



Press Release: Amicus Brief Filed Regarding Britney Spears' Right to Choose an Attorney

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 15, 2021

The Bazelon Center has co-authored an amicus brief alongside the ACLU and a coalition of disability rights organizations asking the court to allow Britney Spears to choose her own attorney. In a system where many patients feel unheard and their preferences are disregarded, allowing the pop star to choose her lawyer is a step in the right direction. We are pleased to report that yesterday, Judge Brenda Penny took the important step of allowing Britney Spears to secure the lawyer of her choice.

Spears has been under a conservatorship for thirteen years. A conservatorship is meant to help individuals who are incapable of taking care of themselves, while letting the individual retain as much independence as possible. However, in many conservatorship cases, the individual becomes trapped and even abused by a system that was set in place to protect her. "It's probably the No. 1 complaint of people who rely on the public mental health system for their care, which is [that] they're not heard and their preferences aren't respected," said Ira Burnim, legal director of the Bazelon Center.

On June 23, Spears appeared at court and made her most public to-date statement about her conservatorship, sharing how she had been forced to switch psychotropic medications, keep her IUD in place, and more. Unfortunately, allegations of this nature are not uncommon among those whose freedom has been taken by the state.

Spears' father was put in charge of his daughter's conservatorship, controlling every one of her decisions, including her performances, finances, and relationships with her two teenage sons. She was deprived of the right to have her own lawyer. Click here to see the amicus brief co-filed by the Bazelon Center and coalition members arguing for Spears' right to choose her own attorney: <https://bit.ly/2TcTpYG>

For further information, contact:

Jalyn Radzinski, Communications Manager
Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law
202-467-5730 x1333
jalynr@bazelon.org

We thank the following partners: AIDS Legal Referral Panel, ACLU Disability Rights Program, ACLU Foundation of Southern California, The Arc of the US, ASAN, Burton Blatt Institute, California Advocates for Nursing Home Reform, California Alliance for Retired Americans, Cardozo Bet Tzedek Legal Services, Center for Estate Administration Reform, Center for Public Representation, Choice in Aging, Civil Rights Education and Enforcement Center, Coalition for Elderly and Disability Rights, The Coelho Center for Disability Law, Policy and Innovation, Disability Rights California, DREDF, Disability Rights Legal Center, Disability Voices United, Justice in Aging, Legal Aid at Work, Mental Health Advocacy Services, National Resource Center for Supported Decision Making, Quality Trust for Individuals with Disabilities, and TASH.