

To: The Australian Senate
Parliament House,
Canberra.

RE: Family Law Legislation Amendment (Family Violence and Other Measures) Bill 2011 [Provisions].

28 April 2011

Dear Senators,

It is welcome to see that changes are being made to Australian Family Law, however, I view that the proposed changes will adversely affect Australian families.

I understand that the initiation of these changes was the dastardly act of Arthur Freeman who threw his daughter from such a public landmark as the Westgate Bridge; as a root cause for legislative changes.

Violence comes in all shapes and sizes - including female perpetrators.

For example, Arthur Feemans' act was first perpetrated by a mother, Gabriela Garcia who took her own life along with her son, Oliver, jumping from the Westgate Bridge only seven months prior. What is disturbing is that there was no 'fuss' made about a mother taking her child's life.

Statistics I have read show that biological mothers do more harm to children than their biological fathers; yet, the violence provisions of the Act seemed to be targeted to fathers. The greatest protectors of children are the biological fathers.

The latest act to be reported of harm to children by a parent has been an unnamed mother driving her car into a tree in Adelaide in an attempted murder-suicide; while the latest charge of murder has been against the biological mother and step-father of Kiesha Abrahams.

Again, the disturbing trend is that these acts are only considered page-3 newspaper articles, yet filicide is the greatest cause of death for children. It is chilling that the intention of these Amendments are to convict the greatest protectors of our children and ignore the greatest killers of our children.

I view that the Amendments will only exacerbate Family Law disputes, encourage false claims which will increase the acrimony and as a consequence, deny the children the right to see one or both parents.

The Amendments also do not differentiate between entrenched violence or situational violence – which are two different acts.

Please, do not allow the amendments through without also considering mothers as perpetrators, also.