

Department of the Senate
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

May 10th, 2010

To whom it may concern,

re. Senate Inquiry into Paid Parental Leave

I am a full time stay at home mother of three. I spend my days volunteering at school (at a disproportionately high level as most of the other parents work). I help with numeracy, literacy, fine & gross motor development and the like. As a stay at home mum, I invest my time in raising well rounded children who have strong bonds to family. I am raising children who are all well above their peers with their own literacy/numeracy levels and social skills (my first child has been accelerated largely as a result of the time and effort I have spent bonding with him and nurturing him at home). It is a tragedy that this proposed Bill will essentially discourage more parents from investing their time into producing well rounded children. Please understand that the only way for government to increase parental bonding is to give the same funding to support this bonding for every newborn.

I find this new bill highly discriminatory in that it deters mothers from choosing the path I have and at the end of the day it is not only their children who are the worse off for it but mine too. Increasingly teachers and helpers are expected to invest huge amounts of time into parenting neglected children, helping them to "catch up" whilst those who have had parental time invested are generally well beyond their peers. I did return to paid work in between my pregnancies and my son went to child care, a decision I have always regretted. He still cringes when we pass the childcare factory he attended with its inconsolable screaming children, non stimulating surrounds, & rationed sandwiches & baby wipes. It was simply a business, and apparently not unique in its industry with high staff turnaround - no opportunity to bond to anyone (the staff were never there beyond a couple of months) and a haven for bullies who had become so as a result of their neglect and as a means to survive. It was essentially a gaol for children & hardly the ideal.

I implore you to amend this bill so that ALL parents can afford invaluable bonding time with their babies not just short term but long term. Give them the invaluable opportunity to not only bond with their babies, but to fairly contribute at school when their children are older. It is essential you amend the Bill to remove the "work test" (sections 32 to 36 of draft Bill) and the "income test" (sections 37 to 41 of draft Bill).

I implore you also to amend the bill to close the abortion loophole. Currently the Bill gives Paid Parental Leave for stillborn babies & in many cases aborted babies reaching 20 weeks gestation, who are born dead or alive (to die subsequently) are recognised and recorded in Birth Registries as "stillborns". Please, to avoid any doubt, the Bill need to be amended to ensure Paid Parental Leave funding does not go to babies who are "stillborn" as a result of abortion.