

CONTINUING LEGAL EDUCATION

THE BAR ASSOCIATION OF SAN FRANCISCO



The Lawyer Referral and Information Services - Court Programs presents

Torn Apart, A Discussion with Professor Dorothy Roberts

How abolition of the current child welfare system can build a safer world

Speaker

Professor Dorothy Roberts

University of Pennsylvania Carey Law School

Moderator

Kate Durham

San Francisco CASA

Many believe the child welfare system's purpose is to protect children from abuse. Drawing on decades of research, Dorothy Roberts reveals that this state apparatus is better understood as a "family policing system" because it is designed to accuse, investigate, regulate, and disrupt the most marginalized families—especially those that are impoverished, Black, and Indigenous—by threatening them with child removal. Child protection investigations will ensnare half of Black children before they reach age 18, putting their families under intense state surveillance and supervision. Black children are disproportionately likely to be torn from their families and placed in foster care, driving many to juvenile detention and imprisonment. Child protection agencies collaborate with criminal law enforcement and prisons, and they share a common carceral logic that addresses human needs by punishment instead of social change. Roberts argues that, given family policing's oppressive design, reform efforts cannot solve the problem. Rather, the only way to stop the harm caused by family policing is to abolish the child welfare system and its underlying logic—to dismantle it incrementally while simultaneously imagining and building a radically different approach to supporting families and keeping children safe.

Topics

- Recognition of racism and inequity in the current child welfare system, including legal mandates and funding directives that promote "family policing and regulation."
- Identification of racial bias and disparate impact of the child welfare system on Black, Indigenous and impoverished families.
- Legal strategies for prevention of further systemic racism and racial harm.
- Connection of child welfare system to juvenile delinquency system, policing, criminal prosecution and incarceration, including the combined effects on Black families.
- Logic of incremental abolition to dismantle current law and system, while re-imagining and rebuilding a radically different framework to support families and keep children safer than the current legal system.
- Policy recommendations to alter legal mandates, funding distribution, and federal law to prevent further harm to BIPOC communities and low-income families.

**Thursday
March 23, 2023**

MCLE Registration: 4:30 - 5:00 p.m.

Virtual Program: 5:00 - 6:00 p.m.

MCLE: 1 hour recognition and elimination of bias

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Registration is required.

Cost

\$5 Virtual

\$35 In person

Location

Bayview Opera House

4705 3rd St, San Francisco, CA 94124

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