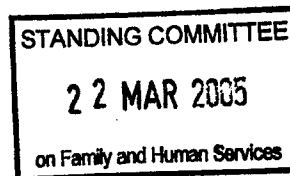


From: Rob and Julie [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, 21 March 2005 6:03 AM
To: Committee, FHS (REPS)
Subject: Intercountry Adoption
 The Committee Secretary



I am writing in regards to the inequality that exists between how the government handles financial assistance for biological children and adopted children for a family in relation to the MATERNITY PAYMENT and excessive government charges through the Department of Human services when going through the adoption process.

My husband and I have adopted our son [REDACTED]. It has been a long road and we do not like complaining about the costs involved but it has been a financial injustice in comparison to people who biologically have children and the financial support they have from the government (in our case as our son was adopted over 26 weeks old).

Luckily we have a great family and they helped financially towards our dream coming true. We are trying again but this time around we do not want to accept large sums of money from family, as this is just putting the financial burden onto other families.

The cost of raising our children is the same as raising your own biological children so why do adoptive parents have to start on such a financial rollercoaster with struggles from:

1. the cost of adoption (as below)
2. to not being accepted for maternity payment if your child is over 26 weeks old (which most are over this age)
3. being rejected from the Double Orphan Allowance due to policy we were rejected due to Joseph's parents not being deceased and he was not relinquished by his biological parents.

This is just some costs adoptive parents endure:

Registration of interest	\$100
Application	\$1200 first applicants \$1000 second time around
Education groups	\$200 per couple or one single applicant
First and single applications	\$2685 second time around it is stands now at \$1500
Extra costs throughout The process due to changes And updates can be	\$930
Approval and prep of doc.	\$1500
Allocation of child/en	\$155
Post placement support visits	\$480
Final visit	\$155
Any additional post placement	\$120 per visit
Travel cost of social worker If over 50km away from worker	\$100

It works out at \$7500 before travelling over to the country. Travel depending on which country can vary a lot. Ours cost over \$5000 for travel for the week. So adoptive parents are paying over \$10 000 straight up before the child is in our care safe at home.

Despite all of these expenses that any adoptive parent would endure and find it the best money spent in there lives to have their babies in there arms. I find it quite hurtful to try to justify ourselves as rightful first parents outlaying all the costs of a "First Child/Baby" into our homes and not being able to be eligible due to the child's age criteria (over 26 weeks). Do first mums who biologically have children have to justify where they spend the maternity payment. The

government state that it is to help family's with the initial costs of having a new baby. We adoptive parents have our new babies and are rejected due to the "Over 26 weeks" clause. It should be irrespective of this age. My son was two years and two months old before I could have him with us, but the costs were the same post him coming to Australia. Setting up a cot, nappies, wipes, doctors visits etc.

I believe there is a need for change with the Maternity payment to accept any baby/child that enters the family. And an investigation into inter-country adoption costs to make it more affordable for couples as there are many children still without families. We are going a second time and would love to have more children, but to go back a third time. Well, it unfortunately does come down to money some times. I hope by the time we adopted our second we will have the added support of the Maternity Payment and the adoption fees have reduced so that we may extend our family again.

Please address these issues

Regards

Julie and Robert Nestic