

Your full legal name
Full street address
City, Province
Postal Code

23 July 2018

List of MPs

House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

Dear Mr. MP,

As one of your constituents I am writing to express my concerns about Child Custody legislation and the recent Bill C-78. Bill C-78 fails to give sufficient credence to the views of the vast majority of Canadians who support a Rebuttable Presumption for Equal Shared Parenting when it comes to Child Custody law.

~~I have personally experienced the traumas that can result from the dramas that can occur within the current Family Law system when a vindictive spouse chooses to end a marriage and acquire inequitable gains. Having a passion for social justice and fairness, my past ten years have been spent learning about Family Law and its inadequacies.~~

Although there may be some plausible, positive measures in the new government initiative, Bill C-78, there are a number of serious deficits in this proposed reform of child custody legislation. Notwithstanding, I believe that there are tenable solutions to significantly improve Bill C-78.

Canadians overwhelmingly support Equal Shared Parenting. In recent polls, nearly 80% support Equal Shared Parenting, country-wide. Moreover, many countries have adopted shared parenting, or have endorsed shared parenting, and are proposing legislative changes. Furthermore, social science research and literature has strongly come in favour of shared parenting, concluding that children in these relationships have superior academic, emotional, social and economic futures with drastically lower incidence of substance abuse, crime, and incarceration.

In view of the changes in social norms and family structures in the intervening 33 years since the current *Divorce Act* was passed, our child custody legal system requires fundamental structural changes. While the government initiative with bill C-78 should be commended for its housekeeping changes, we really need to make lives better for children and their parents, with reform of a more fundamental nature. I ask you to advocate for a number of amendments to Bill C-78. I ask that you advocate for legislative change that incorporates accepted social science research findings and the consistently expressed views of the Canadian public. A rebuttable presumption in favour of Equal Shared Parenting is the appropriate course of action in light of the research and the consistent polling data over many years (ie. about 80% in favour). Interests groups, including Bar Associations and other interest groups, will surely oppose.

Comment [T1]: Name and address at top shows that you are a real person with real interest in the subject of the letter. Postal code shows that you are part of the said constituency.

Comment [T2]: Go to website and find the correct MP

Comment [T3]: Change appropriately for the correct MP

Comment [T4]: Used only for Your MP in your constituency. Delete this for the "CC" letters that you write

Comment [T5]: Write your own details and experiences. It is important to send letters that show that everyone is like-minded and "on the same page", however, the letters should be unique enough that each person sending a letter shows and proves his uniqueness, and that each person supports the same changes that collectively we are requesting. If we all ask for different things it is hard for politicians to meet those diverse requests, but with uniformity in our requests they should be more willing to oblige our requests. I recommend that the 'personal section' is written in a manner that shows that each one of us is unique, while the rest of the letter follows the same or similar requests.

In summary, the following points need to be incorporated into Bill C-78.

- **Canada needs a rebuttable presumption of equal shared parenting. This principle should be the starting point for "best interests of the child" deliberations.**
- **Adopt continuity of family relationships as the definitional basis for the "best interests of the child" standard.**
- **Amend proposed relocation clauses to place the onus on the relocating parent for changes in parenting responsibilities and arrangements.**
- **Include arbitration as an explicit component of dispute resolution options.**
- **Include provision for a "Parental Coordinator" to mediate and, if necessary, to break deadlock situations in day-to-day implementation of the Parenting Order.**

On paper the proposed Bill C-78 seems to support some admirable measures but I ask that you advocate for a less adversarial family justice system with implementation of the following:

- **Further implementation of the Unified Family Court;**
- **Support for alternative and non-adversarial dispute resolution (e.g. expansion of such programs as "393 Mediate" where free, low cost mediation is provided in courts.);**
- **Increased Legal Aid Funding (wider access to justice in the family system is essential);**

In conclusion, a Rebuttable Presumption in favour of Equal Shared Parenting will set the stage for equality and serve to reduce conflict stemming from unwarranted senses of entitlement; reduce excess legal expense, thus allocating family finances for the needs of the family and children; and promote the "best interest" of Canadian children to enjoy a decent relationship with both parents. Many like-minded Canadians support these changes. Now please propose these changes.

I thank you for reading this letter and for your commitment to social justice for children and families. Will you now work towards the highlighted fundamental changes to Bill C-78 and Family Law, and ensure that a Rebuttable Presumption is instituted in favour of Equal Shared Parenting? Please respond with your answer to this crucial question.

Sincerely,

Your full legal name
Your full street address
City, Province
Postal Code

Your most professional email address

cc: Justice Minister, Jody Wilson-Raybould; Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Jean-Yves Duclos.

Comment [T6]: Changes to the text are encouraged but uniformity in our requests should be maintained. Collectively we want the same changes and we should each show this in our letters. Our collective request for the same thing should encourage politicians to listen more intently.

Comment [T7]: Again, suggest that you are not alone and many other Canadians support the same or similar changes.
YOU MAY WISH TO ALTER THE TEXT WITH ONE OF THESE:
A vast majority of Canadians support these changes.
Canadians want these changes.
Many citizens invite change in Family Law as I have outlined.

Comment [T8]: Your signature is crucial and shows that you are professional and not a crackpot

Comment [T9]: Your personal contact information so they can contact you. Putting it here after the signature is obliging them to reply.

Comment [T10]: Your e-mail address will give them a choice on how to reply to you. If possible choose an email address that looks professional.

Comment [T11]: The recipient knows who you have or will be in contact with regarding the matter