

Paid Parental Leave Bill 2010

Senate Inquiry Submission

While the general principle is good, there is a number of concerns about the proposals in this Bill.

The three I shall focus on are: Discrimination, Bonding and 'Rorting'

Discrimination:

I had been hoping that a Labor Government would be more aware of the discriminatory practice of 'looking after' mothers who leave the paid workforce to care for their baby while giving a lesser amount to mothers who are not in the workforce.

The costs of baby care in all its elements are the same in the 6 months so why should the single income family receive less?

Furthermore, there is even greater discrimination where the mother remains at home to give care beyond the 6 months, and has more children before returning to work. By far the greatest proportion of mothers who care for their pre-school children are not 'rich'. The care is a choice of what they believe is best, so why should they be discriminated against? Is it that 'choice' is the catchcry, but not the practice?

Bonding:

The stability and security of bonding in the family situation is very important for emotional and behavioural well-being of pre-school children. In normal circumstances, there could be 2 or 3 pre-school siblings with their mother, developing a strong sense of identity, and relationships because the source of care is not subject to change (shifts, carer off sick, etc).

The best practice for babies is 9 months care. "Nine months in the womb, 9 months further specialized care."

The human baby is the most dependent of all baby mammals, it cannot even move to its food source. On the average, at 9 months, the baby can.

'Rorting':

Analysts have identified in the draft Bill the possibility that parents could claim Paid Parental Leave yet still put their young ones into Day Care and claim the 50% Child Care Rebate.

Another avenue for rorting is to claim Paid Parental Leave for stillborn babies, or babies dying from elective terminations.

There is no doubt parents of stillborn babies suffer trauma, but there should be other workplace conditions to cover that, such as Compassionate Leave.

Where there has been an elective termination (procured abortion), again, Compassionate Leave should cover that situation.

In neither case should there be Paid Parental Leave. That is a

contradiction of terms and a contradiction in philosophy.

Conclusion:

In short, one parent in any form of family arrangement (single income or double income) should get the same support as any other.

Because of the superior bonding in relationship to the stability and security of pre-schoolers, stay home mothers should be able to get the equal benefits for other babies she has in that time. Also, consideration should be given to a 9month time of financial help.

Our taxes must be carefully handled with no avenue of double dipping' and no payment of Parental Leave when in fact there is no baby.

Recommendation:

Any form of even potential discrimination between stay-at-home mothers and those who return to the workforce must be identified and removed. We cannot have, in Australia, "second class mothers".