

Submission No: 113

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Secretary:

Dear Secretary,

I would like to say how welcome this inquiry is into the situation myself and thousands of other fathers face every day.

I have been separated for the past 3 years and divorced for the last 12 months. I want to emphasise that the separation and subsequent divorce was not my doing nor was it my wish to end my marriage.

Today I live in a remote location 1 days travels from my children and the ex wife who I still love very much.

I will not hide from my responsibility nor try to escape it and I despise those who do. I pay what I am told and give more when asked. I spoil my children whenever I get the chance.

Like so many men in this situation I too considered the option of suicide. But realised that although it would cure my pains it would only hurt the ones I loved and those who loved me.

I have a number of thoughts which I am sure are shared by many.

1. Why do our payments increase when we get a pay rise? There should be a set maximum amount for each child, dependant on age and the total income of the ex spouse (and any permanent partners) considering that child support is a joint affair and should be shared financially by both parents. Of course this should take into consideration the fact that the custodial parent has the majority of care. I would consider a 75/25 or maybe even 80/20 split of the financial burden where currently the non-custodial parent is paying 100% (or seems to be)

i.e. according to the Child Support payment calculator. If I were earning up to \$119471.00 per year I would be paying \$34290 of that as Child Support. That is some very well off children in my opinion and I doubt very much the children would see it all. If I was wealthy and earn more my payments would stay the same. A plain case of the better off you are the better off you are.

2. There should be a system of checks and balances for the spending of the Child Support money by the custodial parent.

As the system stands the custodial parent can do with the money whatever they want.

3. As appreciated as this enquiry is it does little for men in my situation. I can not take my children on a 50/50 basis so I will miss out on much of the benefit of this enquiry. My current living conditions and the distances involved restrict me having my children with me. Mostly due to the fact that under the current system I cannot afford to purchase or rent an appropriate home.

4. It seems the current situation is that the Government is using the parental situation to their best advantage and placing the majority of the burden back on those who in many cases can not cope with it.

i.e. upon leaving the marital home we have the burden of finding a place to live, furnish the new home/unit, all the necessities required to maintain a home. We may become involved in new relationships where the new partner would be compelled to work because my present financial position would not allow for anything different.

5. The current system both supports and encourages marriage breakdown. As I said earlier "I didn't want my marriage to fail and I did not want a divorce" These were choices made for me by my ex wife. Yet she is the one who benefits from the situation, while I am penalised for my marriage failure.

I read recently where the Government plans include aiding the non-working non-custodial parent in finding work so he/she can then be forced to make payments. This should also include those who are caring for children who can look after them selves.

i.e., if the children are of school age or left school the custodial parent should be encouraged to find employment also. Share the care share the financial responsibility.

The current system requires a major overhaul. We need a system that is fair and tenable to both parents. We need a system that encourages forgiveness and understanding instead of the current system that instils distrust and malice towards each other.

I would like nothing more than for my family to be together again but there are many things standing between myself and my ex wife. One of those is the Child Support argument. This system constantly drives a wedge between parents.

I thank you for the opportunity in putting my views forward. I hope in the very near future we have a system which is fair to all those involved.