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Secretary:

To whom it may concern,

I believe that over recent months and also in up coming months there is to be an inquiry into the matter of child support and contact arrangements in relation to broken families.

I am from one of these families and believe I can offer some thoughts on what issues need to be addressed to alleviate some of the current problems, I am very keen to help change the system so that fathers in the future don't suffer the way I have.

I was recently involved in the A Current Affair Forum on these issues, I believe it is very obvious from this forum that huge problems are very common in our community.

I am the father of four children, children that I am presently denied barely any access to, but still pay considerable child support and live in poverty myself, something very hard to cope with after being financially stable prior to separation.

I would just like to indicate briefly the areas that I found caused the worst problems in my situation. If anyone is interested in full details I would be very interested in further contact.

1/ The first issue that I feel needs to be addressed is the legal system, I would like to know where has the old saying "innocent until proven guilty" gone when it comes to intervention orders.

How is it so, that a judge can grant an intervention order on someone, without that person even being questioned. For all the judge knows that person may have been in a different state at the time of any allegation of abuse.

Innocent people are being forced out of their homes on false allegations and then being the villain when it comes to defend these allegations.

This needs to be changed immediately. Justice is in the "innocent until proven guilty saying".

To change this will suddenly decrease the rate of separation in Australian families, an accusation should have to be proven before any Intervention Order is granted. Temporary or permanent!

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2/ The next issue that has been significant in me rarely seeing my children is the Family Court.

There will be problems with fathers not seeing children as long as Family Court Orders are not enforceable. I have to date had four Court Orders put in place, to just see these treated with little respect and blatantly broken. Why is it that a conviction for speeding or drink driving can be enforced, but a Family Court Order allowing a father legal right to see his children is not enforceable? Why even have a Family Court?

I would like to also point out another example huge inequality of the legal system. On a number of occasions I have contacted the Police and requested help when children have not been delivered for contact, the same answer every time, "nothing we can do", you will have to go to family court.

However when the children have rang and advised they will be late home, a simple phone call to the police from the mother, and the police are contacting me to see if I have run off with them. What an absolute joke.

I won't go on for ever, BUT PLEASE, somebody out there start changing things so at least in the future fathers will not suffer like I have.

Fix the legal system and you will be well on the way to solving many other issues.

3/ Just briefly, I very much support the idea of 50/50 contact for children from separated families, however I do realize that this would be extremely difficult in many cases. Maybe this would be a good starting point and any changes would need to be applied for in the NEWLY REORGANISED FAMILY COURT SYSTEM.

I hope some of the people this letter reaches take the time to read it and I would be readily available to discuss any issues in depth at any time.

Please feel free to contact me.

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