

Dear Mrs. Haley,

My name is Petra McGill (Keller) and I am honestly all out of options and at a standstill. I am 33 years old and when my son was four his father and I were granted our divorce. I had custody of our son up until then I sold my land and everything I had and spent 20,289.00 just on the custody battle and the lawyer wanted 3,000 more before we went to the final hearing being as I was only 23 at the time I was drained completely so as a result I had to go to ct without representation. The hearing ended in joint custody with my ex primary custodian and myself the standard Judge Browns Visitation because he was in their eyes more stable I had moved several times because I could not afford the rent any longer I honestly was left with nothing I did the best I could. However, that is not the issue I am having I respect the court's decision because I know they were doing what was best for my child. But at the final hearing I wasn't treated right I feel I was taken advantage of they set the child support at minimum wage but somehow I was ordered to pay 60.33 a week for one child and at the time I had lost my job and wasn't working at all and the court was aware of this. My son is now 11 years old and I have been paying this the entire time because I cant afford a lawyer to straighten this issue out and when I am ordered into court not once in 7 years has a judge given me the opportunity to explain my situation they say I have to have a lawyer and that the amount has nothing to do with the reason I am in court, even though it is a child support hearing due to me being behind. Now I am completely being honest with you over the 7 years there have been times that I have been behind only 1 time It did get up to almost 2,000 due to health issues. But I have always paid what I could when times were rough I never not intentionally paid that is my child and my responsibility and honestly when I can't pay its hard on me emotionally because I want to be able to provide for my son. Granted I know there are so many people that just don't pay but that is not the case for every single parent and I feel as if they automatically look at everyone the same. My ex husband (my child I pay support for father) is a very controlling abusive person not physically but emotionally that is why I left. As long as things are going his way and I don't upset him he is fine but if I say or do the wrong thing he has connections and he always threatens jail and has used that to keep my son from me for months at a time I have filed contempt and he was found guilty but it's a never ending battle with him. I filed for disability a few yrs back was approved he contacted disability when he found out I applied and they contacted me and then denied my disability. If he finds out, I have a job he does everything in his power to destroy that for me and honestly I have lost many of jobs because of this. I cannot live my life or get ahead at all; he makes it impossible for me to. I feel like he is with me everywhere I go and know more about where I am or what I am doing more than I do. I do not understand how it is right for someone to be able to do what he does it is not right at all!

Here are some major concerns I have and situations I have encountered over the years. When I started to fall behind I was pregnant with my 2nd child and had placenta previa and had a major bleed at 21 weeks and was for almost 4 weeks they let me go home on strict bed rest and the week I got out my husband went to the court house and paid the full amount that was owed 400.00 to catch it up. Well I had a ct date in Abbeville sc 2 weeks later for a wreck I was in and Mike Keller my ex called the courthouse, remind you he lives in Greenville sc and told them I had a warrant for child support in Greenville sc that I was completely unaware of thankfully I happened to have the receipt from paying the 400 dollars leaving my account actually in the positive \$50.00. I showed that to the officers so they

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let me go home and told me to take care of it ASAP because of the condition I was in. Well my ex found out they did not arrest me and was furious. I went to watch my sons baseball game later that week because I had not seen him due to the hospitalization and as soon as his father saw me he called the police they showed up he brought them to me they cuffed me in front of my 5 yr old son and 5 entire teams of 5-6 yr olds. It was terrible and the account was not behind at the time he just smiled and said you are on my territory you are in Greenville you're going to jail have fun. Ok well I stayed a few days until I could go before the judge then was released. Well within 2 more weeks I had another big bleed then was rushed to Gville Hospital from Anderson and remained hospitalized until my daughter was born at 32 weeks because I hemorrhaged and almost died I went into shock and had to have a blood transfusion and hysterectomy I lost 4 pints of blood. Well it took me some time to recover and my husband was in a very bad car accident and was hospitalized for 2 wks in Augusta GA. So neither of us were able to wk and I got behind pretty bad well once my husband was able to wk we sent as much as we could and eventually got it caught up And they could see we were trying so gave me some time well not long after I was back in the same boat never was notified any of these times about a court date just issued bench warrants that I never knew I have until he gets upset then starts threatening. Then for several years after that I stayed caught up with no problems. I was taking my son home one Sunday on 85 our tire separated from the metal (faulty tire) and we flipped 6 times I thank God everyday that my children were not harmed but I fractured my c2 vertebrae and was hospitalized for 2 weeks along with other injuries and was released and in a neck brace and put out of work for 4 months and went through intensive physical therapy but we still continued to send what we could never stopped Well 2 yrs ago almost 2 1/2 now I went through my second divorce and ever since I have just found myself getting deeper and deeper I can barely survive. When I got my divorce I had my vehicle and what I could fit in it and that was all I was homeless for almost a month all I had was a metal pot and a griddle and I would boil eggs that was my only means of food at times I didn't have those it would take hrs just to boil one egg I could not afford gas so I walked everywhere within reason filling out applications begging for work no one was hiring I checked back every day but after living like this a month I finally had someone let me live in a rundown rental nothing at all but a mattress on the floor was all I had and my clothes no appliances nothing and I had become sick they could not find out what was wrong for a while I would turn blue when I would stand up and was very weak after many different doctors I found out I have a disease of my blood vessels but it is now finally managed so I have started back college full time it was a wakeup call for me I wanted to better myself for myself and my children I want to give them everything they deserve and need I was honestly scared to death I was going to die. But I do not want to have to depend on disability It is controlled now and I want to work and have a career I am a true believer that disability is for people that cannot work what so ever there are too many people who abuse the system and that makes it so hard for the people who truly need it. Well since I have started college last August I have made straight As and trying to find work I did have a job for a short amount of time and during that time I paid every penny on child support. Then one day the cops show up and arrest me and I spent a week in jail lost my job and a family member paid the couple hundred so I could get out well they gave me a week to come up with almost 2,000 dollars or another warrant would be issued so I sold the only thing I had left my vehicle and paid the money but I sold it for what was owed so I would not go back to jail. Since then I have looked for work I had a job with the school work for credit only got to wk for two days then was arrested at my school for child support he questioned my son to death then finally

