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HOUSE OF COMMONS
CANADA

Maurice Vellacott, MP
Saskatoon-Wanuskewin

Vellacott releases results of new equal shared parenting poll

For Immediate Release

April 16, 2009

OTTAWA – Member of Parliament Maurice Vellacott (Saskatoon-Wanuskewin) today announced the results of a new poll on Equal Parenting after divorce.

"The results indicate that four out of five Canadians (80 percent) continue to support equal shared parenting after divorce with almost no difference by gender, region, age group, or party affiliation," said Maurice Vellacott. "This poll was commissioned in conjunction with the work I've been doing to advance Equal Parenting through Private Member's Motions and Bills," Vellacott added.

The results are nearly identical to a survey conducted in 2007, and are part of a long term trend indicating continuing high levels of support for equal parenting.

The survey conducted by Nanos Research during March, 2009 asked participants: "Do you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose or strongly oppose federal and provincial legislation to create a presumption of equal parenting in child custody cases?" The statistical margin of accuracy is 3%, 19 times out of 20.

Last year Vellacott tabled Private Members Motion M-483 on Equal Parenting to gauge parliamentary support and received 17 Conservative and Liberal seconders to his motion.

"The response I received to this motion has encouraged me to proceed with the poll and the drafting of a Private Member's Bill in this session with a view to garnering all-party support for Equal Parenting, Vellacott said.

Poll results indicate that supporters of all Parties in the House of Commons are united in their support for Equal Parenting, ranging from a low of 76 percent for NDP voters to a high of 83 percent for the Bloc.

Recalling the popular support for the 1998 "For the Sake of the Children" report, Mr. Vellacott noted that there has historically been broad political support across party lines. Canadians have long called for this; and countries such as Australia, Belgium, Sweden, Denmark, and many US states have proceeded along these lines.

Mr. Vellacott has been working with members of the extended divorce community to develop amendments to the Divorce Act. "The divorce community are the real experts in this field as they have first-hand experience with the strengths and weaknesses of the current legislation," he said. "The proposed amendments won't solve all problems, but they will certainly address a major point of contention in divorce," he advised.

Equal Parenting calls for continuation of parental rights, and obligations with joint legal responsibility and joint physical custody, with the presumption that equal parenting time is the best interest of the child.

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