

1 Paid parental leave and subsidized childcare are discriminatory against all parents who choose to stay out of the workforce for the period of child raising. A better approach would be a more decent Baby Bonus for ALL mothers, whether paid as a lump sum or in installments. Childraising is an expense to all parents, not just to those who both work full-time. Parents who forgo work to be at home for their kids also forgo that potential income. I am 53 years old, with a university degree. I have 7 children, 3 still at home in secondary school. I received paid parental leave for only my first child. From then on, since I ended up quitting because 6 weeks was too short a time to be at home with my first child, I have received no other government assistance at the birth of any more of my children, but relied on my husband for support. We had some family allowance in the early days, but my husband's income eventually precluded that.

I have hardly been in the "paid" workforce all my life, but have provided an assisting and supporting role for my husband in his business, for the needs of my growing family (which now includes 2 grandchildren), and I also am the primary carer for both my in-laws (aged 85 and 87). I now also volunteer at the local sporting clubs, and schools of which some of my children are members. So I do not consider in any way that I have been a "slacker" or not worked really hard and long for all of my life! (The only difference is that I have no financial gain to show for it.)

The thing I do have to show for it is all my children as paid professionals, or studying at uni or secondary schools (with their eyes on their own individual careers), as good, decent, developing citizens, with no criminal records, starting families of their own or planning for such, trying to buy homes. I'm not saying the way we did it is the only way – but it worked for us with very little help. I was fortunate that my husband has a well-paying career, but not all are so fortunate, and they should have the opportunity, if they want to be around for their families, to do it that way. For example, being around for his family is so important for my eldest son that he has suspended his surgical training (which could take him away from his family both time-wise and distance-wise) to take up a 9 to 5 research position for one or 2 years while his two children are little. This also represents to him a significant reduction in income for that time. His wife also is fulltime at home (she also cares for her parents).

We all do it a little differently, but almost universally we are trying to do the best for our families. Why single out only two income families for help?

2 Another issue I have is my concern that somehow allowances might get to people who deliberately abort their babies. I have heard that all deaths, whether accidental miscarriage or deliberate abortion after 20 weeks can be classified as a "stillborn".

No-one should get parental allowance for this. Parental assistance should only go to those who actually incur the costs of becoming a parent, ie giving birth and rearing a child. We may all feel sympathy for those in the other aforementioned categories, but that would come under burial/death assistance, which is another issue altogether.

If some need assistance to get together things for the baby prior to birth, then maybe, under special circumstances couples could be given/loaned a portion of their bonus earlier on.