threatened him with punishment if he did not tell him where I was going to school. I live in a garage with insulation hanging off the walls concrete floors no windows and if it were not for food stamps, I would not be able to eat. Every time I have got a new job I have yet to make it a week before they pick me up and every time the end result because I am kept in jail for weeks I no longer have a job when I get home! They called my school today saying they were coming to pick me up again! I can't even finish a quarter this is my 3rd quarter there I am about to lose my grant due to this there is no way possible for me to get ahead or try to catch it up am I going to be doing this the rest of my life? I am trying so hard not to let this hinder my education but or will to live but I see no way! If I can't even have the opportunity to get a job and work more than 3 days how can I ever get this caught up I am running out of job options I just yesterday was informed I was hired at bosch on 3rd shift but I know when I go in I am going to be arrested this will be 6th job in 4 months and if I could just have the opportunity to work I could get things straightened out but I am not given that opportunity. When I go to apply, it looks terrible only working three days or four here and there. I feel like I have no option but to give up I can't even afford to pay someone gas money to go get my son I only get him sat 9-6 and sun 9-6 and I am an hr away that's four hrs on the rd everyday and he refuses to meet half way and he just moved to Spartanburg 30 more min further but I can't do a thing we play by his rules or not at all I can't even get my child support paid much less pay 200 in gas every other weekend if I want to see him that I can't afford an attorney to even get it straightened out and it's the same officer every time the school officer talked to the arresting officer and he was told that my ex will hound them until I am in custody. He has made my life so hard that I survived one suicide attempt only because someone found me in time and spent 4 weeks in a hospital that is what led to the sat 9-6 and sun 9-6 visitation. I am sorry and maybe it was wrong but knowing I am going to spend the rest of my life in jail because I can't even get a chance to pay is not fair or right. The officers that wk in the college said they don't understand how so many people are walking around some up to 30,000 behind and never even see a court date but yet they search for me and know where I am at any given time or to even get them clothes and up until 3 months ago until I gave in and got food stamps I couldn't even feed my own children or myself so I had no other choice but not to get them because what kind of mother would I be to let my children go hungry I had to put aside what I wanted more than anything to see them to do what was best for them. Christmas and Easter I could not even afford a card for them, they had nothing but that was ok with them but I am facing a year in jail because I have tried to work and have done everything possible to keep a job. How is this right? Just because I have nothing at all not even a car any longer everything I have ever had I have sold with no regrets what so ever to make sure they are taken care of and child support is paid. That is what I am suppose to and want to do but I am confused as to how I am expected to come up with this money if every 3 months I am thrown in jail. It takes so long to find a job fill out apps every single day and once I land one just like that its gone! All I do is cry all I can do I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO! How does a person get a chance or opportunity? I live in constant fear every single day of my life. I cannot better myself to save myself. By the time, you get this I will most likely be in jail facing a year to get out only owing that much more it is a vicious cycle and lost my yet new job once again and my chance for an education I will lose my grants and so forth. Please help me I just need time to at least work a few months and send my entire paycheck each week and I could be caught up but I lose this job and go to jail and get out owing what the entire yr I was in I will only end up right back where I am now. Every time I go to jail mike gets in touch with me and says are you tired of me putting

you through hell this can all stop if you would sign your rights over and if you do not It will just continue. However, I will not ever sign my rights over if it means spending next 6 yrs in and out of jail until Easton turns 18 then so be it. How can one person be able to have so much control over my life and throw me in jail for being poor whenever he wants too? I cannot even have a say so in anything if I do then within 3 days I am in jail.

Sincerely,

Petra Anne McGill

I have no phone or way to contact other than mail or my school email

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