

Deborah Hunt

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April 21, 2005

The Committee Secretary  
Standing Committee on Family and Human Services  
House of Representatives  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600  
Email address: fhs.reps@aph.gov.au

Dear Committee Secretary

I am writing in relation to maternity payments for Intercountry Adoptees. We have two adopted children from Korea. We feel so privileged to be given the opportunity by both Australia and Korea to welcome these children into our lives and provide a loving family.

I was extremely pleased when the Liberal government introduced the \$3000 maternity payment to children less than 26 weeks, as I knew that our second baby Mia would qualify. We collected our first child Luke in 2002 when he was 22 weeks old so I assumed that Mia would be the same age. Unfortunately due to bureaucracy, visas, legalisation processes etc, we collected Mia when she was 28 weeks of age. This of course put her over the 26 week threshold by 2 weeks. I would appreciate you considering our case in providing the payment as she was born on September 17, 2004 which qualifies her.

Adoptees and parents face challenging times no matter what age, and I believe that we should not be disadvantaged in any way and instead should be rewarded and supported financially to rear our children. There are very few adoptions annually and by removing the age limit of 26 weeks would assist all families tremendously. There is nothing greater in life than providing a loving secure environment for a child and as a society it is our obligation to ensure this.

Whilst you can never put a price on the joy and pleasure our children bring us, the cost of intercountry adoption is very expensive. The adoption of our two children has cost us in the vicinity of \$50,000. This cost does not include flights, accommodation and associated costs required to collect our babies from their birth country.

Please review your policies on maternity payments for intercountry adoptees specifically the age limit of the children eligible to these benefits to enable all families the right to all entitlements available to birth families.

Your sincerely

Deborah Hunt

