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**MEDIA RELEASE**

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## **Referendum Cost Unfortunate Outcome of Political ‘Deafness’**

Family First NZ is not surprised by a poll today that says that 77% of NZ'ers think the Referendum is a waste of money, and says that the government should save the taxpayer \$9 million on a postal referendum and simply fix the anti-smacking law now as demanded by 80% of kiwis.

“It is incredible that in the midst of a recession, the government will be spending that amount of money to tell them what they already know – that the law should be fixed,” says Bob McCoskrie, National Director of Family First NZ.

“But that is the unfortunate price of ‘political deafness’. The blame for having to even have a Referendum is pointed fairly and squarely at the politicians. Even supporters of the Referendum would say that the Referendum is a waste of money - but completely necessary in the circumstances.”

“The Referendum has resulted in a huge amount of time, energy and resources being spent collecting the 300,000-plus signatures to force the Referendum in the hope that the government would be spurred to amend the law and target the real causes of child abuse. Unfortunately they remained deaf.”

“The law can be easily fixed by removing the criminality of parents who use reasonable force for the purpose of correcting their children but at the same time having clear statutory limits on what constitutes reasonable force. This could be achieved through adopting the Boscawen amendment - which mirrors Chester Borrow’s earlier amendment which the National party was supporting before being ‘whipped’ to vote for the current confusing law.”

“The politicians have tried to paint the Referendum as confusing. They should try explaining the anti-smacking law to parents,” says Mr McCoskrie.

“NZ'ers are crying out for politicians to listen to the voice of the people and to tackle the real causes of child abuse, without criminalising and threatening good parents with investigation and interference from already overworked police and CYF social workers,” says Mr McCoskrie.

**ENDS**

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*For More Information and Media Interviews, contact Family First:*

**Bob McCoskrie - NATIONAL DIRECTOR**  
**Mob. 027 55 555 42**