

**Further evidence submitted by Tony Coe, President Equal Parenting Council in response to evidence given by Dame Elizabeth Butler-Sloss, President, Family Division**

I should like immediately to make the following brief representations to the Committee regarding Dame Elizabeth Butler-Sloss's written comments on my submission to the Committee[

1]which you kindly attached to your email. 1. There are, of course, plenty of EPC representatives that the President (or her judicial colleagues) could have met with apart from me. Never once did the President (nor any of her colleagues) suggest that they could not meet for the reason tendered by her now for the first time. It is EPC's contention that the President (and her colleagues) are deliberately avoiding input from parent-consumers whose views they largely treat with contempt.

2. This is further evidenced by the fact that the Family Justice Council rejected excellent candidates from parenting organizations (including—among many others—one from EPC Vice President, Paul Duffield) in favour of a contributor who would not "rock the boat" from an organization that (a) has no practical experience of the court system and (b) relies heavily on Government funding. The plain fact is that the judiciary are determined to provide no machinery for factoring-in the views of qualified parents/court consumers.

3. The President is right that I have appeared before her as a Litigant in Person. However, I am at a total loss to understand why she would want to deliberately mislead this Committee by stating that I was "unsuccessful". Both my Children Act appeals were successful. Indeed one of my two successful Children Act appeals was reported extensively in Family Law Journal. On the subsequent appeal, the President kindly went out of her way to make plain to me, early in the hearing, that she and her fellow Court of Appeal judges were ALLOWING my appeal. No doubt the Committee will form its own conclusions as to the President's motives for being economical with the truth.

4. It is noteworthy that the President has not commented upon my criticism with regard to educational events that in EPC's view our top family judges should most certainly be attending—especially those run by AFCC which are attended by family judges (and family law experts) from all over the world. I raised this issue with a prominent High Court Judge whose gave me this lame and defensive response, "How do I know we've even received an invitation? " We of course made sure they had full details to no avail!

All this reinforces EPC's position that our judges need to be held accountable. It is important not to accept what they say simply because they are judges—even if they are very senior judges!

I should be most grateful if you would kindly forward this email to the Committee members.

Tony Coe

President

Equal Parenting Council

10 January 2005