

TESTIMONY OF
DARREN NOBLE
FATHER IN RECOVERY
FROM METHAMPHETAMINE ADDICTION

**COMMITTEE HEARING: THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EFFECTS OF THE METHAMPHETAMINE
EPIDEMIC ON AMERICAS' CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM**

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
U.S. SENATE
WASHINGTON, DC

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Good morning Senators. Thank you for the chance to speak to you as a father in recovery. Aaronette and I are the proud parents of two children, Casey who is six and Summer who is 15 months old. Summer is here with us today. I am also the very proud stepfather of Joey Binkley.

I used meth for 14 years. My wife and I used meth together. We wanted to get help to stop hurting ourselves and our children. I tried treatment. I went to 4 different treatment programs. But each program was set up for single adults. I couldn't bring Aaronette or the children with me. So I couldn't concentrate on the treatment itself. I couldn't stop worrying about my wife still being in the situation that I left. I couldn't stop worrying about what was happening with our children. For treatment to work you need the time and space to think about you. But I couldn't think about me. I could only worry about my family.

After so many years of using meth, trying get clean, and using again, I ended up in prison. In 1999 I was arrested for manufacturing meth. I use to manufacture meth by myself out in the woods. When I went into prison, I weighed 120 pounds. I was not offered treatment in prison and after prison. After serving 3 years and 10 months, I was released.

Life didn't get better for us after prison. Aaronette and I continued to use meth. Our addiction got so terrible that in 2005, Aaronette gave birth to our second daughter who was born with meth in her. Child welfare took our baby girl away. But child welfare, along with the family court program, placed us into Bridgeway's family treatment program. Aaronette went to the women and children's program. I went into the men's program.

I can't tell you how wonderful it felt to do treatment as a family. In the family treatment program, I knew that my wife and children were safe and healing. That really eased my mind. I could focus on my treatment. But I could also heal with my family. At Bridgeway, we did family therapy, couples counseling, and parenting classes. I learned how to communicate with my wife. I learned how to honor her. You see, before our relationship was based on drugs. But now we know how to talk to each other and love each other. We also know how to be parents.

When I was using meth, our daughter Casey looked so scared. Our daughter Summer lived with her Grandmother. Summer was very attached to her grandmother. But today, our daughter Casey has a beautiful sparkle in her eye. She is doing well in school. Our daughter Summer was returned to our custody five months ago, and she is inseparable from us. We are a family.

We have a support system made up of wonderful people from the family court, Division of Family Services, and the family treatment program. They all worked together to help our family get clean and stabilize. Our social circle is made up of other parents in recovery and people in NA. We are blessed. I am working in construction. We attend church. We still go to therapy. We are a family with faith and hope.