

## Does the Equal Parenting Alliance expect to get an MP elected to Parliament?

We intend to put up candidates for election to the House of Commons and European Parliament. Indeed we are standing for the Scottish Parliament in May 2007.

Our main aim in standing for election will be to increase publicity for our cause, and force the other candidates to state their policies on parenting issues; making this a mainstream campaign issue for all parties

We believe that the system of family law in this country is in crisis and the other political parties are doing nothing about it.

We intend to see they can't ignore the total failure of family law – and its catastrophic effects on children – any more.

## But aren't you just another group of angry dads?

We are a mixture of men and women who all agree that something needs to be done to fix this mess.

After all, it's not just dads who are affected when a child loses a parent. The child loses not just a parent, but often they lose their grandparents, cousins, uncles, aunts and friends. The child can lose half their family at a stroke.

All these people lose that child from their lives, but more importantly, that child can't benefit from the love and influence of their extended family, for no good reason. It's a lose-lose situation and society at large suffers from the cumulative damage done to all these families.

Is this really in the *child's best interest*?

The Equal Parenting Alliance Party is a new political party started in 2006.

*We believe no child should lose a parent, when parents separate, without very good reason.*

Everyone agrees that children of separating parents should maintain normal, frequent and continuing contact with *both* their parents. However, the current Family Justice system is simply *unable* to deliver even this most fundamental of requirements for children.

We think the system should put the needs of children *first* and respect their right to normal parenting *above* the rights or wishes of *either* of their parents.

The current system does not do this. For example, it allows one parent to eliminate the other parent from a child's life, if they wish.

*We believe this is fundamentally wrong.*

**Family law should be organised around protecting and preserving vital parent-child relationships, and not around helping one parent to destroy them.**

### How Can I Help?

To achieve our aims we need people to join and offer their support. We cannot do this alone.

You may never have joined a political party before - most of us haven't - but we hope you agree we are different and this is an issue worth supporting. You can join for just £5 a year from our web site.



[www.EqualParentingAlliance.com](http://www.EqualParentingAlliance.com)

## Equal Parenting Alliance Party



### “Children Need Both Parents”

On parental separation, family law should ensure that (in the vast majority of cases where a child *has* two normal, loving parents), the child does not lose a parent – just because the other parent prefers it that way.

This is obvious to most people. But it is not the way that family law works now.

Instead of putting the needs of the child *first*, our family courts do exactly the opposite. The wishes of the “resident parent” are almost always considered *above* the needs of the child.

Because of this, tens of thousands of children each year needlessly suffer the effective loss of one of their parents in the UK.

But while this is going on, our dysfunctional family courts and government sit back and repeatedly congratulate themselves on a job well done!

How can they show such contempt for the rights and lives of the children they should be trying to protect?

We are dedicated to protecting these children and reforming our family law system so it is fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

**Putting Children First**

## Aims of the Equal Parenting Alliance

- To peacefully campaign and build on the public awareness already created by other parenting campaign groups through the use of simple arguments.
- To provide a membership organisation that ordinary members of the public will feel able to join by persuading them that these issues are important, and that society, now and for the future, needs the problem to be solved.
- To encourage the vast reservoir of parents and children who have been mistreated by the present family law system to join and get involved. To persuade them that change is needed, but that it will not happen until they make it happen.
- To demonstrate the problem is not *just* about father's rights, but children's lives, the lives of both their parents, their extended families and society at large.
- To engage CAFCASS constructively. Even though they are part of the problem they are also part of the solution.
- To work in parallel and in co-operation with all other compatible groups associated in family law reform
- To provide a 'ready made' party to allow suitable people from other groups to stand as candidates for By-elections or European Parliament.



## Why a political party?

- It is a tacit way of declaring the cause we stand for as serious and of general concern to all members of society.
- It separates us from other groups, making it clearer that we are distinct, and not in competition with them.
- Most members of the public do not join political parties, but joining Equal Parenting Alliance will be more attractive to those wishing to help, rather than joining a "campaign group".
- A political party gains a level of respect amongst other politicians that a 'campaign group' does not.
- The option of standing for local, general and European elections is available; at relatively little cost we have the opportunity to send a leaflet for free to an entire constituency. There is also some free publicity inherent in running an election campaign.



## Are family courts biased against fathers?

Although there *is* bias against fathers<sup>(1)</sup>, in fact the main bias actually favours the resident parent.

However, we believe the problems within family law are far more complex than a simplistic charge of "bias" would suggest.

Overall, we believe our family justice system is composed of generally well-intentioned individuals who are unfortunately floundering in a sea of ignorance, prejudice and complacency – and charged with operating under an unclear law.

Already we have enough ingredients to explain why our family justice system is so counter-productive and so often acts against the best interests of children.

But if we then operate this already ineffective system in a climate of total secrecy, provide no accountability to either the participants or society at large; and add to this melee a legal industry hugely profiting from legal aid and the confusion of participants; it's hardly surprising that the result is a dysfunctional system that benefits no one but those profiting from it.

The failures of family law are so fundamental, that fixing just one of the flaws (for example, removing the bias against fathers) would not be enough to make the system operate in the child's best interests.

Family courts are "not fit for purpose".

Although it may seem depressing to present such a dismal picture of a justice system, we believe it's essential to realise the measure of the problem before we can come up with a plan to fix it.

<sup>1</sup> ... and even Martin Mears, former Law Society president, agrees that family courts are biased against fathers. (interviewed on BBC Radio 4 Women's Hour 13/01/2006).