



New Zealand Federation of Business
& Professional Women Incorporated

11 February 2006

SUBMISSION

To: Secretary of the Transport & Industrial Relations Select Committee

Re: Parental Leave and Employment Protection (Paid Parental Leave for Self-employed Persons) Amendment bill

Introduction

1. This submission is from the New Zealand Federation of Business and Professional Women, Inc. (BPW NZ)
2. We wish to appear before the committee to speak to our submission.
3. Contact person: Angela McLeod (Legislation Convenor) – based in Wellington.

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Our organisation

4. Our organisation's aims are to link professional and businesswomen throughout the world, to provide support, to lobby for change and to promote the ongoing advancement of women. We work for equal opportunities and status for all women in economic, civil and political life and removal of discrimination in all countries. We promote our aims and organise our operating structure without distinction as to race, language or religion.

Our membership is approximately 1000.

Our structure is comprised of a National Executive, 33 branches located nationwide between Kaitaia and Southland, together with a number of individual members in areas where there is no branch.

We are interested in this bill because *it supports the Self Employed Working Woman and the ability of her business to contribute to the small and medium enterprise sector of the New Zealand economy. It also gives practical, financial help to families where new mothers have been self-employed, and supports positive health outcomes for both mothers and babies.*

BPW NZ Policy

5. We have several policies which support our stand on this amendment. The following subjects are covered: paid parental leave and shared responsibility of both spouses.

Parental leave has been discussed often in BPWNZ as shown by these policies:

Policy 7.12 states that “NZFBPW adopts the policy that a one year period of parental leave without pay remains an economically viable option for New Zealand. (1995)

and

Policy 7.12.1 CONFIRMS the existing policy that the status quo for parental leave be retained, being 12 months leave without pay. (1999)

Particular reference to paid parental leave is stated in these policies:

7.12.2 THAT BPW NZ support the concept of Paid Parental Leave. (2001)

7.12.3 THAT Paid Parental Leave be provided for 14 weeks. (2001)

7.12.4 THAT Paid Parental Leave be funded by a specific tax paid by all employees, employers and the self-employed. (2001)

Our support of either spouse being self employed and eligible for paid parental leave is evidenced in the following policies:

8.1.1 THAT the Federation adopt as Policy recognition that acceptance of shared responsibility by spouses for the upbringing of children and the upkeep of the home is essential if married women are to have equality of opportunity in economic, civil and political life.

8.1.2 THAT clubs be encouraged to support and sponsor activities that would help to achieve general acceptance in New Zealand of the principle that responsibility for child rearing and home-making should be shared by both spouses. (1979)

CEDAW

The New Zealand Government has ratified the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of discrimination Against Women. Article 11, supports (a) The right to work---, (b) The right to the same employment opportunities---, (c) The right to free choice of profession and employment, the right to promotion ---.

Receiving paid parental leave as a self employed person is an important step in giving them access to the same rights as the person employed by some one else. The self employed person is the driver of their business and allocates resources to 'get the job done'.

When a self employed person has a baby their responsibilities as a parent impact on their ability to maintain the flow of work through their business. As an employee, she/he would be eligible for paid parental leave knowing that they will still have a employment to return to at the end of their leave.

Being excluded from this support is a major constraint on the ability of a parent who owns and operates their own business to spend quality time with their new family and maintain their self employment.

This particularly impacts on women who usually take primary responsibility for children, and inhibits their access to the rights enshrined in the Convention.

BPW NZ is pleased that the Bill is congruent with the Convention and will enhance the rights of parents, in particular women, in relation to business ownership.

We support the intent of this bill in its entirety as it is family friendly, and will improve the ability of parents/primary care givers with new children to maintain their small or medium enterprise – a mainstay of the New Zealand economy