

## **Local Parent Activist celebrates Martin Luther King day - by being peacefully arrested.**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE, January 15, 2008**

Syracuse, NY – At 2 PM today John Murtari plans on returning to the Hanley Federal Building carrying pictures of parents and children unjustly separated. He also plans on using kid's chalk to write "I LOVE YOU" to his son and "SEN. CLINTON HELP US" on the ground outside the building. Murtari expects to be arrested on Martin Luther King's birthday, "what better way to commemorate what he stood for than peacefully sacrificing your individual freedom for a great Civil Right you believe in." In a message to his group before the event he summarized:

.... arrested with no bull-horn, no animosity, and no anger toward our brothers & sisters (which include the other parent, judges, lawyers, social workers, etc.), but always first to say I'm doing this because..... my most precious right to love my child is being violated! (The exclamation point being made not by frothing at the mouth, but by voluntarily surrendering personal freedom.) The great power of what Martin Luther King and Mahatma Gandhi called NonViolent Action.

**A Powerful Message:** Parents not only making a statement about reform, but also sending a message to the world that social change and justice can be promoted without violence toward others. A lesson that Faith, Love, and Personal Sacrifice are even more powerful

His only regret, that he has been unable to get more parents actively involved in similar actions, "it is a difficult challenge for many people, but with time I certainly expect to see more parents come forward."

Mr. Murtari, a native of Lyons, New York and an Air Force Academy graduate with a Masters from Syracuse University, is a local coordinator for the group. He is the President of a small Internet startup company located in Baldwinsville, NY. In 2006 he was involved in a hunger strike which gained national attention and caused a movie producer, Mr. Angelo Lobo, to visit Syracuse and interview Murtari in jail. Lobo includes footage of Murtari in his upcoming film, "Support?", on the failures of the Nation's family law system. Film trailers including Murtari are visible at <http://www.supportthemovie.com/>

Murtari spoke of the need for Family Law reform and protecting the Civil Right of mothers, fathers, and children to be secure as family. A need to control the ease of parent/child splits that presently occur due to divorce, separation, or the actions of social services. He tried to make a comparison to the actions of the black 'Freedom Riders' from the 50s who would peacefully sit in the front of a bus, accepting arrest to call attention to the injustice of segregation.

Murtari's group, AKidsRight.Org, hopes that a local meeting between group members and Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton (D-NY) may be near. Local and national members have been calling and faxing the offices of Senator Clinton regarding the recognition and protection of their Civil Right to raise their own children. The group hopes this simple act will demonstrate their love for the kids and their deep convictions that serious reform is necessary.

The Group would like Senator Clinton to respond to their petitions for Congressional Hearings into the need for National Family Law reform and potentially a Family Rights Act, by meeting with local parents. The Group is hoping for Congressional Hearings into Family Law reform so that group members affected by the present patchwork of laws across the nation will have a chance to tell their stories.

The Group's web site highlights the NonViolent philosophy and practice Martin Luther King used to break the grip of segregation. It hopes a similar attitude will help bring reform and also healing to parents who are often involved in bitter child custody disputes with each other or social services.

In contrast to the bitterness and anger which is normally associated with protest efforts and family issues -- Murtari plans a positive attitude. He says they are NOT there to condemn Senator Clinton as a "bad person" or as someone who doesn't care about family or children's issues; however, as a natural part of the political process they want to show their concern over the issue and to increase her sensitivity to their cause.

**For more information:**

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Background information, copies of court orders, at the web site:

[www.AKidsRight.Org/clinton](http://www.AKidsRight.Org/clinton)

An electronic copy of this release can be found at:

<http://www.AKidsRight.Org/clinton/release41.pdf>