

New rules on parental leave miss the mark, Women's Network says ^[1]

Stretching leave from 12 to 18 months won't benefit low-income families, says Jillian Kilfoil

Author: MacKay, Cody

Source: CBC News

Format: Article

Publication Date: 8 Nov 2017

AVAILABILITY

[Read online](#) ^[2]

EXCERPTS

The federal government's long-awaited changes to parental leave are no help to Islanders living in poverty, says the Women's Network of PEI.

Families Minister Jean-Yves Duclos on Thursday announced the expanded parental leave will allow new parents to stretch their 12 months of employment insurance up to 18 months.

Family caregiver benefits were also announced — one is a 15-week leave to care for a critically ill or injured adult, the other a 35-week benefit to care for a critically ill or injured child.

Both will go into effect Dec. 3, though the actual value of the extended EI benefits isn't going up.

"It's a very small population on P.E.I. who would be able to benefit from that," said Jillian Kilfoil, executive director of the Women's Network of PEI.

"It's not an increase in the amount of benefits you get, it's just an increase in how many months you can spread those benefits over."

'Not a priority'

She said it's already difficult for people to take a 12-month maternity leave, and the expanded leave isn't doing any favours for lower-income families.

"I don't think it's a bad thing, I just think this is not a priority, or something that won't help people in poverty — this is not something that caters to that group, unfortunately," she said.

A higher minimum wage or greater parental leave benefits would be more helpful, she said, since the new rules only help people from "certain socioeconomic backgrounds."

"Having half your salary for a year is very very difficult for individuals and families," she said.

"We wouldn't want to get in the way of any of these initiatives, we'd love to just see them tailored more towards the most vulnerable population."

'Mixed feelings'

In an emailed statement, Paula Biggar, the province's minister responsible for the status of women, said she raised concerns in a meeting in Toronto on Thursday with status of women ministers from across the country.

"I have mixed feelings around the changes. While it will be beneficial for some families to extend their benefits to 18 months, unfortunately there will be other families who will not be able to take advantage of the extended program," she said.

"They won't be able to afford to stretch a 12-month salary by another six months."

-reprinted from CBC News

Related link:

Region: Prince Edward Island ^[3]

Tags: maternity and parental leave ^[4]

pay ^[5]
social policy ^[6]
family ^[7]
mothers labour force participation ^[8]
workforce ^[9]

Source URL (modified on 27 Jan 2022): <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/17/11/new-rules-parental-leave-miss-mark-womens-network-says>

Links

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/17/11/new-rules-parental-leave-miss-mark-womens-network-says> [2] <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/prince-edward-island/pei-federal-government-extended-parental-leave-1.4395329> [3] <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/7852> [4] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/maternity-and-parental-leave> [5] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/pay> [6] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/social-policy> [7] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/family> [8] <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/8942> [9] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/workforce>