

MEDIA RELEASE

13 MAY 2007

MP's to Vote on "Most Extreme Anti-Smacking Law in World" - Expert

Politicians will vote this week on the world's most extreme anti-smacking law in the world, according to Dr Robert E Larzelere, Associate Professor of Human Development and Family Science at the Oklahoma State University, who was brought to New Zealand by Family First NZ as a scientific expert on child correction for the debate on Sue Bradford's anti-smacking bill.

In a commentary written after his week in NZ earlier this month speaking with politicians and media, he says "...the imminent New Zealand smacking ban is more extreme than Sweden's ban in three ways. Using force to correct children will be subject to full criminal penalties Sweden's ban had no criminal penalty. In addition, New Zealand's bill bans the mildest use of force to correct children, not just smacking. This removes most disciplinary enforcements parents have used for generations, especially for the most defiant youngsters. Finally, the required change in disciplinary enforcements will be the biggest change ever imposed on parents."

Dr Larzelere also highlights concerns of immigrants to NZ with the law and says "The New Zealand bill's proponents claim that missionaries were responsible for introducing smacking and bashing to the Maori and other South Pacific peoples. The irony is that they are doing the same thing they accuse missionaries of – imposing a European philosophy of child correction on native ethnic groups – this time enforced with criminal penalties."

He warns that the law to be voted on this Wednesday by Parliament "...runs counter to scientific evidence, previous experiences with similar bans, and the wisdom of previous generations as far back as we can remember. It illustrates the world's increasing inability to work out well-reasoned balanced positions rather than forcing people to choose between polarized extremes."

Dr Larzelere compares our politicians' efforts to ban smacking with US President George W Bush's decision to invade Iraq and says Bush "...had an overly optimistic view about invading Iraq because they heard only one optimistic side of the scenarios. Now our country is in a quagmire with no good way out. For the sake of New Zealand's children and future, I hope they have a better exit strategy than George Bush."

Dr Larzelere's full warning can be read at http://www.familyfirst.org.nz/index.cfm/Dr_Larzelere

ENDS

For More Information and Media Interviews, contact Family First:

Bob McCoskrie JP - NATIONAL DIRECTOR
Tel. 09 261 2426 | Mob. 027 55 555 42