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House of Representatives Standing Committee
on Family and Community Affairs

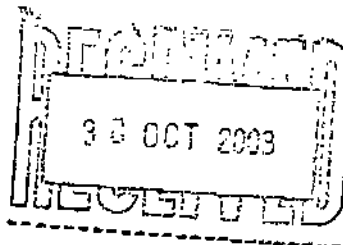
Submission No: 1691

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Secretary:

28 October 2003

The Hon John Anderson MP
PO Box 725
GUNNEDAH NSW 2380



Dear Mr Anderson,

RE: Child Support

I am writing to you to express my Child Support concerns. I attended the meeting regarding Child Support Custody yesterday 27 October 2003 and there was only a limited amount I could say in the time allocated and I was very nervous and I know I didn't say all I would have liked to.

Child Support needs to be changed dramatically and we need something done very soon, please.

I am in an extremely stressful situation and I feel that Child Support needs to be reviewed on an individual basis and as the father and paying parent I need more rights.

Because my situation is so complex I am going to try and give you some main points that are of great concern to me and my new family.

It would help me greatly if I could make an appointment to speak with you in person as it is very difficult for me to explain everything in writing as there is documents that I've been sent from the Child Support Agency that they say I have to fill out and I find that they ask for such personal information, that is passed on to the other parent that it is impossible for me to disclose and I would like you to see these, so you can understand what I am talking about. I have explained this to the Child Support Agency and they just keep telling me that it is the "Law" and they are just a 'Debt Collector'...

Some of my key points are:

- I have two children under 12 living in WA with their mother as I had to come over here with work, I've been in the East for over 2 years.
- I am paying \$399.23 a week in Child Support deducted from my pay weekly, paid to her tax free.

- We had a verbal agreement when we separated 5 years ago that she would stay in the family home and I would continue to pay the mortgage and other costs as part of the Child Support.
- Just recently she wrote to me and told me she wants the house sold and wants all the equity paid to her as she wants to buy a house with a swimming pool.
- From this I have got a Solicitor and the house has been on the Market since May 2003 and we have been trying to get tenants in as well.
- Also in June 2003 the house was raided by the Police and they found large quantities of Cannabis, cash and smoking implements and she is up on trafficking charges for this.
- She also was collecting the 'Single Mothers Pension' while in a defacto relationship and she has just been caught with doing that as well.
- She is getting \$20,831.00 per year, tax free, which I think is utterly ridiculous and when I have said something to the Child Support Agency about this they have said the children have to get what they were used to when I was living with them, I have never been on this sort of money until the past year - we separated over 5 years ago. I work 70 hours plus a week, while she is drug dealing (even though she's been caught apparently she's still doing it) she has been raking in the money with that for a number of years, her boyfriend is on good money etc and I'm bringing home \$1.00 and my expenses are a \$1.50 and believe me I don't have any luxuries let alone able to buy a house for my family, where is the justice in this?
- She has now moved out of the house without telling me, I found out when Child Support Agency sent me a letter.
- I have spoken to Child Support regarding this and they have told me there is nothing they can do.
- Due to all of this, I am struggling to put a meal on the table as my wife and I have just had a new baby, I'm having to pay \$399.23 per week Child Support, a Mortgage plus expenses in WA and I am having to pay Rent plus living costs here in Gunnedah etc.
- It has just about costed me my marriage, we are having to cut back on absolutely everything to the point we aren't buying meat anymore, we have the family car up for sale and the list goes on.
- I can't tell you the extreme stress and heartache this is putting not only me but my family through - while she (my ex defacto) has just bought a house with a swimming pool with her boyfriend of one year who is on at least \$1000.00 a week net pay himself and she has the children in second hand clothes while she has her hair and nails done monthly, she's dripping in gold

- jewellery and she gets another tattoo done every other month, (I have been told this by my father who lives in the same town as her).
- I have thought about getting custody of the children, but because I work such long hours it would just be too hard and in saying that I don't think I could afford the legal costs for custody anyway, according to my Solicitor.
 - I phone my children every fortnight religiously and they are always asking me when am I coming to see them, I have to just tell them I'm trying to save up and my 7 year old son tells me he will give me some money (it absolutely breaks my heart) in all honesty it is probably going to be a very long time until I can see them as there is no way I can afford to go over there and she won't let them come over to me, let alone contribute to any costs of airfares etc which I would ideally like as they love my wife and they obviously haven't met their new sister.
 - When I last phoned my children my son was even scared to talk to me as he said he may get into trouble with his mother, I had to tell him it was fine that he speaks to me, I asked him what his new address was and he said that his mother said not to tell me but he did tell me and told me to keep it a secret.
 - I have also asked Child Support if I could put the money into a 'Trust Account' for the children or towards their education and they have told me that it cannot be done and when I ask why they just tell me it is the 'Law'.
 - I am paying all this money I mean she's on better money than an average working Australian and she has hardly worked an honest day in her life, I'm just supporting her habits and the children are being taught deceit and crime and I don't have a say in it. She doesn't even send me a card from them for anything or a school report, I don't even know their clothes size, I have to ring my father and his wife (as they live in the same town and see her and the children regularly) to find out those sorts of things.

These are just a few of the problems I am having with the situation. Can you please take the time to see me at some stage it would help me a great deal if I could speak to you in person. I would really appreciate your time and you may be able to make some suggestions?

Kind regards.

[REDACTED]