

Mr. Guy Lavigne
796 Edmond St, Hawkesbury, Ontario K6A 3C1

November 16, 2002.

The Right Hon. Jean Chretien, Prime Minister of Canada
Room 309-S, Centre Block
Ottawa, Ontario
Canada K1A 0A6

Dear Prime Minister:

RE: Four children and two families destroyed because of the biased and anti-father family court system.

I would like to bring to your attention some of the terrible injustices and suffering that has been forced upon myself, my two children, my two stepchildren, my extended family as well as the father and extended family of my wife's two older children. All of this suffering, imposed on so many good people is as a direct result of a family court system that encourages abuse of the system and forces parents into a war over custody of the children.

In August of 1995, I met a woman with two young children from a previous relationship. This woman led me to believe that her former partner was a deadbeat father and was a no good person. With all of the publicity everywhere about men being abusive and violent I was easily misled into believing that this man was no good, just as my wife has said. I thought that I was doing what was an honourable act by helping her raise her children. She wanted more children. For myself, I love children and agreed to more and from our common-law relationship came two more children.

During our relationship, I was brainwashed by my ex to believe that her former husband was such a terrible person. She did not want me to speak to this man. I found it strange, however, that his children always seemed so eager and anxious to see and to be with him. The children were only allowed to see their father every other weekend even though it was clear that they wanted dearly to see more of him. I could never understand why children would want to go with a parent that I had been lead to believe was a no good father.

During the six years that our relationship lasted, the true nature of her personality began to emerge. She became violent and abusive, often throwing objects at me in the house in front of the children. She was abusive with the children as well. In September of 2001, reality struck. She asked me to leave the house. Trying to appease her, I moved out, hoping that this would help lessen her anger and make things better between us.

Shortly after leaving, I found out that my wife had been having an affair behind my back. Now that I was out of the house, she was bringing her lover over to the house at night. Even the children heard her lover come and go from the home during the night hours.

For the first time I spoke to my wife's first ex-husband. I found out that he was not the abusive father that I had been told of, but another loving father who wanted to see more of his children. I

found out that my wife had been abusive with him as well and had cheated on him as well during their relationship. He told me how he was forced out of the house after about 6 years of living together. It was as if it had been her plan to have children from multiple relationships and then by using the court system, to force the fathers out of the home while the children were still young.

When my common-law wife realized that I was speaking to her first partner and was beginning to find out the truth about her history of lies and deceptions, she became angry and made false allegations of harassment, assault, and threatening. It seems that the police take a women's word without question and are only too eager to arrest a man based just on the word of a woman. After being charged, I too, was now labeled as one of those "bad" fathers and facing thousands of dollars in legal expenses. Access to my children was reduced, greatly distressing my children.

In November of 2001, I suffered a breakdown from the lies, deception and the persecution I faced as a result of her false allegations and manipulation of the system against my children and myself. The weight of the system coming down on one's self is almost unbearable. The reality of how the family court system and criminal justice system strip everything from a father was now very evident to me. I, being a man, soon learned that I could expect no justice in our court system, neither for myself, nor for my children. I had to be hospitalized for nervous breakdown, depression and for being suicidal. The pain of facing this woman's lies and deceptions and knowing that the system supported this kind of behaviour was very difficult to deal with. Luckily, my friends helped to prevent me from doing the unthinkable.

Just like the first father, I was now relegated by the courts to the role of weekend "visitor" to my children and turned into a source of revenue to the mother. The mother reminded how much money the court system was going to make me pay her and seemed to take pleasure in rubbing this in. I also learned how the family courts in Canada make a father pay child support for step children, even when another father is already paying child support for the same children. Even though the first father was paying child support, the courts determined that I would be forced to pay for child support for not only my children but the children from her previous marriage. I learned that this gross injustice is called "double dipping," something it seems is very profitable for the mothers.

My wife's income is now about \$4200 per month with child support from two husbands and money from government grants through child tax credits. Much of this is tax free. On the other hand, I am left with about \$1700 net per month. It had become clear to me that there are huge financial rewards for women to have children from multiply relationships and then to break up their marriages after a short period of time. The law in this country, together with our family court system is literally promoting the breakup and destruction of families with these financial incentives.

My oldest step-daughter wants desperately to live with her father and is tired of her mother's abuse and instability. Yet, the court system seems geared to force kids to stay with their mother and to keep the mother in total control of the money and the children. Even the children are being persecuted and their rights and freedoms being trampled upon.

It is about time that no fault divorce laws be scrapped and that the family court system be changed to encourage the preservation of families, not encourage the destruction of families. Any system that provides an incentive for only one parent (usually the mother) to destroy a marriage and to turn children into profit centers is wrong and immoral. It seems that the political climate is such that

women know that they have nothing to lose and all to gain by breaking up their marriages and discarding their husbands. This can only cause great harm and suffering to many children.

My respect and confidence in the justice system in this country to protect the rights of my children and myself is all but gone. My children's rights to a meaningful relationship with their father have been taken away. My wife has been allowed to commit adultery with impunity, something that also happened in her first relationship. In fact, she has been rewarded for her behaviour. Equality, fairness and justice have been clearly denied to my children and myself by the family court system.

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms begins with the phrase **“Whereas Canada is founded upon principles that recognize the supremacy of God and the rule of law:”** It has become abundantly clear that our family court system has strayed so far away from the guiding principles of our Charter that it has turned justice in this country into nothing but a joke.

The strength of Canada can only remain strong when the people of Canada believe that they have a nation worth protecting and fighting for. This, in turn, can only exist when Canada's political leaders and those who administer justice, ensure that individual rights and freedoms are protected by laws that promote fairness and justice in our society and that these laws are applied by the courts in a way which adheres to principles that recognize the supremacy of God and the rule of law. When the men of Canada can no longer see that their country is willing to protect the rights of their children and themselves, then our entire nation suffers. No man will want to fight to protect a nation not willing to protect the rights of himself and his family.

It is not in the best interests of our children that one parent be made the winner in court. It is not in our children's best interests that our children see how profitable it is for parent to destroy the marriage and to extract money from the other parent. It is not in the best interests of children to see one parent being given sole control of the children over the other parent.

Is there a solution to this? I believe so. I am convinced that if legislation was in place that guaranteed equal shared parenting, that the horror that four children, two fathers and two extended families have endured in my family situation, would never have come about in the first place.

This insanity in our family courts must stop. It is time to implement equal shared parenting.

Your comments appreciated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Guy Lavigne". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending to the right from the end of the name.

Guy Lavigne

cc: All Federal Members of Parliament
All Provincial Members of Parliament
Members of the Senate of Canada
Various consulates and embassies world-wide.