

Quebec promises more flexibility, extra weeks of parental leave for families ^[1]

Leave spread out over two years — parents of multiple births and adoptive parents get 5 extra weeks

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EXCERPTS

Parents in Quebec will be able to bank up to ten days of their parental leave, and use them after they return to work, under proposed legislation tabled Thursday in the National Assembly.

The governing Liberals want the provisions added to the Quebec Parental Insurance Plan in order to allow working mothers and fathers more leeway to take care of their infants.

The proposed changes are contained in Bill 174. If passed, parents could choose to keep those ten days for up to three years, and take time off work without requiring approval from their employer.

"We know during the first years, kids get sick, notably at daycare," said Minister of Employment and Social Solidarity François Blais.

Extra weeks for multiple births, adoptions

Blais said Bill 174 aims at giving parents more flexibility over their parental leave. The bill would also give families who have more than one child at a time an extra five weeks of parental leave.

Parents of twins or triplets, for example, deserve the added time because maternity leave is related to the mother's health, Blais said.

"Pregnancies with multiples are often more difficult. There are more cesarian sections," he added.

This sets the total number of weeks of leave for these parents at 60.

Adoptive parents will also have five extra weeks, bringing their leave up from 32 weeks to 37.

Blais said this number is lower than birth parents, who receive 55 weeks, because part of the leave is meant to allow a woman's body to recover from childbirth.

The new provisions also confirm one of the Liberals' earlier announcements, which would allow all parents to spread their parental leave over two years.

The changes are not expected to result in any additional costs for the government, since there is no actual increase in the monetary value of the parental-leave benefits.

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