

UK: Calls to give MPs six months of paid parental leave to allow them to stop working when they have children ^[1]

Commons authorities are looking at plans to make sure politicians can take time off when their child is born

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Commons authorities are looking at plans to make sure politicians can take time off when their child is born.

At the moment MPs don't have maternity or paternity rights as they are not technically employees.

So it's left down to the party whips and there's no formal process of arranging cover.

The baby leave plans would mean someone could be allowed to stand in for them in their absence - and paid for by the taxpayer.

The Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority, which would be responsible for funding the constituency cover, is "very supportive in principle", The Times reported.

And Speaker John Bercow is throwing his weight behind an idea from Labour's former deputy leader Harriet Harman to allow proxy voting.

That would allow MPs to nominate a colleague to vote for them in the Commons when they are not around.

"Parliament needs to set a good example," Ms Harman told the newspaper.

"We cannot be making the rules for other people and saying it's important for babies to spend time with their mother and father but have no provision for that to happen ourselves.

"I've been there for 35 years and I've had three babies — I don't think 18 months would have been much to take off in that time."

But critics say it's a privileged that's not available to everyone and thus would seem unfair.

Maria Miller said any entitlement shouldn't be better than the people represented, and Tory MP Andrew Brigden added: "otherwise it smacks of special privileges for MPs".

-reprinted from The Sun

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