

Dear Senate Inquiry - Shared Parental Responsibility Bill 2005

This is a my submission to the Senate Inquiry into the provisions of the Family Law Amendment (Shared Parental Responsibility) Bill 2005

I am aware that by now you have material covering the benefits of shared responsibility. I will not cover this again except to write that the contrary arguments used to say that the existing rules are adequate relies on the experience and opinions of a cross section of cases that do not represent the entire picture. The more commonly held view is that the present legal remedies are inadequate and devalue parenting to the extent that the Government itself is doing damage to many families with its presently poorly developed rules.

I have included a paper that I have found most helpful from those that provide scientific research data from psychology. I write the word "scientific" very deliberately as this paper is definitely not representative of the very many studies with too few subjects and poor statistical significance with conclusions 'muddy the waters'. In contrast, it is a summary of many cross validated research papers and gives an accurate picture of important issues at the heart of the matters emerging in Family Law and Families. I hope you find it helpful.

I have also included a second paper on the lack of scientific validity for the most common 'risk assessment' tools used by Court Experts. Many cases are directed by expert witness from Forensic Psychologists yet eminent professors of the psychological profession can find no scientific validity for their use. Therefore, in relying on expert witness the courts are in turn failing to adequately fulfil their role. This is particularly disturbing! Please consider its importance in clarifying the very important relationship between family law and psychology. Had the Family Court been funded to provide a substantial mediatorial and counselling role as was originally intended then the information would have by now emerged to provide accurate, insightful and helpful assessments for families. However, this large work has not yet been done and as a result psychological assessment tools and subsequent court policy have not developed to maturity.

Thanks for your work! (I'll be prayin' for you all.)

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Thank you for reading my submission

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(See attached file: Ellis related summary of divorce conflict.doc)(See attached file: Maccoby 2005 on Emery, Otto & O'Donohue.pdf)