

Rhodri Wyn Jones

4th March 2012

Frank Bradfield

Dear Rhodri

It is always a pleasure to hear from you and for the opportunity to write to the committee.

You will realise that since my petition was first submitted in July 2009 the Welsh Government has come a long way in trying to deal with the short comings of Family Law but I have to say with a touch of sadness that although Janet Finch-Saunders AM led a short debate in the Senedd on the 23rd of November 2011 not one member of any political party stayed in the chamber to listen or contribute to the debate other than the Deputy Minister for Social Services Gwenda Thomas AM and the Conservative Group.

I listened with intent to the very able Deputy Minister describe how the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child was now being incorporated with domestic law and that was a vast improvement from her original stance when she first wrote to the Committee in 2009

My desire for a Charter for Grandchildren is made out of truth, that we in Wales and the rest of the UK need to address the domestic family problems that face our society today and one can only address this by examining the root cause which is destroying the fabric of society itself.

This will not be achieved by introducing more laws or introducing more institutions but it can be achieved by giving parents what they used to have which is the right to decide what is best for their child.

So that the committee can have an understanding of how we as a society came to this point in time where governments, courts and children's agencies are unable to cope with the demands placed on them by the break down in families, a fact recorded in the Family Justice Review with no suggestion on how to treat the situation that we ourselves have created.

In the fifties and early sixties when divorce was frowned on lawyers dealt with such cases easily and it is my contention that when the UK Government made divorce easier the flood gates were open which caused a dramatic rise in such cases. Lawyers seizing on the opportunity to accumulate wealth decided to branch into this new field and specialise in family law and the universities engaged with them so that they became duly qualified.

I say that if the powers incorporated in the Children's Act of 1989 were used properly then perhaps I would not be writing today but the situation is that the resident parent has the power to dictate what happens to the child irrespective of that child's best interest denying the child access to the non resident parent and grandparents, and it is the state to blame for this.

As I said earlier when couples divorced it was the state and not the parents that took the decision where that child should live and it is from this small beginning, that we have the state taking on more

and more responsibility for families, weakening parental skills that we find ourselves in the position we are in today.

Governments following the direction they are going cannot address the breakdown in our society unless they engage and bring parents back to where they should be, in charge of their family

We campaign for children's rights and we are delighted to engage with the Deputy Minister because we know that outside in the streets we are being listened to.

Children have the right to parental love which includes parental training, and when the state takes a child into care that right to parental training which includes culture, religion and family history is denied the child at a stroke worst still when there are siblings and they become separated.

I ask the committee to follow Scotland's lead by supporting a Charter for Grandchildren making it mandatory for use in Children Agencies.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Frank Bradfield', with a stylized flourish underneath.

Frank Bradfield

Grandparents Apart Wales