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As a candidate for Humboldt County District Attorney/Superior Court Judge, please respond:

Protection of the civil rights of the elderly and the vulnerable in our community must be one of the highest priorities of the District Attorney's office and the Superior Court. Equal access to justice for all should be a cornerstone in Humboldt County.

Unfortunately, this isn't always the case. For those without connected attorneys on retainer – there is no equal access to justice. This is particularly true but not exclusive to the Probate Court which handles some of the most consequential and life changing decisions in an individual's life – including the removal of basic civil rights and confinement to locked facilities.

Individuals have a right to request representation in a probate conservatorship but it is not required that the court appoint any council (unlike in a Lanterman-Petris-Short conservatorship). In at least two documented cases (PR2100161 & PR2100162), the requests for representation were entirely ignored by the Probate Court who never assigned the Public Defender's office. Also ignoring the recommendation of the court investigator to assign council. The court has never addressed why it failed to assign council and it is unknown if this is a common occurrence.

**As a result**, the individuals were then victims to elder financial fraud by a local prominent attorney, Chris Johnson Hamer. Attorney Hamer has been drawing up legal papers for known Alzheimer's and dementia patients to sign that hands over custody of themselves and their estates to Attorney Hamer's clients. **IF** the Public Defender (or any other council) had been assigned to represent the vulnerable elders – as they had a right to – then it is doubtful this level of blatant fraud would have been rubber stamped by the court. As an In Pro Per petitioner (not by choice) and the adult daughter of the victims – I was ignored entirely. If you're not an attorney, you are invisible in the courthouse.

Elder financial fraud is a crime on paper only in Humboldt County depending on who is perpetrating it.

**As a candidate for District Attorney/Superior Court Judge, what can you do to help ensure local elders and vulnerable residents are not victimized by local attorneys or by the legal system that is supposed to provide oversight and scrutiny without fear or favor?**

The state is actively working to expand conservatorships in a variety of initiatives and proposals which is going to further tax the overburdened probate system. They are creating new lower level paraprofessional positions to fill the workforce needs for this expansion without having the level of training or experience that is currently required. All of this will absolutely require the highest level of scrutiny and oversight by District Attorney's and the courts in order to protect the rights of the vulnerable.

The District Attorney's office/Superior Court Judges will be integral in the implementation of conservatorship expansion locally. How will you, if elected District Attorney/Judge, ensure the process is fair, rights are protected and appropriate scrutiny is provided?

The notated public case record for the probate case is posted at

<https://www.riodelltimes.com/Court/BarbaraConservatorship/>

Ongoing segments related to conservatorship are posted at KMUD News on Soundcloud:

<https://soundcloud.com/search?q=the%20conservatorship%20of%20barbara>

Thank you,

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