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House of Representatives Standing Committee on Family and Community Affairs

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LETTER ACKNOWLEDGED BY

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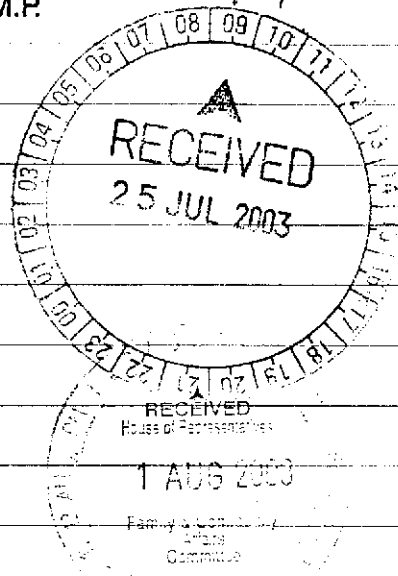
JOANNA GASH M.P.

Secretary:

24/7/03

IAN AULSEBROOK
64 McMAHONS RD
NORTH NARRA NSW
2541

TELEPHONE [REDACTED]
mob [REDACTED]



Dear Mrs Gash

I am writing in response to your letter regarding the inquiry into Custody Arrangements in the Event of Family Separation.

With regards to Section (a)(i):-

- YES, there should be a presumption that children will spend equal time with each parent. I am constantly being told that I have an equal responsibility to my children, which I willingly accept, but with accepting that responsibility I should also be given the privilege of equal time to care for & raise my children. The children have a right to a father too! This circumstance should only be rebutted where one parent is either incapable or presents a danger to the children, and EVIDENCE of this can be presented as opposed to the word of a vindictive ex partner.

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With regard to Section (a)(ii):

- A court should order that the children of separated parents have contact with other persons, including their grandparents, IN ALL CASES!! Trying to spend time with your children yourself, enable them to spend time with Grandparents, Uncles, Aunts & cousins, family friends is virtually impossible in the limited time given to non-custodial parents. This has caused indescribable heartache & suffering in my family, as my ex-partner has made it as difficult as possible over many years for my children to see both me & my family, ~~as~~ all the while flying in the face of both court orders & moral decency. It goes without saying that this shouldn't happen where there is PROOF of danger to the child or children.

With regard to Section (b):

- Without doubt, the existing child support formula is a complete failure. It is the most morally bankrupt & discriminatory organisation I have ever had the displeasure of dealing with. There is no incentive for me to work hard because by the time I pay extra tax & child support I'm running myself into the ground for nothing. My ex-partner now has 5 children to 3 different fathers, of which my 2 are the first 2. Both the other "sperm donors" pay nothing or very little, so my money is being used to raise 3 children that are not my responsibility, & the ultimate

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indignity of this is that my children miss out because "mom can't afford it!" I work hard, I have a good job, & I am more than willing to provide my children with everything they need, however I am not willing to pay for the lifestyle of my ex partner & her lack of morals in having children to whomever she met.

In a recent appeal to the CSA due to increased cost of sport for one of my children, I had to explain & show evidence of every dollar I earn & how I spend it. The first thing they do with this is send it to my ex partner! What business is it of hers? I don't get sent her financial position & details. The result of the appeal was that the CSA acknowledged & accepted that I had incurred extra costs, but there would be ~~not~~ no reduction in maintenance because my ex partner told them that she didn't agree to my son playing a higher level of sport. Thing is, she did at the start of the season. The CSA ignored my evidence, receipts etc, & blindly accepted her word.

The CSA cause more problems than they solve. It is a complete joke.

However the greatest cost, & sadly the one that seems to be overlooked because it's not so easily measured, is the human cost. I have been a non-astodial parent for almost 10 years. I have suffered a nervous breakdown & at one point was suicidal. It has affected my health.

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& overall well being on more occasions than I care to recount. I have seen the effect it has had on my parents, even though I feel I have to keep as much as I can from them because I know it worries them sick. I have seen close mates looking down the barrel for all the same reasons. Much of this is down to the CSA & the courts, the feeling of worthlessness & hopelessness kills people. I have said many times before, & I'll say it again, the CSA & the family court have the blood of these people on their hands!!

I can only hope that this enquiry will stop someone in the future having to go through what I was put through, both financially & emotionally. If any further comment or help is needed I'm available on the phone numbers on the first page. Please keep fighting for us Joanna, there's thousands out there like me who don't have the self belief to speak up.

yours sincerely

Ian Hulsebrook