



CENTER FOR THE RIGHTS
OF ABUSED CHILDREN

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 30, 2025

Michigan Supreme Court to Decide Whether Trafficked Child's Rights Must Take Precedence

Center for the Rights of Abused Children Urges Michigan's High Court to Protect a 9-Year-Old Victim, Not Her Abuser

LANSING, MI — On Wednesday, May 7 at 11:30 a.m. ET, the Michigan Supreme Court will hear oral arguments in the case of *In re Barber/Espinoza*—a case that will determine whether a woman who trafficked her 9-year-old daughter can still claim parental rights.

The [Center for the Rights of Abused Children](#) filed a powerful amicus brief urging the Court to reverse a shocking appellate decision that reinstated the mother's rights—including the right to forced visitation and state-funded efforts to reunify her with her victim—even after clear evidence showed the mother gave up her child to be raped in exchange for drugs.

"You don't get a pass to harm a child just because you're called mom," said attorney Tom Jose, Director of the Center's pro bono Children's Law Clinic. "When a parent becomes a predator, the law must protect the child—not preserve a title. No child should be forced to face their abuser, and no court should force a child back into the hands that betrayed them."

The appellate court's ruling ignores established law and common sense. When a parent traffics their child, the state has the right—and the duty—to prioritize the child's safety and immediately to terminate parental rights.

A child's life is on the line. The Center urges the Michigan Supreme Court to stand firmly for children's rights: No child should be treated as property. No child is for sale. Every child has a basic, inviolable right to be safe—and it's the court's duty to defend that right.

[Watch the oral arguments live](#)
[Read our amicus brief](#)

###

About the Center for the Rights of Abused Children: The Center for the Rights of Abused Children believes every child deserves a safe and loving home. Join our mission today, thecenterforchildren.org.

Contact: For questions, please email Tom Jose at tom@thecenterforchildren.org