

# Parental leave deal near with Quebec [CA-QC] <sup>[1]</sup>

Pettigrew: Issue could be settled before federal election

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## AVAILABILITY

See text below.

## EXCERPTS

Signs of a spring election multiplied yesterday as Liberal cabinet ministers raised the prospect of quick solutions to the employment insurance woes of seasonal workers and a parental leave deal with Quebec & issues Liberals fear could hurt them in the polls.

The difficulty for seasonal workers to qualify for employment insurance is a major irritant in outlying regions of Quebec such as Gaspé - ridings where Liberal incumbents are expected to face stiff challenges from the Bloc or ridings which the Liberals would like to win away from the Bloc.

Pettigrew and Frulla said the government is also working hard to negotiate a deal to transfer parental leaves to Quebec.

"I would really like to settle the dossier of parental leaves," said Pettigrew when asked about dossiers he would like to see resolved before Canadians head to the polls.

"I think if we were to have an agreement in principle we would show very clearly the new tone that we are looking to give to federal-provincial relations. I think Quebecers would appreciate that."

Frulla said the talks are going well, but the transfer would also have a significant impact on Quebec's budget.

"If there is a transfer of parental leaves it is in part because Quebec wants to improve them, so that has big financial implications."

Yesterday in Quebec City, family minister Claude Bechard told reporters that talks are going well from Quebec's standpoint and that he expects an agreement within a few weeks.

Meanwhile, federal cabinet ministers from Quebec say their organization in the province is ready the moment Martin decides to call an election.

However, Frulla said it is important that the Liberals do well in Quebec.

"We have to win thanks to Quebec, not despite Quebec."

- reprinted from the Gazette

**Region:** Quebec <sup>[2]</sup>

**Tags:** maternity and parental leave <sup>[3]</sup>

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