannot imagine what this family has gone through. Thankfully, Liberty Counsel has now come to their aid.

The story of 15-year-old Justina Pelletier captured our attention as the story of her plight was brought to light by the Boston area media. Following the advice of Dr. Mark Korson, Justina's treating physician and Chief of Metabolic Services at Tufts Medical Center in Boston, Lou and Linda Pelletier took their daughter to BCH. But there, a new doctor, just seven months out of medical school, and a psychologist disagreed with her well-respected

treating physician and changed Justina's diagnosis to a mental rather than a physical condition.

The parents were presented a new treatment plan that discontinued all

medical treatment, forbade them from talking to Justina about her medical condition, and prevented them from seeking a second opinion. When Lou

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Liberty Counsel Founder and Chairman Mat Staver discusses the Justina Pelletier case on Fox News Network's Huckabee program (top left), one of many national news outlets – including Fox's The Kelly File, Glenn Beck's TheBlaze TV and Radio, and other widely distributed programs – featuring Staver as a guest commentator on this issue. The public outcry over the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families (DCF) abuse of this 15-year-old young woman over the 14 months she has been a "ward of the state" has accelerated since Liberty Counsel began representing the Pelletier family in February. Tragically, Justina's health has greatly deteriorated under the DCF's "custody," and although she was a competitive figure skater (bottom left) a little over a year ago, she is now confined to a wheelchair and is losing her hair among other serious medical issues. Liberty Counsel has launched a nationwide campaign to send tens of thousands of hope-filled, Scripture-bearing "Get well, Justina!" cards to this precious young woman who yearns to return to her own home. You can send a personalized card to Justina as part of our national outpouring of love and concern by visiting LibertyCounsel.com or StopDCFNow.com.

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and Linda Pelletier refused to sign off on the plan and requested she be discharged back to her treating physician at Tufts Medical Center, BCH summoned DCF, which prevented the parents from discharging their daughter. For the past 14 months, DCF has had custody of Justina, making her a ward of the state, and thus eligible for research by BCH doctors and clinicians.

DCF also obtained a gag order preventing the parents from speaking to the media. Watching his daughter's health decline, Justina's father eventually spoke to the media nonetheless. DCF then sought to hold Lou Pelletier in contempt of court! That is when

The parents were presented a new treatment plan that discontinued all medical treatment, forbade them from talking to Justina about her medical condition, and prevented them from seeking a second opinion.

Liberty Counsel came to the aid of Justina and her family.

Within four days after Liberty Counsel joined the case, DCF began to backpedal. The court approved an agreement to (1) drop the contempt charges against Lou Pelletier for speaking to the media, (2) dissolve the gag order, and (3) transfer Justina's medical care to Tufts Medical Center, where Dr. Korson, a nationally known specialist in his field, had been treating her for mitochondrial disease.

But as of this writing, DCF is still holding Justina as a ward of the state. This is the same Massachusetts DCF that has "lost" 134 children in the agency's custody. The children of 134 parents are missing, and DCF has no

idea where they are located. Over the past few years, 94 children in DCF's custody have actually died!

On a recent visit with their daughter, accompanied by a minister and a member of our legal team, Justina said, "I feel like a prisoner." She went on to ask, "Why can't I go home with my parents?" This story of government abuse is truly heartbreaking.

As more details of this case come to light, people are becoming increasingly outraged. It is unfathomable that this barbaric overreach by a state agency is taking place in America – and in the city that launched the fight for American liberty, of all places!

As a Massachusetts ward of the state, Justina has been refused access to education. She was admitted to the ER over a weekend in February 2013, and she has not been able to see her classmates since that time. She is now at least two academic years behind her classmates because DCF has not provided her any education. Until Liberty Counsel got involved, she was denied visitation by clergy. She has not even been allowed to celebrate Easter or Christmas!

Her three older sisters have rarely been able to see her, and her 92-year-old grandmother has not seen her in more than a year. Justina's parents have only been allowed one hour per week – and that under extreme supervision, sometimes with up to five DCF workers and armed security personnel in the room. DCF has prevented the parents from even photographing their daughter!

