



**Family Law | Pre Mediation Advice | Child Support
Domestic Violence | False Allegations | Discrimination**

P.O. Box 28, Waterford, Q 4133 Australia
Tel: 07 3805 5611 Fax: 07 3200 8769 Mob: 0409 269 621
Email: admin@mensrights.com.au Web: www.mensrights.com.au



*Community
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2001, 2002,
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AUSTRALIAN SENATE COMMUNITY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
PARLIAMENT HOUSE
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Tel: (02) 6277 3515
Fax: (02) 6277 5829

Email: community.affairs.sen@aph.gov.au

**Child Support Legislation Amendment (Reform of the Child Support Scheme .
New Formula and Other Measures) Bill 2006**

Dear Senators,

The extremely short notice given to the Australian public who might wish to respond to the introduction of this most important bill could be interpreted as a deliberate ploy to discourage debate or someone's foolhardy error. I hope it is the latter, but I doubt that it is.

To introduce this bill on the 14th September, advertise the existence of the Senate Committee inquiry on the 19th September in The Australian and to then allow only three days to respond with meaningful submission by the 22nd September is ludicrous. Just how do you expect anyone to digest 300+ pages of legislation and 200+ pages of Explanatory Memorandum and write a comprehensive response within that timeframe? You obviously don't, so I must conclude that the Government has decided to break its promise to not misuse its majority in the Senate, because this timetable is a blatant misuse of their power and an insult to all those who have lobbied for significant change to the child support legislation.

The formula devised by Prof. Patrick Parkinson has not changed CS collections for the better and I predict more problems will be caused by the introduction of a 'lower bar' to contact. By that I mean that currently child support does not reduce until the non custodial parent has greater than 109 nights per annum, so as you can imagine many see their children for up to 108 nights. When the bar is lowered to 52 nights, as is proposed, non-custodial parents will find their time cut by half.

The Parkinson formula will produce some reductions, but for low income earners what they gain will be lost when Family Tax Benefit is no longer shared between the parents. For parents of older children who are not able to see much of them, they will certainly pay more. For the unemployed or those on disability pensions they are expected to find increased monies from the miserly amount

allocated by the Federal Government for their subsistence. How this helps their contact with their children I am not sure and I doubt that it will.

Formula creation to date has been plagued by inadequate, incorrect and incompatible data. Studies have not been completed to produce a cost for raising a child in two separate households, neither have other studies taken into account the contribution made to the family's financial purchasing power of government benefits, which if ignored as they are, gives one the idea that the earned family income is capable of buying much more than it actually can. Building any formula without considering the fixed costs of each party and the variable cost to each party of raising the child is bound to result in inequities.

I would like to lodge a formal protest about the timetable. I wish therefore, to seek a substantial extension of time for lodgement of submissions.

I also seek to be heard on October 4 or a later, more appropriate date, when the Committee consults with the public in Canberra,

Yours faithfully

Sue Price
Director