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Professor Petersen

English 2010 - 005

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### The Ethics of Relationship Dynamics

Subject of Interest:

Ethical reasoning of establishing, retaining, or nullifying a relationship with in-laws.

Possible Title:

So-So or Just-No?: A Brief Introduction to the Examination of Bad Blood Between Family & In-Laws

Thesis:

State laws that enable grandparents (in-laws) to force relationships with their children & grandchildren infringe upon the rights of an individual to choose whom they will have a relationship with, and should be removed from the law books.

Main Points to Cover:

1. In America, freedom is paramount; this includes personal choice, and that extends to what an individual does, how they act, and what they do.
2. Some states in America allow grandparents (in-laws), to sue their children or the spouse of their children, in order to be allowed access to their grandchildren.
3. Legal adults, or emancipated individuals, may separate from their parents in many ways and for many reasons.

- a. Some of these legal adults may have experienced physical/mental abuse, manipulation, threats, and any number of other factors that lead them to no longer have contact with their parents and/or in-laws.
4. It is critical to examine the ethics in which personal freedoms are affected by such laws.
- a. If a grandparent or in-law is aware that their grandchild is in danger, should they be allowed to sue?
  - b. If an individual is aware that their parent/in-law was ill-suited to guardianship, should they be allowed to protect their own child by preventing a relationship with that parent/in-law?
  - c. If both an individual & their parent/in-law are found to be ill-suited to guardianship, should these lawsuits lead to the child being placed in the custody of the state?
  - d. How can abuse of such laws be prevented, such as if CPS (child protective services) is given a false alert?
  - e. What repercussions should there be for the individuals who gave false alerts to the CPS?
  - f. If the state laws, which allow an individual to sue for a relationship, is based in cultural norms, such as grandparents typically being allowed in a child's life, then could a precedent be set for other lawfully required relationships?

- g. If one parent doesn't want their child to have a relationship with their parents/in-laws but the other does, should the debate be taken to court?

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