

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

The current family laws are inadequate and way out of date. The Government needs to change the family law to make it fairer to both parents and bring it in line with today's way of life.

As a non custodial parent I'm sick and tired of been restricted in what I can and can't do with my children. It was definitely not my intention to bring children into this world to be able to only see them for 20% of the time. I dare say that is the case with majority of non-custodial parents.

Times have changed with the way people live there lives. I don't accept the family courts perception that mothers be given majority of custody because they are the ones with children most of time. This notion is way out of date. As a manager and a father I can tell you from personal experience that the male staff that work here that have children spend as much time with there kids as do their spouses if not more. There spouse's work as well.

I know that the time I spend with my kids is a huge benefit to them and as well as me. It's not appropriate anymore for both parents to have this lop sided parenting arrangement. One side of the fence the parent with majority custody despises the non custodial parent.

I fell into this situation in the beginning. It's been referred to as the Disney Dad. It's true you do become one of these people. I soon realised that I wanted my kids to try and understand what a normal childhood is all about. I don't think trying to win brownie points with all the time is at all in the best interest of the children. They need to see and do the normal things you would do with them if you were not separated, along with the special treats every now and then. They need to know and see both parents on equal amounts of time.

I accept in some circumstance's that there is a history of violence in some family break ups. This happens in a minority of separations. This is not the case for majority of separations. In those situations where a history of violence has been proven it should be dealt with in appropriate manor and not be associated with couples separating on amicable terms.

Today's political leaders have to look and amend family law properly and not use language that can be interpreted in different legal ways and have situation, the amended law makes no difference at all.

Other points that need to be addressed.

- Parenting needs to be 50/50, unless proven other wise why this cant be.
- The CSA needs be overhauled and brought up to date with today's living requirements
- The Government ask parents to go back to work when children reach school age; therefore separated couples are able to start sharing the costs of raising their children rather than the sofa mothers who stay at home and be supplemented by the non custodial parent with child support. In a situation with divorced/separated couples what if the mother falls pregnant to her new partner. Why is the father disadvantaged for a further six years until that child reaches school age?

The family law has to change. It is way overdue. This is for the children from separated parents; they have a right to know both parents on equal terms. Meaning 50/50 custody!!

Regards

Robert Hunter

Thank you for reading my submission

Name: Rob Hunter

Postal Address: Tuggeranong ACT