

Submission re Amendments to Family Law Act.

from

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A scarcely revealed clause in the Amendments to the Family Law Act is that the new laws will not apply to those of us already in the system!

I have just become aware of the small print in the intended Amendments to Family Law. I was devastated to note that those of us who have put so much hope and faith in the coming new laws, and have had cases pending for a long time, have misplaced our hopes.

The Amendments as they now stand will only apply to new cases lodged after 1 July 2006. Therefore those with cases pending will be subject to different laws than those who apply to the Courts after 1 July, even if their case is heard after 1 July. Further, I understand that those of us subjected to the unamended laws will not be able to appeal on grounds of changed circumstances if by that we mean a change in the laws.

Mr Ruddock has held many public meetings around the country, to audiences largely if not exclusively comprised of disenfranchised fathers and grandparents. These people were so heartened by the possibility of Amendments to the inequitable laws to which they consider they and their children are subject in the past and current culture of the Family Court.

Yet they have been, probably unintentionally by Mr Ruddock, deceived and bitterly disappointed, for he has been talking to them about benefits and justice from which they will be forever excluded, if the way the Amendments are now framed is upheld! This is truly unconscionable and doubtless not Mr Ruddock's intention.

The disappointment to thousands who have anxiously awaited fairness in child contact matters is terrible.

It is only unjust that applicants to the Family Court involving children which have already been lodged are to be judged by an unimproved thus inferior set of laws to those who have not yet lodged their applications to the Court.

Please make the new laws immediately applicable to all children after enactment.

Please consider my submission.

With thanks

Gail Abrahams