

August 2, 2003

House of Representatives Standing Committee
on Family and Community Affairs

Submission No: 567

Date Received: 8-8-03

Secretary:

Committee Secretary
Standing Government On Family Community Affairs
Child Custody Arrangements Enquiry
House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Committee,

I am writing this submission on child custody arrangements with great concern in regards to the proposed 50/50 share care arrangement.

The issues I wish to raise are;

1. Children's needs must be paramount in all decision that affect their wellbeing.
2. Both parents need to take responsibility for their children.
3. The current system for child custody arrangement, is failing those most in need.
4. The non-custodial parent is most often unwilling to provide maintenance for their children, while in the care of the other parent.
5. There is still little support for mother's facing loss of home, finances etc.
6. Children need to live in a stable environment with stable relationships.

The problems faced after family breakdown, can only be exacerbated by children being shuffled from one home to another.

MY STORY.

Thirty years ago upon my parents separation, the system at the time failed to recognize the needs of the child, support of a nurturing parent and financial support.

I had a choice of living with my father who provided financial support only while I lived with him and living with my mother who at the time had no financial support and had always provided the nurturing support that I now needed more then ever. While living with my father, I was subjected to abuse and neglect by the women that came and left the family home while my father worked.

My mother had always been at home caring for her children and now having little finances and little skill to obtain a job, tried to provide for her children financially and be a nurturing mother with no outside support, this situation was also very stressful.

I was shuffled from one parent to an other, and remember my younger sister saying she felt neither parent wanted or loved her. At fifteen I ran away unable to deal with life, I lived on the streets and took up with several men who cared for me but also took advantage of my vulnerability, I am lucky to be here.

These problem which I faced thirty years ago, are still faced by the youth today.

We need to move forward and be accountable as parents for our children's needs.

Mothers need to be supported so that they can provide the nurturing that their children need while they are young. Fathers need to be accountable for providing financial support for their children.

Any suggestion that parenting is a 50/50 issue is absurd. How can a new system work when the problems of the old system have not been addressed? The problems I faced thirty years ago are still prevalent today.

Recommendations:

- I would like to see the current legislation remain.
- Resources used to ensure that these arrangements provide for the child's best interest.
- Non-custodial parent be accountable to a contribution of financial cost for the child.
- Custodial parent be provide with support needed at the time of the family breakdown, to be better able to provide emotional support for the children.

I sincerely hope that you will consider my recommendations on this situation.

Yours truly,



Teresa Moore.

1/9 Scarborough Rd.
Redcliffe
Qld 4020