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Standing Committee on Family and Community Affairs

Input into the Inquiry on child access

23/7/03

Secretary: _____

Starting point should be 50/50 access to both parents in the event of divorce, Family court fails to stipulate this.

In the event of either parent disregarding court dictated access agreement the parent at fault to incur a penalty, i.e. the non offending parent to get extra access time.

A 24hr. hotline should be established for the parent who has been denied their court granted access time by their partner, to get immediate help in this situation. Perhaps two police officers to speak to the parent at fault. The Government to give special powers to the police to enable this to happen. The police department must remain impartial, if they are prepared to intervene in a custody dispute when the mother calls them they must be prepared to do likewise when a father calls for help.

i.e. We know of a case when police were called to stop a father taking his son to see the child's grandparents who were visiting from Interstate. BUT, in another instance when the father arrived to collect his son for court granted holiday access and was told by the mother he could not have the child the police refused to intervene.

If the offending parent continues to ignore court dictated access time the case should be reviewed. The reasons why this is happening should be investigated.

In the event of divorce both parents should remain living in same area to facilitate access both ways.

To avoid expensive family court battles assets should be divided 50/50 (as in CANADA) Family court battles lasting several years cost thousands of dollars often leaving one or both partners destitute. This money would be better being invested for the children's future needs instead of making the lawyers wealthy.

A percentage of the property settlement, where money is involved, should be invested for the future of the children.

This submission is from the parent's of a 47 year old man who has been involved in a property settlement dispute for six years. It has cost him well in excess of \$160,000 and the emotional trauma for him and all his immediate family has been horrendous.

Yours Faithfully
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