

Dear Senate Enquiry – Shared Parental Responsibility Bill 2005

This is my submission to the Senate Inquiry into the provisions of the Family Law Amendment based on my own personal experience as a sole parent.

I submit that 50/50 shared parenting should be endorsed for the following reasons

1. That it is in the best interest of the children, except where proven abuse of the children to criminal court standard of evidence. Too many parents are unfairly denied custody and access due to false allegations of one kind or another with no more than verbal proof by a bitter ex-partner
2. That to be a good parent we ALL need to spend sufficient time with the children to understand them, know them emotionally and the situations they live in. So that we can accurately assess their maturity and realize any dangers they face such as peer group pressure and /or abuse by the custodial parent or others. Which the sad fact is, never gets acted on by government departments if the non-custodial parent is the only person concerned enough to go to the trouble of officially reporting.
3. That the majority of children have love both parents at the time of separation, whether abused or not. We only have to go to a local park late at night to see our youth drinking, smoking and vandalism etc. These are the children who have had their hopes and dreams destroyed by the courts giving excessive power to one parent. Talk to these kids and you find a large number come from broken homes and many of the young girls do not know who their fathers are let alone where they live etc, girls of this group often are not even allowed to see a photo of dad let alone contact him.
4. That there ARE NO GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS willing or able to help these kids deal with their problems, many refuse to deal with school counselors etc because any information gained is given to the custodial parent. The custodial parent then confronts the child when alone and so all trust of the counselor is lost. They then are left with only friends to talk to about how they feel and so their counselors become mentally and emotionally damaged and immature kids just like themselves. Many of these children will find a substitute parent figure and so are manipulated by some people who take advantage of their innocence
5. That our children should be protected in law against the bitterness between their parents by giving them the ability to fall back on the law to gain access to the other parent without abuse by referring "I have to because the court said". This could help to reduce the growing incidence of Parental Alienation Syndrome and other emotional abuse. So then giving the children a little more control of their own lives.
6. That there are many misguided people in all walks of life who believe that children need to be protected from life in general. What we need to do is allow them an opportunity know the truth and so allow them to know and understand their own situation better. Given the power of equal

parenting from both parents they will be able to find the truth for themselves and make decisions based on their own knowledge and experience. This will help them to deal with life better and reduce the mental and emotional confusion they are forced to endure today. Reduce early pregnancies, vandalism, and violence.

7. That it is the parents who divorce not the children so give them equal opportunity with both parents as was the status quo before divorce. Only 50/50 shared parenting will do this.

Thanking you for taking the time to read my submission

Sincerely

Harold L Craig

Bellambi

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