

Bill may leave behind tens of thousands of children in the foster care system

Chairperson, after countrywide public hearing on over 340 amendments to the Children's Act, the committee would later learn DSD failed to consult SALGA. Did not factor in the ECD migration. And the most obvious, the committee would never get through all the amendments in time before the NA and NCOP process and still meet the court deadline.

On legal advice, the committee prioritized 12 foster care clauses.

It became evident the ANC members were given marching orders. Stick to the 12 clauses and hurry up so the Minister does not default on the court order.

All credible submissions received from stakeholders, many experts in their field, seemed to have dissipated.

On 18 May the committee agreed, and video recording will confirm, clause 10 amending Section 21 would be included as this would ensure children who live with their unmarried fathers, will not end up in an already overburdened foster care system. Empowering the children's court to issue the relevant certificates and apply due diligence in the best interest of the child.

Why would Parliament deny fathers their right and opportunity to father their children, if they wanted to. Do we not constantly hear the phrase, 'the fatherless generation'?

Imagine our surprise at our next meeting, when the legal advisor presented all the changes previously agreed to, with the exception of this clause which was deliberately left out.

Minutes by the impartial Parliamentary Monitoring Group (PMG), were also discredited, as it not fit the ANC's agenda of the day.

The ANC's attempt to gaslight opposition members led to all opposition parties leaving the meeting on a matter of ethics and principle.

In the weeks thereafter, attempts to rewrite history, journalists attacked, mansplaining by the solo male member all went unchecked. Even a circus has more order because there is only one ringmaster.

Disregarding its own Child Care and Protection Policy, clause 86 S150(1) will now see orphaned or abandoned children found on their own with no caregiver, informally placed without a court order.

This section will also contradict the new Child Support Grant Top Up regulations.

In order to qualify and receive the this top up grant, current regulations state 'after' a screening process while the amendment states 'before' screening. DSD indicated they'll just change the regulation once the Act is promulgated which will only lead to confusion, bottle necks and backlogs at SASSA offices. Self-sabotage if you ask me.

Chairperson, time will tell, whether the court accepts the Minister's incomplete comprehensive legal solution (CLS) and if the foster care crisis has been averted or simply diverted.

Contra to the Minister's mantra of Leaving No Child Behind, tens of thousands of children in the foster care system, may very well be.

The DA cannot support this version of the Children's Amendment Bill.