

Shanghai Women's federation proposes shared parental leave ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

Shanghai Women's Federation is calling for introduction of a "shared leave" policy for new mothers and new fathers to help women return to the workplace and men to get more involved in childcare.

Currently in Shanghai, women get 128 days of paid maternity leave, but their husbands are just entitled to 10 days. The federation suggests the couple should share a total of 138 days of paid leave.

"We suggest that women take the first 98 days and the remaining 40 are shared," said in a proposal set to be submitted to political advisers during the city's two sessions.

Initiated as to protect women's rights, paid leave has become an obstacles for women in the workplace, discouraging women to have babies.

The number of babies born in Shanghai in 2016 was around 218,000 and 197,000 in 2017, both far below the government's expectation of 260,000.

Besides, it is not mandatory that new fathers have to take 10 days of paternity leave. It is common for employers not to allow men to take leave or only two to three days, the federation said.

"It's not the business of women to take care of a baby. The duties and responsibilities should be shared by both women and men," the federation said in the proposal.

Shanghai Women's Federation will submit a total of 10 proposals to city lawmakers and political advisers during this year's two sessions, covering child care, senior care and family rights, among others.

It will suggest standards for community-based child activities venues, reducing use of antibiotics in food and stepping up efforts to care elders who lose their only child.

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