



TO: EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE
COMMITTEE

ON: HOLIDAYS (BEREAVEMENT LEAVE FOR MISCARRIAGE)
AMENDMENT BILL (NO 2)

14 FEBRUARY 2020

INTRODUCTION

- 1 This submission is from Zonta International District 16 Incorporated (*Zonta D16*).
- 2 We do not wish to make an oral submission before the Select Committee.

ABOUT ZONTA D16

- 3 Zonta D16 has been active in New Zealand for over 50 years. We are the New Zealand District of Zonta International (which comprises 32 Districts worldwide).
- 4 Zonta D16 is an organisation of professionals empowering women through service and advocacy. We envision a world in which women's rights are recognised as human rights and every woman is able to achieve her full potential.

MAIN POINTS

- 5 Zonta D16 supports the Holidays (Bereavement Leave for Miscarriage) Amendment Bill (No 2) (*the Bill*).
- 6 The Bill recognises the need for bereavement leave for mothers, spouses and partners suffering loss, trauma and grief after a miscarriage or still-birth. The Bill in turn reflects the importance of supporting women and their families in these circumstances – not only as an act of compassion, but also as a much needed and very sensible measure for their health and wellbeing.
- 7 Research and clinical experience have clearly shown that parents form attachments to their children before birth, and that pregnancy losses by miscarriage or still-birth have a significant impact on the wellbeing of parents and whānau. In some ways, because these losses are less well recognised by society, they can be more difficult to mourn, and can leave mothers and fathers vulnerable to high levels of anxiety and depression. The Bill would appropriately recognise pregnancy loss by miscarriage or still-birth as a legitimate bereavement, and offer some support for families during this difficult time.
- 8 Zonta D16 supports the following provisions proposed in the Bill:

8.1 **Proposed amendments to sections 69 and 70 of the Holidays Act 2003**

We believe that these proposed new provisions would appropriately amend the current legislation to make plain that bereavement leave extends to the mother and her partner or spouse where there is an unplanned end of a pregnancy by miscarriage or still-birth.

We concur that the duration of the bereavement leave should be up to 3 days (in line with other deaths in the immediate family).

8.2 **Proposed definitions of “miscarriage” and “still-birth” for these purposes**

We note that for these purposes the definitions of “miscarriage” and “still-birth” are those set out in section 2 of the Births, Deaths, Marriages, and Relationships Registration Act 1995. We concur that those definitions are appropriate for these purposes.

- 9 Finally, if the Bill becomes law, we would urge the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) to run an information campaign to inform all New Zealand communities of the new entitlement.

CONCLUSION

- 10 Zonta D16 supports the Bill in its entirety.
- 11 Zonta D16 works closely with and supports Perinatal Anxiety and Depression Aotearoa (PADA). PADA is in support of the Bill and of this submission by Zonta D16 on the Bill.