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## Actress, other women allege abuses by Hawaii's Family Court

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Actress Brenda Dickson, best known in Hawai'i for a bitter divorce case that landed her in jail, appeared before legislators yesterday to call for improvements in the Family Court system.

Dickson last year won an appeal of lower-court rulings in her divorce case, with the Intermediate Court of Appeals deciding that part-time Family Court Judge Darryl Choy abused his discretion when he ruled against Dickson on several issues in the acrimonious marital dissolution.

The case has been sent back to the lower court for additional proceedings.

"What they did to me was no different than the Nazi regime," Dickson told two state representatives in an appearance at the Legislature.

During one of her divorce- case hearings here in February 2007, Dickson mocked her husband's lawyer with Nazi salutes and told Choy that her divorce settlement was a "fraud."

That hearing was convened after Dickson had been jailed for 16 days for failure to abide by the terms of the settlement.

She was released after promising to abide by the terms of the deal, but continued to press for legal redress through appeals of Choy's rulings.

In an 85-page decision released in October, the appeals court upheld several of Dickson's arguments.

Dickson "contends that the Family Court abused its discretion when it denied (her) multiple requests for an extension of pretrial deadlines, and sanctioned her for missing the deadlines by excluding evidence," the appellate decision said.

"Based on the circumstances of this case, we agree," the court ruled.

Dickson said Choy's rulings had rendered her penniless.

"They think if they make you homeless, they make you helpless," Dickson told state Reps. Gene Ward, R-17th (Kalama Valley, Queen's Gate, Hawaii 'i Kai) and John Mizuno, D-30th, (Kamehameha Heights, Kalihi Valley, Fort Shafter).

Ward and Mizuno also heard from several other women who said they had been wronged by Family Court decisions.