

# B.C. government proposes expanded leave for new parents, those in mourning <sup>[1]</sup>

Bill syncs compassionate care and maternity leave regimes with new federal rules

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## EXCERPTS

Potential changes to B.C. employment law would give mothers more time off work before and after giving birth, and give parents more leave if they are suffering the death or disappearance of a child.

If passed, amendments to the Employment Standards Act introduced Monday in Bill 6 would provide several new and extended opportunities for parental leave, according to a government press release.

Labour Minister Harry Bains said the changes will "help ease the worry and stress over job security" and offer more flexibility and support to families.

Changes include allowing mothers to start maternity leave as early as 13 weeks before the expected birth, while new parents can take a longer unpaid parental leave to care for their baby, offering up to 18 months of leave for birth mothers, while ensuring job protection.

### Death or disappearance of a child

The amendments would allow parents to take up to two years of unpaid leave if a child dies before age 19; a "significant addition," the government said, to the three days of unpaid bereavement leave currently available.

They would also provide up to 52 weeks of unpaid leave to parents whose children go missing due to a crime. According to the ministry, B.C. is currently the only province where parents cannot take leave for this reason.

"Entitlement to these leaves mean that the parents who are facing the tragedy of the death or disappearance of their child will not have to worry about their continued employment for the specified period," Bains told the Legislature on Monday as the bill received first reading.

Bains said many of the amendments in the bill sync B.C.'s leave provisions with new federal provisions.

He said the revisions also sync B.C.'s compassionate care leave regime with the expanded federal one, providing for 27 weeks of unpaid leave to take care of a terminally ill family member.

Currently only eight weeks are offered in B.C., the ministry says.

-reprinted from CBC News

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