

Mrs Leisa Low
[REDACTED]
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4th April 2005

The Secretary
Standing Committee on Family and Human Services
House of Representatives

RE: Inquiry into Adoption of Children from Overseas

By way of introduction my name is Leisa Low. My husband, Brad and our family live in [REDACTED] Queensland. We are only new to the International Adoption process, but we have discovered in the short time since making our Expression of Interest in October 2004 that the process is not consistent between States and that the entitlements provided to adoptive families is not fair in comparison to other families.

To address the first term of reference: I believe that the differences between States and Territories do not make for the best system, but results in families from different states being unfairly treated and disadvantaged. For example in our case, I am 35, Brad is 37 we have four biological children aged seven, five, three and 19 months. We understand that the whole process could take close to four years from our initial application to picking up our child/ren. This is an excessive amount of time, of course the process is time consuming by its very nature, and we expect to be assessed vigorously to make certain we are "right" for the job, but the time in other states is so much less. This amount of time would also bring us close to the upper age limits for adoption from Ethiopia.

It concerns me that potential parents are being "aged" out of the opportunity to adopt because of this excessive time for their applications to be assessed.

We want to be assessed for siblings because having four children already (biological or adopted) discounts us from making another application. I don't think it is a State Government responsibility to decide, that because we live in Queensland we are only allowed a certain number of children; surely this would be based on what we can provide for our children. We also believe that it would be better for any child we adopt to have siblings who have come from the same country/culture. To have a bond with someone with similar experiences, if we only adopt one child we could not provide this.

To address the second term of reference: Having four biological children I know quite well the cost of giving birth and setting up for a new baby, and have always appreciated any help towards these costs. But the cost of caring for children doesn't reduce after they are six months of age, when the entitlements are not longer available. I believe this age

STANDING COMMITTEE
- 4 APR 2005
on Family and Human Services

limit needs to be abolished and that adoptive families receive all the assistance that other families rightfully receive.

To be further financially disadvantaged when you arrive home with your new child on top of the extraordinary costs already met is simply not fair.

Thank you for reading my thoughts

Leisa Low
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