

Thursday, 24 February 2011

## Parental leave work place entitlement protected after Coalition's attempt at sabotage was rejected.

New mothers' connection with the workplace will be protected following the rejection by Parliament today of a Coalition attempt to weaken the Paid Parental Leave scheme, say unions.

A bill introduced by Liberal MP Bruce Billson, which would have turned paid parental leave from an employment entitlement to a welfare payment by removing business's role in administering the payment, was defeated in the House of Representatives today.

ACTU President Ged Kearney said the Bill would have undermined one of the key objectives of the PPL scheme: encouraging women's participation in the workforce by maintaining a connection to their employer during the period of leave.

"Paid Parental Leave has been a right in most developed countries for years. It is long overdue and the Productivity Commission recommended that employers play a role in administering it because it would help businesses retain skilled staff," Ms Kearney said.

"It is sad to see the Liberal Party continuing their historical opposition to the right of new parents to spend time with their babies without having to worry about losing their place in the workforce."

Ms Kearney said that ridiculous allegations by Mr Billson that the Government's Paid Parental Leave is part of a "secret pact" with unions, were another sign of how out-of-touch the Coalition are on this issue.

"Paid Parental Leave should be an entitlement, like the other rights that workers and unions have fought for," Ms Kearney said.

"Unions will continue to campaign for better Paid Parental Leave provisions than the legislated minimum to further improve the lives of working parents.

"Our position has been to improve on the Government's PPL scheme and deliver extra benefits to workers' through workplace bargaining.

"Improvements may include full income replacement, increasing the length of paid parental leave to 26 weeks through an employer contribution, and ensuring that women continue to receive superannuation contributions while they are on parental leave."

**Media contact:**

Amanda Nguyen ph (03) 9664 7326 or 0418 479 455; [anguyen@actu.org.au](mailto:anguyen@actu.org.au)