

Unit 16
Northcliff Office Park
203 Beyers Naude Drive
Johannesburg
P.O. Box 95780
Grant Park 2051



Tel: +27 11 340 9108
Fax: +27 11 8889624
www.saaswipp.co.za
info@saaswipp.co.za

3 July 2015

The Chairperson

Parliamentary Portfolio Committee: Social Development

National Parliament

SUBMISSION TO THE PARLIAMENTARY PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE

CHILDREN'S SECOND AMENDMENT BILL: B 14-2015

FROM:

SOUTH AFRICAN ASSOCIATION FOR SOCIAL WORKERS IN PRIVATE PRACTICE (SAASWIPP)

CONTACT DETAILS:

The Chairperson SAASWIPP

(Adoption Portfolio)

Unit 16, Northcliff Office Park

203 Beyers Naude Drive, Johannesburg

P.O. Box 95780, Grant Park, 2051

E-mail: info@saaswipp.co.za

1. THE SOUTH AFRICAN ASSOCIATION FOR SOCIAL WORKERS IN PRIVATE PRACTICE

The South African Association for Social Workers in Private Practice (SAASWIPP) was founded in 1979 to co-ordinate and promote the activities of social workers in private practice, and to set and maintain professional standards.

SAASWIPP used to accredit private social workers in the adoption field. This task of accreditation was taken over by Dept. Social Development in 2012.

2. REASON FOR CONCERN:

It has come to our attention that, according to the Children's Second Amendment Bill. No 14 Of 2015 which was submitted to the National Assembly Committees, an amendment to Section 1(a) of the Children's Act, 2005, was introduced and reads as follows:

“(a) by the deletion in the definition of “adoption social worker” of the word “or” at the end of paragraph (a), the insertion in that definition of the word “or” at the end of paragraph (b) and the addition of the following paragraph:

“(c) a social worker in the employ of the Department or a provincial Department of social development, including a social worker employed as such on a part-time or contract basis;”

We have the following concerns:

2.1 As Adoption Social Workers and members of SAASWIPP we would have appreciated being consulted and having the opportunity to express an opinion in this matter.

We as Private Adoption Social Workers are registered with SACSSP-PBSB as specialising in Adoption Work.

We have all been accredited to carry out Adoptions in terms of Section 251 of the Children's Act. We are experienced in this field and would have made a valuable contribution.

2.2. Adoption is a registered and legislated speciality.

Adoption practice requires specialised knowledge, expertise and competence.

If the social workers who are employed by the Department of Social Development are authorised to do adoptions without being accredited, and without the necessary skills and knowledge, it could have far reaching negative consequences for the children and families we hope to serve.

This would also have a negative impact on the quality of services.

The speciality field of adoption has made progress through the years to provide an excellent service to adoptable children and families. This is the result of a commitment by SAASWIPP to ensuring that their Adoption Workers continue to maintain the high standard that has been set for adoption work.

All social workers who carry out adoptions, no matter whether they are employed or in private practice, should adhere to the same requirements.

2.3 We at SAASWIPP are of opinion that all social workers, those who carry out adoptions and those who manage adoptions, as well as those who need to recommend adoptions according to Sec. 239(1) (d), should be accredited according to the same requirements.

One of the purposes of accreditation is to ensure that a high standard is achieved and maintained by adoption social workers. The accreditation process is rigorous and demands evidence of the social worker's knowledge and experience of adoption and all its repercussions, as well as sensitivity, high ethics and a sense of social responsibility.

2.4 We have to maintain high standards with adoption as it affects a child's life permanently. It is imperative that adoption social workers are equipped to ensure the best interest of the child prevails at all time.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS:

3.1 Each DSD office should apply for accreditation to do adoptions (according to similar standards as CPOs) in terms of Section 251 of the Children's Act and be registered as specialists in adoption.


3.2 A Social Worker employed by DSD and doing adoptions should be accredited.

3.3 Include consultation with all role players in the field of adoption if changes are made that have an influence on this speciality.

3.4 DSD are welcome to consider using Private Accredited Adoption Social Workers as consultants to undertake adoption matters. It can be cost effective and ensure that high standards are maintained.



Signed: Mrs. Annemarie van Dyk
SAASWIPP Adoptions Portfolio



Date