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Secretary: B. Forbes

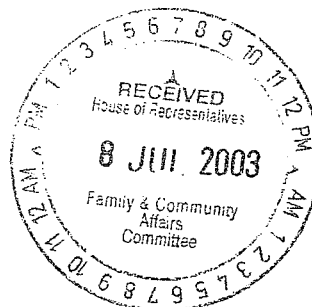
Sent: Tuesday, 8 July 2003 12:02 PM

To: Committee, FCA (REPS)

Subject: Joint Residency Arrangements for Children in Separated Families.

John Sibilant
3 Dudley Street
HABERFIELD NSW 2045

Committee Secretary
Standing Committee on Family and Community Affairs
Child Custody Arrangements Inquiry
Department of the House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
Australia



Fax: (02) 6277 4844

Email: FCA.REPS@aph.gov.au <<mailto:fca.reps@aph.gov.au>>

Dear Sir / Madam

I am writing to express my strong support for the proposals to increase joint residency arrangements for children in separated families.

This is a proposal that is long overdue. It has great merit in that it will strengthen the opportunity for good relationships between both parents and their children. The presumption of joint custody will also benefit parents. It can benefit parents because it can eliminate argument over parenting arrangements. In addition, parents are benefited through the sharing of the burdening of raising children and will provide parents with opportunities for themselves through greater self-development time.

Conflict between parents is maximised in the current family system for the simple reason that "the winner takes all".

There is no incentive in current family law practice for cooperation between parents especially with the sharing of the burden associated with managing children and their development by one parent on their own.

Present family law practice punishes the parent with the least amount of residency with the children. Almost inevitably it is fathers who are on the receiving end of this harsh treatment.

Research demonstrates that as a consequence of the type of residence orders currently preferred by

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the courts many children lose contact with their fathers. The loss of these relationships is unnecessary and avoidable.

I look forward to the development of a family law system that recognises the importance of fathers in their children's lives.

Thank you,

John Sibilant

8/07/2003