



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**BILLS**

**Paid Parental Leave and Other  
Legislation Amendment (Dad and Partner  
Pay and Other Measures) Bill 2012**

**Second Reading**

**SPEECH**

**Thursday, 24 May 2012**

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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## SPEECH

**Date** Thursday, 24 May 2012  
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**Questioner**  
**Speaker** Macklin, Jenny, MP

**Source** House  
**Proof** No  
**Responder**  
**Question No.**

**Ms MACKLIN** (Jagajaga—Minister for Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs and Minister for Disability Reform) (11:26): I thank all members for their contribution to the debate on this very important bill, the Paid Parental Leave and Other Legislation Amendment (Dad and Partner Pay and Other Measures) Bill 2012.

As the member for Hindmarsh, I think, has so eloquently put it, this is a very special time in the lives of mums and dads. We hope that this extra paid time will give dads the sort of help and support that the member for Hindmarsh has put so well.

This bill extends the government's Paid Parental Leave scheme to include a new payment, the so-called dad and partner pay, for eligible working fathers and partners. It took this Labor government to deliver this bill and Australia's first national Paid Parental Leave scheme. It gives working parents, mums and dads, the security to stay at home with their newborn babies in what we all know are those very critical, early months of a child's development. I can inform the House that more than 150,000 families across the country have already taken up this government's historic Paid Parental Leave scheme.

Dads will now be able to have the chance to have some time off work as well. Dad and partner pay will give eligible fathers and partners two weeks pay, at the rate of the national minimum wage. Our Paid Parental Leave scheme, now with dad and partner pay added, will of course further reduce the pressures on new parents when their children are very small. It also, very importantly, gives both parents the opportunity to share in the care of their newborn baby. It is the case that so many dads want to do that, which is a great thing. It also lets parents make their own choices about how they want to balance their work and family arrangements.

Another important thing about our Paid Parental Leave scheme is that it delivers real benefits to business. It is funded by the government and paid through employers, so employers can stay in touch with their long-term employees while they are taking time off to care for a new baby. I will just remind the House that this was the approach recommended by the Productivity Commission after an extensive inquiry.

This does make sure that our Paid Parental Leave scheme is a workplace entitlement not a welfare payment and, as I said, it very importantly makes sure that employers keep in touch with their valuable skilled staff. That is why I am very disappointed that the Liberals, yet again, are trying to wreck our Paid Parental Leave scheme that so many people, parents and employers, are already benefiting from right around Australia.

We do not support the foreshadowed Liberals' amendments that would undermine the link between women taking time off to have a baby and their workplace. The Liberals tried this once before in here. It got voted down. Now they are going to try and wreck a scheme that is working very, very well.

This demonstrates this opposition's view of Paid Parental Leave. They are trying to upset a paid parental leave scheme that is working very well. By contrast, they have put forward a proposal themselves for paid parental leave that certainly does not have the support of their own party room. It would give wealthy women—women earning \$200,000, \$500,000 or \$1 million—\$75,000 to have a baby, if Mr Abbott had his own way, while working families would have to make do on the minimum wage.

We know that there is a lot of conflict about this in the Liberal party room. We know that they have a massive \$70 billion budget black hole that they have to fill, and yet they want to spend billions on paying very, very wealthy women, giving them \$75,000 to have a baby.

We will not be supporting the foreshadowed amendment. It will undermine our Paid Parental Leave scheme, which is working extremely well for parents and for employers. And I think this proposed amendment from the opposition just shows once again how out of touch they are with the needs of working families.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER ( Ms Vamvakinou ): The original question was that this bill be now read a second time. To this the honourable member for Menzies has moved as an amendment that all words after 'That' be omitted with a view to substituting other words. The immediate question is that the amendment be agreed to.

Question negatived.

Original question agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Message from the Governor-General recommending appropriation announced.