



Chapter 6

Closing Arguments

WHAT IS A CLOSING ARGUMENT?

When both sides (or each of the parties) are done telling their sides of the story, the Judicial Officer may (but does not have to) ask if any party wants to make a “Closing Argument.” A Closing Argument is a very short recap of what you already told the Court to remind the Judicial Officer the most important parts of your story.

If both sides want to do a Closing Argument, the person who filed the Petition (the “Petitioner”) or Motion (the “Movant”) that caused the Hearing to be scheduled will say his/her Closing Argument first. Then the other side (the “Respondent”) will say his/her Closing Argument. If there are more than 2 parties in the case, and each party wants to make a Closing Arguments, then the person who filed the Petition (the “Petitioner”) or Motion (the “Movant”) that caused the Hearing to be scheduled will say his/her Closing Argument first. Thereafter, the remaining parties will make their Closing Arguments in the same order as Opening Statements, if any, or the same order as that followed when asking questions of the first person to tell his/her side of the story.

The following is an example of what a Closing Statement might sound like in a custody case:

Your Honor, today I proved to the Court that it is in my child’s best interests to give me custody of my child. I explained to the Court about the good relationship she and I have and how well she is doing living in my home and at school. Her teacher testified as to how much better she is doing now that she primarily resides with me. My sister and my mother also testified about their close relationship with my daughter and how active they are in her life. Based upon all of this testimony, it is clear that it is in her best interests for me to have custody.

If neither side wants to make a Closing Argument or if the Judicial Officer does not want to hear Closing Arguments, then there will be no Closing Argument