-------- Original Message --------
Subject: Child Support & Contact
From: [redacted]
Date: Wed, June 25, 2003 12:15 pm
To: <senator.ferris@aph.gov.au>

Dear Senator,

Thank you for your recent support of changes in the "paradigms" of Child Support...

Child Support should not only be defined in financial terms. It should not be set up to perpetuate a "victim" mentality and or abrigate responsibility. Child Support should be THAT - support for children, their welfare, their development, their sense of security and well-being.

As a father of three (two from a previous marriage) children I totally support the opportunity for fathers to be valued and acknowledged in children's lives.

When my relationship broke down my children were left in my care. When I returned to work, I agreed to share care with my former wife. I began, at my own volition, to pay for the childrens expenses.

A situation began where more and more my children were held to ransom - "more money or you won't see them" to the point where I was forced to take legal action just to see the children I so desperately love.

To my horror my legal advice, and second opinions, were that the Family Court routinely will grant full custody of small children (aged 2 and 4years) to the mother and I could expect no better than every second weekend. Anything more than that would be classified as "unlikely and unusual".

I also learned through this process that nothing could be done to stop "poisoning" by scorned parents. I begged my ex-wife to stop telling the children what a bad person I was - for my darling children this was just not true. Our relationship did not work, I had been an imperfect husband but not a bad one, but I was always a good father and loved my children dearly. However the general "paradigm" seems to be that mother's love the kids and fathers pay for them.

The stress built up, but my focus has always been what is best for the children.

My ex-wife's stated aim was "to grind me into the ground" and the "system" as she called it was to be her method. I became a full-time occupation for three people. Herself, Parents and Sister on a part-time basis.

The court sent us to mediation. The mediator informed us that Court was the worst place for children and we should seek to get out of the "system" for the children's benefit. I agreed totally - my wife had no interest in getting out of "the system". The poison was hurting my 4 year old daughter and I thought then that to "stop the arguement" I would consent to the "expected outcome - every second weekend, half of Easter half of Christmas day".

Though a devoted and loving father - all that seemed to be in my favour was that there was no domestic violence! While my ability as a father seemed in question, my ex-wifes was never in doubt!!

I set about "settling into a routine" where at least part-time I could demonstrate my love and dedication to the kids. When Child Support again contacted me to advise that my ex-wife now was regarded as having Sole Care of the children and 27% of my PRE-TAX income was to go to her. With NO STIPULATION that it went to the kids etc. She was free to use the funds as she saw fit.

I told child support that I want to see my kids more!! But was informed that I did not have those choices. Child Support treat me as if my only role is to PAY for the kids. But you can't BUY love. I can't BUY my kids a sense of self-love and well-being. I can't BUY my kids their sense of security and self-worth. I TEACH them that.

How does my son learn to be a man? Child Suppot can't BUY that for him. Nor is it satisfactory that men can get away with that.

MEN have the obligation to CARE FOR and NURTURE their children. Providing money to "outsource these functions" is NOT ACCEPTABLE. It is not acceptable as a community and it is not acceptable as a family.

The moves in Federal Parliament to recognize men's contributions to the raising and caring of children can ONLY be re-dressed by making Child Support payments commensurate with the overall contribution made by father NOT SOLELY their obligation to PAY.

MEN have a VALUE, men have a parenting role, men have a nurturing role, a teaching role, a loving role. That is not a woman's monopoly.

Though the "system" is not predicated on that assumption.

Thank you for beginning to restore my faith in parliament's "community" understanding.

I want to be a good dad!

The current system Rates me a good dad because "I pay on time". That is apalling. It devalues fathers, it hurts children, it provides a cop out for those fathers who do not contribute, it provides validation for those women who would "scorn" men.

I am a good dad because I GIVE MY TIME, willingly and lovingly with a plan to grow good children. I hope these changes give me the opportunity to GIVE SUPPORT to my children, not PAY to OUTSOURCE my obligations.

Thank you!!

Kind regards,