

Submission No: 404

Date Received: 8-8-03

Secretary:

Pauline Davis
14 Wilbraham Court
Frankston Victoria 3199

Committee Secretary
Standing Committee on Family & Community Affairs
Child Custody Arrangement Inquiry
Department of the House of Representatives
Parliament house
Canberra ACT 2600

8 AUG 2003
13:19

Dear Sir/Madam,

I would like to make a submission to the child custody arrangement inquiry. I have enclosed a letter that I recently sent to: John Howard, Simon Crean, Larry Anthony and Amanda Vandstone. I would like to add the following points.

1. Centerlink has a ceiling with regards to payments made to single parents regardless of the amount of child support that they receive. If they do not receive child support, the government does not believe that they need more money to raise their children. This encourages the single parent to seek employment for extra money if they feel that they need more. If the government believes this through one department, why does child support agency believe differently?
2. Most custodial parents do not spend all the child support that they receive, directly on the children. They tend to improve their own lives. Most of the children involved do not receive "better" toys or clothes than if the custodial parent was not receiving child support. They may go on more holidays or live in a larger more expensive house instead.
3. The archaic formula used for child support payments was introduced at a time when women {most custodial parents}, were not able to find employment because of many years out of the workforce or no work skills. These were the women who married straight out of high school and had children or if they did have a job when they got married, it was a low skill menial job which they gave up when they had children. Those days are long gone. Most women have good income earning potential, either through jobs that they already have or they have worked during the course of the marriage between having the children. If they have not worked for a long time, there is assistance available to them, i.e. training courses e.t.c.
4. When a custodial parent enters a defacto relationship or remarries, the finances of the spouse are taken into account with every other government department except C.S.A. I can assure you that the discussion at the supermarket does not include things like: "you and I can have steak for tea but we can only afford soup and toast for your children because we only get x amount of child support, so they can go without." While this should not relieve the paying parent of their

role of assisting financially for their children, it should at least be taken into account to some degree.

5. Often, as the result of lengthy legal proceedings, and losing the major asset, (the family home), most non-custodial parents commence single life with a financial deficit. Sadly this is something that they usually do not ever recover from, either emotionally or financially. Most custodial parents have either the profit from the sale of the family home or the asset of the family home with which to rebuild their lives with.

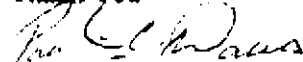
I would like to close with an excerpt from Pauline Hanson's maiden speech to Parliament dated 10/09/1996, in which she states:

"I wish to comment briefly on some social and legal problems encountered by many of my constituents-- problems not restricted to just my electorate of Oxley. I refer to the social and family upheaval created by the Family Law Act and the ramifications of that Act embodied in the child support scheme. The Family Law Act, which was the child of the disgraceful senator Lionel Murphy, should be repealed. It has brought death, misery and heartache to countless thousands of Australians. Children are treated like pawns in some crazy game of chess. The child support scheme has become unworkable, very unfair and one sided. Custodial parents can often profit handsomely at the expense of parents paying child support, and in many cases, the non-custodial parent simply gives up employment to escape the, in many cases, heavy and punitive financial demands. Governments must give to all those who have hit life's hurdles, the chance to rebuild and have a future."

As you can see, not much has changed in the seven years since that statement was made to parliament. People are still dying through stress, drug, alcohol related conditions or violence from a frustrated ex. Then there are the suicides. Non-custodial parents are either quitting their jobs or living well below the poverty line, and custodial parents are still reaping the "reward" for having "kept" the children.

I wish you well in your decision making and hope that this problem can be resolved with a fairer outcome for all involved.

Thank You



Pauline Davis.