

Time for tots: Premier pledges labour law change to extend parental leave [CA-SK] ^[1]

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EXCERPT

Saskatchewan will change its laws to allow parents to stay home longer with their newborns, matching changes made to federal labour laws earlier this year, Premier Lorne Calvert announced Friday.

"It is the right thing to do and we will do it in this session (of the legislature)," Calvert said in a speech to the Canadian Union of Public Employees. "There may be opposition, but I tell you from my point of view, if as government and as a community and a society we can serve and enhance that first year of life, that first year of childhood, we are doing something good for the long term of our communities."

The federal government extended the length of parental leave available to full-time employees to 35 weeks from 10, on top of the 15 weeks of maternity leave available to new mothers. The change took effect Jan. 1.

However the change applied only to those working in industries covered by the Canada Labour Code, such broadcasting and banking. The majority of workers did not receive the full benefits of the federal change.

Although they could receive Employment Insurance benefits for 50 weeks, their job would only be secured for the term allowed for by the legislation in the province in which they lived.

Barb Byers, president of the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour, applauded the premier's announcement.

"We're really pleased to know the government here is committed to changing the legislation to ensure that working parents in Saskatchewan will get the full benefits," she said.

The Saskatchewan legislature begins its spring session on March 20.

-Reprinted from The Daily Herald (Prince Albert, SK)

Region: Saskatchewan ^[2]

Tags: maternity and parental leave ^[3]

work/life balance ^[4]

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