

FAIR AGENDA

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New parental leave cut proposal would leave thousands short of expert recommended time to care

Reports today suggest the Government is making a fourth attempt to cut paid parental leave. The proposal would include the introduction of a ceiling of just 20 weeks of combined paid leave for working parents trying to find time to care for their baby.

Renee Carr, Executive Director of Fair Agenda says: "The Government seems to hope we'll forget that 26 weeks post-natal leave is the minimum amount of time recommend by experts for health and welfare reasons."

"This new proposal would leave tens of thousands of parents short of the 26 weeks of post-natal leave experts say is needed to give their baby the best start in life."

The Government has already tried and failed to introduce cuts three previous times.

"It's shocking that the Government are still focusing on reducing the support available to thousands of working parents who are trying to afford time to care for their newborns -- while at the same time pushing for huge tax cuts for companies bringing in millions."

The deciding vote on this new proposal is expected to sit with the crossbench Senators, including the NXT, who are reported to be pushing for the new proposal.

"At the election the Nick Xenophon Team and Jacqui Lambie Network pledged to Fair Agenda that they would vote to protect paid parental leave. Voters who supported those parties on that basis will be rightly disappointed if they now break that promise by supporting this new cut."

Previous modelling commissioned by Fair Agenda suggests that the introduction of this kind of ceiling on the leave available to workers would tear precious time to care away from workers like nurses, teachers and retail workers. (This previous modelling available at www.fairagenda.org/ppl_report)

Ms Carr added: "We should absolutely be talking about ways to improve the parental leave system for everyone - but not by pitching parents against each other."

"Women who have worked to negotiate decent parental leave into their employment agreements shouldn't be punished for that."

"We all have a stake in ensuring the next generation has a bright future. Paid time to care for new parents is critical to keeping our country strong. We shouldn't be letting our government drag us backwards on this issue."

"The Government has already tried three times to cut our paid parental leave system. Three times concerned community members and politicians of conscience have stopped them. We urge them to do so again."

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