

Committee Secretary
Community Affairs Committee
Department of the Senate
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
Australia

Inquiry into Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs Legislation Amendment (Child Support Reform Consolidation and Other Measures) Bill 2007

I wish to make the following submission.

The history of Child Support has been to reduce the burden on tax payers of ensuring that the basic needs of children with separated parents has been met.

No one has been able to demonstrate beyond reasonable doubt, that this aim has ever been achieved.

The Child Support Agency (CSA) meets other requirements. There is considerable political advantage in having the CSA.

There are many reasons for and against the payment of Child Support, but I would like the Committee to concentrate on just one, the best interests of the child.

Child Support focuses purely on the monetary gain or loss attributable to a child(ren) after their parents separate. This is not in the best interests of the child.

Some reference to this has been made by Professor Parkinson in establishing a period where no Child Support is payable.

I would like the committee to consider the following:

The best interests of the child includes low conflict between the parents
Conflict is likely to be minimised where:

1. The payment made reflects the actual needs of the child
2. The payment can be seen to be spent on the child
3. The payment is not seen to be spent on the other parent

The best interests of the child includes contact with both parents

1. Financial punishment should be made where a parent stops contact with a child where there is no court order preventing them from having contact
2. Financial punishment should be made where one parent prevents the other parent from having contact with a child without a court order

The best interests of the child includes ignoring the best interests of the tax payer and concentrating on the best interests of the child.

Regards,

Mark Millard