



MEDIA RELEASE

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Cabinet Minister's Smacking Law Comments Welcomed

Family First NZ is welcoming comments made by Social Development Minister Paula Bennett in a radio interview over the weekend.

When a caller to the programme on *Newstalk ZB* asked the Minister whether she thought a smack as part of good parental correction should be a criminal offence in NZ, the Minister responded 'No I don't, I believe that actually good parenting should be left to do that in their different ways in their different homes and I don't have an interest in going into people's homes and telling them how to parent'.

"This is a welcome change to the previous message that parents have received from politicians that 'we know best how to raise your kids'," says Bob McCoskrie, National Director of Family First NZ.

"Ms Bennett is also willing to acknowledge the difference between a smack as part of good parental correction, and child abuse. She went on to say 'I've got the hat on of being hugely hugely concerned with serious abuse – now I think they're very different things so do understand I'm not saying that section 59 was ever going to stop that...'. She also admitted that she would never have introduced an anti-smacking bill."

Paula Bennett now joins Labour leader Phil Goff as having indicated that a smack as part of good parental correction should not be a crime in NZ, as the law currently stands. This is the question being asked in the upcoming Referendum on the anti-smacking law.

The Minister also acknowledged the level of daily concern from parents regarding the law and its impact on their parenting and the attitude of children.

"If the politicians believe that the law as it currently stands is wrong, they should save the country \$10m on a Referendum and amend the law now," says Mr McCoskrie. "They can simply adopt the private members bill put forward by ACT MP John Boscawen, and then heed the calls for a Royal Commission to target the real causes of child abuse."

ENDS

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