



19 June 2009

PRESS RELEASE PRESS RELEASE PRESS RELEASE PRESS RELEASE

Why are we questioning the rights of our children?

The upcoming referendum is asking you to vote on whether children have the right to be protected from unnecessary harm and grow up in a society that views violence as a problem not a solution, according to The National Council of Women of New Zealand (NCWNZ).

“The current law as it stands should be applauded as it has given children the same legal protection from assault as adults”, says NCWNZ National President Elizabeth Bang.

NCWNZ passed a resolution by majority in 1997 calling for the repeal of Section 59 of the Crimes Act 1961 which allowed parental assaults on a child to be excused as ‘reasonable’ discipline.

In 2007 the law was changed, giving New Zealand children a chance to be raised in a society that will, over time, be less violent.

The citizen’s initiated referendum is a chance to demonstrate that you agree with the Government’s decision to send a clear message that hitting your children is not acceptable and support the new law.

NCWNZ believes that the referendum question is misleading and masks the real issue. It has been worded to suggest that smacking is part of good parental correction and that good parents are being criminalised, but there is yet to be an example of a ‘good’ parent who has been charged under this law.

NCWNZ will continue to support the current Child Discipline Law and believes that parents should be encouraged to favour positive parenting strategies for discipline.

At the end of July 2009 every registered NZ voter will be sent a referendum form to vote on retaining this measure of child protection.

Voters shouldn’t be fooled by the loaded question but should instead ask themselves:

“Should a child be entitled to the same protection from assault as I am?”

Further Information:

Elizabeth Bang, National President
National Council of Women of New Zealand
Ph 04 473 7613
P O Box 12 117, Wellington
Email: oa@ncwnz.org.nz

“Women Influencing Policy”