

4 August 2003

Committee Secretary
Standing Committee on Family and Community Affairs
Child Custody Arrangements Inquiry
Department of the House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
Australia

RE: Child Custody

To Whom It May Concern:

I feel compelled to write on behalf of my wife and I in regards to your inquiry about possible changes to Family Law. We feel strongly that the proposed changes would be a good thing as the current system is clearly unfair.

We are the grandparents of a child [REDACTED] that my son gets every second weekend and some of the school holidays. Over the last few years, we have had to sit back and watch our son fight through the courts for every bit of time he has got. We have been able to maintain a relationship [REDACTED] because our son always comes over to our place whenever he has contact with [REDACTED]. It certainly isn't a lot of time, but we make the best of the time we have.

It has been frustrating over the last eight years. Our son is a good father who always does the best by [REDACTED] and wants as much involvement in his life as possible. He has put up with a tremendous amount of grief from [REDACTED] mother who has made every issue difficult. She even resorts to abusing my wife and I when she loses her temper over every little issue. I personally feel that I would not have put up with the nonsense from her if I were in my son's position.

It's frustrating also, because my son has since met and married a wonderful girl and had two daughters together. They have been working very hard over the last eight years to save for a house and to provide security for their family, including [REDACTED]. It angers me that this is hindered by the amount of money he pays to his son's mother who has never worked, and who nearing 40 is still living with her mother who is equally as abusive.

As mentioned earlier, my son wants as much time in [REDACTED] life as possible and considers that 50/50 is a very fair option. He is currently going before the court again in order to get this. It is a situation that [REDACTED] says he wants. My son and [REDACTED] have a very good relationship, and there is no reason whatsoever to deprive them both of more time together. [REDACTED] also has a very loving relationship with his two little sisters [REDACTED], and with his stepmother. These relationships would all benefit from a 50/50 arrangement.

And finally from a personal point of view, the rights of the grand parents are being considered. During the last eight years, my wife and I have often wondered where we fit in and why our positive role in [REDACTED] life is not a consideration. We love him very much, and want to be a major part in his life not just someone he visits for a few hours every fortnight.

We welcome your inquiry, and hope that you see the benefits of a fairer system for all involved.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

House of Representatives Standing Committee
on Family and Community Affairs

Submission No: 881

Date Received: 11-8-03

Secretary: [REDACTED]