

[Family Law Amendment Legislation \(Family Violence and Other Measures\) Bill](#)

The Family Law Amendment (Family Violence and Other Measures) Bill was introduced to Parliament on 24th March 2011. This followed [consultation](#) on the Family Law Amendment (Family Violence) Bill 2010 Exposure Draft, which was supported by 73% of respondents. While the proposed changes are an important first step to better protecting the safety of women and children in the family law system, more changes are necessary to ensure the family law system does not jeopardize the safety of women and children.

The Bill has been referred to the Senate Constitutional and Legal Affairs Committee for an inquiry. Submissions were due on 29 April and the Committee will report back to the Senate on 23 June. You can find the Committee's inquiry page [here](#).

You can find WEAVE's submission [here](#).

Women's Legal Service has established a website 'Put Safety First in Family Law' with further information [here](#).

They have put up an online petition for supporters of their campaign to sign. You can sign the petition [here](#).

It is fundamental that the key focus of Family Law should be ensuring the safety of women and children from ongoing violence and abuse and that such safety should be the essential factor in decision making.

Currently there are significant problems for women who are escaping domestic violence and child abuse. The research indicates that mothers who have left violent relationships are most at risk of experiencing difficulty in achieving safety for themselves and their children in negotiating children's matters after separation in the context of current system provisions. Women are still experiencing continuing exposures of themselves and their children to violence.

Survivors of violence and abuse begin recovery from a cessation of exposure to danger and the need to re-establish safety. However, women who are continually being re-exposed to danger both directly and through their children are in the difficult position of being unable to recover or to achieve safety when the criminal justice, child protection and family law systems have not stopped their exposure to violence and abuse.

Resources and approaches need to be further developed and accessible to improve responses to the needs of women and their families subjected to violence and abuse.

We encourage women, individually and collectively to use this section for information about how to lobby for changes in how systems respond to domestic violence and child abuse, and advocate for the full protection of women and children from violence and abuse.

We encourage organisations and individuals to write to their local politicians to support the measures in it and to call for further changes to ensure that the family law system does not jeopardize the safety of women and children.