



MULTIPLE BIRTHS CANADA DISAPPOINTED WITH OUTCOME OF VOTE ON BILL C-464 - YET HOPEFUL FOR FUTURE CHANGES

NEWS RELEASE

March 27, 2013

OTTAWA, ONTARIO - Multiple Births Canada (MBC), the national organization representing Canada's multiple-birth community, is disappointed with the outcome of today's vote on Bill C-464: Parental Leave for Multiple Births or Multiple Adoptions, yet pleased with the positive support shown by MPs voting yes.

This Private Member's Bill, introduced by MP Sana Hassainia, requested an amendment to the Canada Labour Code and the Employment Insurance Act to increase the maximum number of weeks during which parental benefits can be paid from 35 weeks to 70 weeks in the case of multiple births or multiple adoptions. The intent was to create equality for all parents qualified to apply for the Parental Leave Program (PLP). The PLP was designed to support six key pillars: promote child development; balance demands of work and very young children; make short-term investment for long-term economic gain; use EI as an effective instrument; promote gender equality; and allow businesses to retain valuable, experienced employees. Unfortunately, the PLP is currently failing multiple-birth families on three pillars – promoting child development, balancing work/family demands, and providing employment security.

Specifically, extended leave should reflect the reality that 56.6% of twins and 94.1% of triplets are born at less than 5.5 pounds. The number of weeks allotted by the PLP for multiple-birth parents should allow these parents to provide the additional care and extra time needed to bring multiple-birth infants to the same stage of development as singletons. It should also address the extreme sleep deprivation issues faced by multiple birth parents when they return to work expected to perform at their previous productivity levels despite their babies' birth age not reflecting their corrected age. This sleep deprivation has been known to affect multiple-birth parents' job security and mental health. And, the PLP should address an underlying issue many multiple-birth families unexpectedly face when they cannot find affordable daycare or places for more than one infant at a time, therefore being forced to take a leave of absence or quit their job.

Quote: *"We know the Conservative Party of Canada believes in family values. We are confident they will take a closer look at the intent of Bill C-464 and find a way to amend the Parental Benefits Program to better address the needs of Canada's multiple-birth families. We are sure that today's "no" vote was simply an issue of the Conservatives not having a full understanding of the issues surrounding Bill C-464. We know we can count on them to review this matter and recommend extended parental leave benefits to ensure fairness for multiple-birth families."*

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