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My name is Bev Pattenden and I am a Co-Founder of the group called "Grandparents in distress" at Grafton. Our group commenced in September 2002, after we realised that we were not alone in our anguish of our grandchildren being separated from us and one of their parents, usually the father and our sons. We felt we were powerless to make changes unless we formed a group. We came to work with Dads in Distress when we realised that we had similar problems, that had existed for over 25 years despite the attempts of many to bring it to the attention of the public. We found that we were just part of a system where members of a family had lost their rights and that lawyers, psychologists and the court had taken over that role, causing suffering, hardship, dismay and suicide. We found that mothers now had all the rights and fathers had none, until such time that the court decided otherwise. That in most cases the fathers had been pushed aside as being irrelevant and unworthy of fathering their children and that it could cost thousands of dollars to prove his worthiness to be included in the child's life, that the child support system was enough to cause the non custodial parent to sometimes live in desperate poverty. We found that the word "violence" had been twisted to mean even an angry word.

After much anguish and research we found that we were fighting a powerful and secret government authority, that been instigated in the days of the Federal Labor Government and had not been changed even in the days of the Coalition.

There are many grandparents who will not speak out, because they are afraid of causing even further problems and I would probably not have come forward if my son had lived in my town and had the same surname as myself, for obvious reasons.

It is our belief that a presumption of shared or joint parenting should be the accepted right of all parents. This will also give access to other family members.....that efficient laws should be available where there is a danger to either parent or child..... with penalties for false and misleading accusations under normal criminal law.

As you will have gathered by now, this is a worldwide problem in Western Societies and so it is of no use trying to correct the problems unless we know how it started, who is the actual enemy and why it continues to this day. Unless we realise that it is part of social engineering based on the Socialist/Comunist Manifesto to "destroy the family unit and religion" we are wasting our time and will bring even further anguish and sorrow upon our society, for if it is the plan to destroy the family unit, then it is also the plan to take the authority away from both parents and give it to the "state". I would therefore ask that you be very careful indeed that in your genuine efforts to correct the errors of the past 30 years and to give back the rights to both parents, that you unintentionally set in motion a set of laws that will take all power away from both parents and give it to the "state-child" under the guise of the "United Nations rights of the child", for this is the greatest deception of all.

I thank you all for your efforts and pray that you may have the courage to make a stand for the family unit, which is the backbone of a proper and righteous nation.

Thank you.

B. Pattenden

GRANDPARENTS IN DISTRESS

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