

**The Canterbury Home Birth Association joins EPOCH NZ
in showing support for repeal of section 59 Crimes Act 1961**

EPOCH (End Physical Punishment of Children) New Zealand is a charitable trust with the aims of: ending physical punishment of children; educating parents and others about the dangers and disadvantages of physical punishment of children; promoting alternative non-violent ways of helping children behave well; and promoting law reform that supports these aims. The Canterbury Home Birth Association has recently joined EPOCH NZ in showing support for repeal of section 59 Crimes Act 1961. This act states: "*Domestic Discipline (1) Every parent of a child and every person in the place of a parent is justified in using force by way of correction towards the child, if the force used is reasonable in the circumstances*". In other words, section 59 provides a statutory defence for parents who are charged with assaulting a child.

Sue Bradford's Bill for repeal of section 59 Crimes Act 1961 passed its first reading in Parliament recently and may be considered by the Justice and Electoral Select Committee after the election. According to Beth Wood at EPOCH NZ "There is a good deal of confusing information being circulated about the intentions of the bill and the implications of repeal. Some political parties are strongly opposed to reform. There will be considerable opposition to reform when section 59 is considered by the Select Committee and it will be important to convince the Committee and the Government that there is support for full repeal from credible organisations and individuals."

For some years EPOCH NZ has maintained a network of organisations (of which there are now approximately 130) publicly committed to full repeal of section 59 and positive non-violent parenting. EPOCH NZ is seeking to expand their network of organisations as part of their efforts to influence decisions made about section 59 in the future. If you would like more information about EPOCH NZ and repeal of section 59, or to view a list of the supportive organisations, please visit www.epochnz.org.nz.

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