

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

Dear Senators,

I hereby submit a submission to this enquiry in support of joint custody of children in a marriage breakdown.

I believe far too much emphasis has been placed on the relationship between Mother and child and far too little on the importance of the child and Father relationship.

Many reasons have been given for not allowing greater paternal contact, one of the most quoted is domestic violence. Domestic violence is of great concern but I don't believe it to be as widespread as some media and lobby groups would have us believe. Psychological and emotional abuse can be as equally destructive as physical violence and yet this gets hardly any publicity, perhaps because a significant percentage of perpetrators happen to be female. There is significant contemporary research in the field of PAS "Parental alienation syndrome". Perhaps the leading researcher on this topic Professor Richard A. Gardner of Columbia university. NY. USA. states that there is evidence of PAS in nearly every marriage breakdown, varying in intensities from mild to severe. Severe appears in 5% - 10% of cases.

This is extremely significant as nearly every child involved in a divorce is affected by it. In moderate to severe cases the children will require significant psychological intervention to become well balanced and mentally healthy human beings. I bring this to your attention because:

1. There is very little research in this country of this syndrome.
2. It is entirely perpetrated by the RESIDENT parent.
3. In this country, the courts (and our society in general), assume that the Mother is the primary carer in most cases, the MOTHERS then are the parents mostly responsible for persecuting our children in this way.

A significant way of protecting our children is to ensure that neither Mother or Father has all the power (except in cases where physical abuse is evident), granting joint custody and responsibility.

The judiciary can be part of this simply by accepting the role Fathers play in the raising of children.

In addition the courts should impose penalties when applicable (which historically has not happened to Mothers), as has been their jurisdiction. In other words, do what they are meant to do and protect the interests of our children.

This is of enormous importance to the children of this nation, the people whose futures you have been entrusted to protect.

Thank you for reading my submission

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