Under Massachusetts law, prison inmates get up to five visits per week, medical care, religious services, and education rights. Justina is limited to just one visit per week, little medical care, no clergy visits, and no education. She has been treated far worse than an incarcerated felon!

Unknown to many people, Boston Children's Hospital is a chartered teaching hospital and is allowed to conduct medical research and experimentation on children who are declared

wards of the state. According to BCH's *Clinical and Investigation Policy and Procedure Manual*, "Children who are wards of the state may be included in research that presents minimal risk... or greater than minimal risk with a prospect of direct benefit."

Justina's abuse as a DCF ward is unfathomable. No 15-year-old should be forced to live under such conditions!

On a recent visit with their daughter, accompanied by a minister and a member of our legal team, Justina said, "I feel like a prisoner." She went on to ask, "Why can't I go home with my parents?"

In January 2013, before she was admitted to the Emergency Room at BCH, Justina performed in ice-skating competitions and attended a private school under an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) that was sensitive to her learning disability.

As a ward of DCF, Justina's health has declined to the point that she must be confined to a wheelchair. This poor girl has been through unimaginable abuse at the hands of the state!

After learning of the Pelletier's plight and performing our own background investigation of the case, I flew to Boston to represent the family in court against the contempt charges directed at Lou Pelletier for breaking a court-ordered gag order.

The media scrutiny and legal proceedings have caused DCF to reconsider their course of action and begin to back down a bit. But make no mistake, DCF must be removed from this case and must be held accountable!

Justina needs to be home with her parents, and she needs to be back in school with her peers.

More than a dozen Massachusetts

state legislators blasted DCF for “breaking up” the Pelletier family and decried Justina’s imprisonment. They have now called for a House Committee to launch a full-scale investigation into DCF’s handling of the case.

The idea of a medical facility removing a child from a loving family – a family in which there is no history or evidence of abuse of any kind – is a deeply chilling thought. This poor girl and her family have been through literal torture. DCF should be held accountable for this flagrant abuse of government power!

Please pray for Justina and the Pelletier family. I hope you will financially support Liberty Counsel’s fight for Justina and other families who are abused by government entities. I assure you, we will not rest until Justina is home! You can sign a petition to free Justina Pelletier at our special website, StopDCFNow.com, or our portal site, LibertyCounsel.com. When you Tweet, use the hash tag #FreeJustina.

Stand with us as we fight to reunite the Pelletier family and address the larger issue of rampant statist attacks on parental rights throughout the nation! ✝



Mathew D. Staver, who founded Liberty Counsel along with his wife, Anita, in 1989, serves as the organization’s Chairman. A leading constitutional attorney, widely read author, and sought-after speaker and cultural apologist, he also serves as Dean of the Liberty University School of Law and as Chairman of Liberty Counsel Action. Staver is among the core leaders of a national effort to rebuild the conservative movement in America.

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something significant for Him!

What can you do to make a

God may give you a passion for a difficult cause or lead you in a direction that seems impossible, but with God, all things are possible!

difference in our embattled culture? Start with the five basic suggestions listed above, and you’ll soon find yourself overcoming impossible situations and impacting your

community for good.

With a little time and perseverance, the Lord will bring you even more opportunities to take action. Perhaps you will even write your own book about fifty ways to advance liberty!

May God bless you as you make a real difference and impact our culture for His glory! ✝

Anita L. Staver, Liberty Counsel’s President, cofounded the ministry in 1989 along with her husband, Mat. Anita is a member of the bars of the state of Florida and the District of Columbia. She is admitted to practice before the United States Supreme Court, every federal court of appeals in the nation, and six federal district courts.

DO YOU WANT TO BE UNCOMMON?

You can enjoy and use Liberty Counsel’s first feature-length motion picture, *Uncommon*, and special materials we have developed!



THIS IS NOT JUST ENTERTAINMENT...

