

Nova Scotia removes maternity leave penalties for municipal councillors ^[1]

Author: The Canadian Press

Source: CTV News

Format: Article

Publication Date: 5 Apr 2018

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EXCERPTS

Nova Scotia municipal councillors who are pregnant will be able to take maternity leave without penalty and without asking permission of their councils under proposed legislative changes.

Amendments to the Municipal Government Act and the Halifax Charter will allow councillors who are pregnant, or who have recently become a parent, to miss three council meetings without risk of losing their seat and without financial penalty for up to 52 weeks.

Under current legislation, councillors automatically lose their seats if they miss three consecutive council meetings.

Currently, parental leave is granted by a motion of council and leave requests can be publicly debated.

Municipal Affairs Minister Derek Mombourquette says the changes ensure any elected official in any municipality can make personal family decisions in private.

He says it's an important step towards removing barriers to greater participation in municipal government.

The issue was highlighted by Kings County councillors Emily Lutz and Megan Hodges.

Hodges appeared at the legislature last fall in support of an NDP bill, saying the issue had been "overlooked."

-reprinted from CTV News

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