

PE1513/T

Petitioner Letter of 1 May 2015

Dear Committee,

It is with some displeasure that I write to address the letter received by the First Minister. It has been some time since I had thought it widely accepted that proposals 1 & 2 in my petition were not going to be considered, which is fine - I realise compromises must be made when discussing issues like this. This does not mean I still do not believe them to be the appropriate remedies, merely that I am not so obtuse as to think that I should not have to make compromises. But the same can be said for the Scottish Government who have now responded twice with the same rhetoric, despite the development of The Law Society of Scotland lending its support to the enforcement of DNA testing.

I am saddened that in this new age of equality championed by a woman I respect deeply, that it appears to only apply to women who face adversity. Something I find particularly troubling. It has taken so long for this step to be made to push for equality for women (far too long in my opinion) and it makes me question how long the minority of fathers placed in such awful circumstances through no fault of their own will ever be thought of as anything other than deserving of this "punishment", as it has been described to me. That is not to say care must be taken in any area involving the welfare of children. of course it must. And it must remain paramount in any consideration. But to deny a child his or her parent, mother or father, is wrong, it is to the detriment of the child and it must be addressed.

I applaud the consideration, which if I understand correctly will seek to have fathers who do manage to fight their cause in a court of law successfully added to their child's birth certificate automatically, but I would urge the First Minister (and the committee) to consider the heavy weight of support behind the enforcement of DNA testing. It does nothing to put the child in harm's way, it is non-invasive under modern techniques, and gives a firm footing for fathers to be able to then ask the court to consider other action without the burden of having to otherwise prove paternity should a court find they cannot infer paternity for whatever reason. It makes little sense to rely on chance (chance of being denied paternity in rightful cases AND chance of being granted paternity where no paternity exists) when there are methods which can determine with 99.99% accuracy. I would note that it will not guarantee any further action by a court and that violent fathers, abusive fathers or fathers who have sexually abused their child's mother resulting in a child will still have to explain themselves and their case to a

court and to submit themselves to a bar report which will then preclude them from any involvement in their child's lives. What it will do is give the genuine cases, which are still caught in the same sweeping net as the others, a fighting chance.

Sincerely,

Ron Park