



CourtWatch

Justice doesn't just happen

“From what I experienced already with the court system, I didn't really think I had a good chance to get my case taken seriously. If CourtWatch hadn't been in the courtroom, I don't think I would have been granted an Injunction for Protection.”

Working Professional & Victim of Domestic Violence

Since our inception in April 2007, CourtWatch has:

- ▶ Monitored over 4,000 court proceedings
- ▶ Developed a 6-hour training curriculum and trained over 125 volunteers
- ▶ Grown from averaging 200 to nearly 500 volunteer hours/month
- ▶ Developed a research database to capture information from volunteer observation forms
- ▶ Actively participated with the Orange County Domestic Violence Task Force to:
 - ▷ Rescue the specialized Misdemeanor DV Court from closure due to budget cuts
 - ▷ Preserve key support personnel in the DV Injunction Court from budget cuts
- ▶ Been awarded a “100 Women Strong” grant by the Center for Women’s Philanthropy
- ▶ Assembled domestic violence experts to serve on our Board of Directors & Advisory Council

CourtWatch is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to holding the judicial system accountable to its citizens. CourtWatch has trained over 125 volunteers who contribute an average of 450-500 hours per month to monitor domestic violence, sexual assault and child abuse cases in the criminal and civil injunction courts. Our mission is to provide an impartial assessment of the effectiveness with which the Court handles these cases.

Even for those who know the judicial system, it can be difficult, intimidating and frustrating to navigate to a timely result.

Many domestic violence survivors endure terrorism in their own homes, often on a daily basis. When they turn to the judicial system for help, they deserve assistance. Yet some do not receive the justice or protection they seek. CourtWatch's goal is to hold everyone accountable: judges, attorneys, law enforcement, and anyone else involved in the judicial system.

CourtWatch provides a presence for the victim, male or female, who has been traumatized, physically and/or sexually assaulted or abused, intimidated, or threatened.

“The court system toyed with my case for months. Not taking it seriously, the judge commented that I [the petitioner] would need to be violently attacked two or more times in order to be granted an injunction.”

Victim of Aggravated Stalking

“I went to the courthouse to file my complaint and ask for an injunction. This is where my real nightmare began. I am not sure what was more traumatizing – [him] stalking me or the courts treating me like I was the perpetrator.”

Petitioner, Injunction for Protection

continued

P.O. Box 5333
Winter Park, Florida
32792-5333

PHONE (407) 325-3052
FAX (407) 645-3840
WEBSITE www.courtwatchflorida.org

CourtWatch also provides a watchful eye on behalf of defendants – helping to call attention to courtrooms where defendants may feel railroaded into accepting a plea agreement in an “assembly-line” like atmosphere without fully understanding the ramifications.

In addition to exposing the areas that need improvement, CourtWatch also recognizes the positive aspects of the judicial system we observe. Constructive feedback and suggestions for improvement are provided verbally, in writing, and in private meetings. Reaching out to the press is a last resort. CourtWatch often faces opposition and suspicion from those we watch. But we also have support from many members of the system who also realize that “Justice doesn’t just happen.”

“You wouldn’t believe the difference in how the Judge and State Attorney act when you’re in the courtroom.”

Former Public Defender

“It really makes a difference when you’re here. [The judge] is so much better.”

Assistant State Attorney

“Is the judge always that nice when you’re in the courtroom?”

Harbor House Advocate

“Y’all are doing a great job . . . the judges are afraid of CourtWatch.”

Circuit Court Judge

ORANGE COUNTY NUMBERS

5.9%Orange County’s population as a percentage of the total state population

8,949Orange County Domestic Violence offenses reported in 2007 (7.8% of the state total)

5,012Orange County Domestic Violence related arrests in 2007 (7.3% of the state total)

28%Percentage of 2007 Orange County criminal court cases filed that were Domestic Violence related

1,021Orange County Sexual Assault offenses reported in 2007 (9.1% of the state total)

267Orange County Sexual Assault related arrests in 2007 (8.7% of the state total)

23 of 123Orange County Domestic Violence related fatalities in 2008 (increase over 2007’s total 16 of 98)

ONEThe number it takes to start making a difference

SOURCE: Florida Department of Law Enforcement. Crime in Florida, Florida uniform crime report, 2007 [Computer program]. Tallahassee, FL: FDLE. Florida Statistical Analysis Center.

Which number will you be? Will you be **ONE** that makes a difference and helps to protect the human rights of those in our community?

Please contribute today, either by check or by PayPal via our website www.courtwatchflorida.org. Thank you for your support.

Laura S. Williams

Laura S. Williams
Board Chair & Program Director

*“Thou shalt not be a victim.
Thou shalt not be a perpetrator.
Above all, thou shalt not be a bystander.”*

*Written on the walls of the
Holocaust Museum in Washington, DC*