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HOUSE OF COMMONS
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Vellacott recognizes Parental Alienation Awareness Day

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OTTAWA – “Parental Alienation is a serious problem in Canada because too many children do not benefit from the active involvement of both parents in their lives,” said Conservative MP Maurice Vellacott (Saskatoon-Wanuskewin), speaking in recognition of Parental Alienation Awareness Day. April 25th is Parental Alienation Awareness Day and much more awareness needs to take place around the impact of parental alienation today.

Canada's high levels of divorce and non-traditional family arrangements often result in situations where children are no longer able to benefit from the consistent nurture and guidance and love of one of their parents. In most cases, though not all, it is the father who is missing from the home. Canada's family law system often makes matters worse, which is why I have been working on a Private Member's Bill that would require Equal Shared Parenting to be treated as the presumptive approach for resolving custodial arrangements among divorcing parents.

A new study has been released by Prof. Edward Kruk of the University of British Columbia using Canadian data. His research confirms conclusions that have already been well-established from much research around the world. Kruk's report notes that 90 percent of runaways grew up in father-absent homes, as did 71% of dropouts and a majority of those identified as depressed, suicidal, addicted and pregnant teens. “Barring cases of abuse and neglect, the best interests of the child include the active involvement of both parents in their nurture and upbringing,” said Vellacott.

A very important symposium on Parental Alienation took place in Toronto in March. I commend all those involved in organizing this successful and important event. One of the many speakers at the symposium was Dr. Terence Campbell, Ph.D., a clinical and forensic psychologist. He said that all separations must begin with the premise that joint physical custody is better than sole custody.

Many of the speakers at the conference were women, including Dr. Marty McKay, also an advocate of equal parenting. She expressed distress at the way many professionals contribute to Parental Alienation among children in broken homes. She listed the whole spectrum of professionals involved in divorce and custodial situations: judges, lawyers, assessors, psychologists, mediators, child welfare agencies and domestic violence agencies.

“I wish every success to those involved in raising awareness of the trauma of parental alienation,” said Vellacott. “I hope my Private Member's Bill will move Canada in a direction that reduces parental alienation and advances our country's support for the best interests of our children.”