

A joint letter from community and labour organizations, concerning Federal Consultations on Parental & Caregiving Leaves and E.I. ^[1]

Author: Various

Source: The Progressive Economics Forum

Publication Date: 4 Nov 2016

AVAILABILITY

Full letter (English and French) online ^[2]

The very narrow and brief on-line consultations around parental and caregiving leaves finishes today. As we've done in the past, a coalition of community and labour organizations worked together to develop a common list of policy asks. Even though the official consultation is finished, we encourage concerned individuals and groups to submit their own recommendations to ESDC and Minister Duclos.

A Joint Letter from Community and Labour Organizations, concerning Federal Consultations on Parental & Caregiving Leaves and E.I.

We represent a number of community and labour organizations with concerns about the current federal consultations on amending Employment Insurance and Canada Labour Code provisions for Parental and Compassionate Care leaves. In particular we are concerned that the Government has restricted itself to a very narrow set of options.

There are other, more meaningful options for change. We need more realistic options for working families, with a priority for social equity and anti-poverty measures.

1. We urge the Government to keep a focus on the big picture which includes our social programs and public services. We are in urgent need of:

- Improvements in EI access and benefits, especially for those in precarious jobs,
- A public, universal and affordable childcare program for families across Canada, including infant care,
- New investments in our health care system, including eldercare.

2. The evidence in Quebec and internationally demonstrates the success of additional parental benefits which are dedicated 'use it or lose it' weeks for the second parent. Such provisions help enormously to improve gender equity and shared parenting with many long-term benefits for society. We propose an additional 8 benefit weeks.

3. There is little point to improving parental and other EI special benefits if there are still women and men who can't qualify because they can't meet EI's 600 hour minimum. We propose all EI special benefits require the lesser of 300 hours (pre-1996 minimum) or \$2,000 income (Quebec minimum for parental benefits).

4. Workers with a new child, those on sick leave or caring for sick family members require more than 55% of their normal earnings while on leave. We propose a benefit rate of 70% and a minimum EI benefit for low wage earners.

5. Access to EI special benefits should be restored for all migrant workers. A discriminatory two-tier system was introduced in December 2012.

6. EI is not an appropriate means to address protective re-assignment/leave benefits. Quebec for example addresses it through the workers compensation system.

7. Compassionate Care Benefits should be available when caring for someone with a critical illness (but not necessarily at imminent risk of death, as currently required).

Thank you for considering our position.

Region: Canada ^[3]

Tags: maternity and parental leave ^[4]

social policies and programs ^[5]

Source URL (modified on 9 Nov 2016): <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/16/11/joint-letter-community-and-labour-organizations-concerning->

Links

- [1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/16/11/joint-letter-community-and-labour-organizations-concerning->
- [2] <http://www.progressive-economics.ca/2016/11/04/parental-and-caregiving-leaves/>
- [3] <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/7864>
- [4] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/maternity-and-parental-leave>
- [5] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/social-policies-and-programs>