Uncommon is more than an entertaining movie. We have developed a package of resources designed to help you to become an uncommon Christian: A DVD of the 106-minute *Uncommon* movie is one you will want to get for your home movie collection. Special music was developed for the film, including several hip-hop and Latino-style music compositions. A CD (not pictured) containing all the inspirational songs from *Uncommon*, including “*Have Faith*,” an upbeat song written for the movie, allows you to take the inspiration with you throughout the day. *Uncommon Voices* is an 82-page, full-color, oversized book with scenes and quotes from the movie and real stories of people who stood up for their faith and never backed down. *Be Uncommon* is a month-long, five-day-a-week Bible study. Accompanied by a DVD, each day begins with a scene from *Uncommon*, the daily Scripture that goes with the scene, and a Bible study lesson that inspires the reader to be an uncommon Christian. *Uncommon* is not only an excellent film, but it can also be performed as a play in any setting. We have developed a script which can be performed by your drama group!

*All of these uncommon resources are available at nominal cost in our Online Store at LC.org. But when you send a gift of at least \$50 to support Liberty Counsel’s vital mission today, we will send you the DVD, play script, soundtrack CD, the Bible study, and the beautiful *Uncommon Voices* coffee table book. Simply check the special box on your Response Form and we will rush your resources to you.*

Let these special resources give you the tools to become uncommon today!

From Anita Staver, President

HOW TO ADVANCE LIBERTY IN A LAWLESS TIME LIKE THIS



We ought to obey God rather than men. Acts 5:29

One of the most common questions Mat and I hear from the public is, “What can I do to make a difference?” While we could quickly fill a book named something like *Fifty Ways to Advance Liberty* with ideas for activism, space is limited in this article. So, here are five highly effective actions you can take immediately:

1. **Plant your family in a Bible-teaching community of activists.** A thriving garden produces good fruit, but a dying garden will not grow anything of significance. If your pastor’s or other religious leader’s teaching is unbiblical or irrelevant to your community and to modern Christian life, go and seek a fruitful place.
2. **Become an Internet activist.** If you read online news and commentary,

you will realize that anti-God radicals are among the most vocal communicators on the Internet. You and your friends can fight back against their lies. For example, you could adopt a popular news site to monitor and counterbalance ungodly, humanist statements with well-reasoned comments. Perhaps you will even

If your pastor’s or other religious leader’s teaching is unbiblical or irrelevant to your community and to modern Christian life, go and seek a fruitful place.

- be inspired to start your own blog!
3. **Use social media as a tool to reach others with God’s truth.** Share the Facebook posts from our Facebook page (www.Facebook.com/LibertyCounsel); mention @libertycounsel on Twitter and retweet our posts, encouraging others to do the same.
4. **Support family-friendly films.** Since the success of Sherwood Baptist Church’s *Facing the Giants*, faith-based movies are gaining ground at the box office. If your church is not involved in film-making, you can still get involved. Gather your friends to watch Liberty Counsel’s new film, *Uncommon*, which will inspire others to impact their spheres of influence.

And above all...

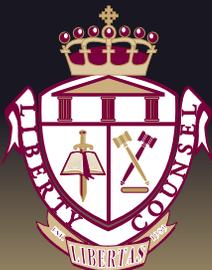
5. **Pray for godly wisdom, passion, and boldness for yourself and for others.** Ask God to stir a desire within you for whatever action you should take. God may give you a passion for a difficult cause or lead you in a direction that seems impossible, but with God, all things are possible! Pray for a groundswell of Bible-believing activists who catch a vision from God for their futures.

As you pray for these things, please continue to pray for Liberty Counsel as we fight to advance religious liberty, the sanctity of all human life, and the family. You can be assured that we are standing steadfast in the vision that God has given us. Mat and I know that what seems humanly impossible to accomplish can be done with God’s help, because He has repeatedly shown us that “God + you = enough!”

God and you are enough to beat impossible odds, even in a lawless culture like the one in which we are presently living. In fact, your collaboration with Him is enough to accomplish anything He leads you to do, no matter what your surroundings!

Throughout history, God has used mere mortals to do impossible things. The faithful biblical heroes mentioned in Hebrews, Chapter 11 – men like Noah, David, and Moses – were *activists*. And, with God’s help, you can become an effective activist, too. You just need to take the first step. In other words... *Let’s not just wander through life; let’s do*

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Restoring the Culture by Advancing Religious Freedom, the Sanctity of Human Life and the Family

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