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Sent: Tuesday, 8 July 2003 1:50 AM
To: Committee, FCA (REPS)
Subject: submission

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House of Representatives Standing Committee on Family and Community Affairs	
Submission No:	1
Date Received:	8-7-03
Secretary:	S. Forbes

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Standing Committee on Family and Community Affairs
Child Custody Arrangements Inquiry
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Dear Reader

My Submission is based on my own personal experience and that of my children.

A) Given that the best interests of the child are of paramount consideration: it is necessary for equal time with both parents to be compulsory initially. The presumption could be rebutted in the following manner:

- ❖ A proven criminal conviction of child abuse or molestation, which would prevent some 80% of non-custodial parents suffering the disgrace and humiliation of false and unproven accusations. Childs wishes after a number of counseling sessions to verify they are genuine wishes and not intimidation or manipulation by poor parenting skills or spite. By mutual consent of both parents.
- ❖ It should be compulsory for children of separated parents to have contact of some kind with remaining family such as grandparents,

brothers and sisters, half brothers and sisters, aunts and uncles. By phone once a month and punishable if not fulfilled a minimum of twice annually. These relatives are a strong source of support for children who may suffer a decline in social skills and many mental and emotional problems due to separation. This should be requested for consideration by the court by a simple process as a letter from the interested party. These requests could be rebutted based on Facts of record such as criminal records proving unsuitability. Childs wishes after a number of counselling sessions to verify they are genuine wishes and not intimidation or manipulation by poor parenting skills or spite. By mutual consent of both parents.

- B)** I submit that the existing child support formula does not work and is in fact preventing non-custodial parents in many cases from being able to practise and enjoy access to their children. It is far too rigid with little or no consideration of extenuating circumstances. It is unfair that two children of the same parents can have very vastly different opportunities in life. It is unfair that while a child in one household may enjoy a joint income of hundreds of thousands of dollars annually solely by using the identity of a partner to conceal financial prosperity, while the other child of the same parent is forced to live a life of poverty and battle to survive daily due to reasons beyond their control. I believe that access should be used to help define child support amount and that the opportunities of joint incomes should be passed on to benefit the children of both households.

It is my personal experience that the children are nothing more than a source of income and opportunity to most custodial parents and a very spiteful way to destroy the other parent. I believe that the power of law should be removed from both parents to prevent this happening, that the system we have today puts the responsibility of proof on the non-custodial parent. The simple test of conflict shows that the custodial parent is not giving full respect to the rights and needs of the children, rather using the power of law to cause more ongoing conflict in the children's lives. It is my opinion that the custodial parent should bear the burden of proof to show cause why they should be nominated the parent with the children's best interest in mind and practise.

Yours sincerely
Harold L Craig