



UMPIRE RULING IGNORES INTENT OF CANADA'S PARENTAL LEAVE BENEFITS

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OR AFTER JUNE 16, 2011**

OTTAWA , ONTARIO – Multiple Births Canada (MBC) expressed disappointment today with a recent decision by an Umpire under the Employment Insurance (EI) Act who ruled Christian Martin is not entitled to Parental Leave Benefits.

In a 40 page document, Umpire Russell W. Zinn denied Mr. Martin the benefits he was previously awarded by a Board of Referees on September 11, 2009. While acknowledging Mr. Martin was a qualified EI recipient who had applied for benefits to care for his newborn daughter, Lucie Martin, Umpire Zinn ruled he was not eligible to receive these benefits because the baby's mother, Paula Critchley, was already in receipt of benefits to care for the newborn's twin sister, Athena Martin. In reviewing the wording of the EI Act, Umpire Zinn agreed with the Commission's interpretation that the benefits were due as a result of the pregnancy and not as a result of caring for a child. Further, he said "While the pros and cons of the policy choice to grant the same amount of benefits to parents of 'one or more' children may be debated, this is a debate left properly to Parliament."

As the national organization representing Canada's multiple-birth community, MBC is impelled to register its disappointment with this decision. Umpire Zinn ignored the general purpose of parental benefits which is to provide income while a claimant is caring for one or more newborn children. In this case, Mr. Martin clearly took time off work to care for one newborn while Ms. Critchley took time off work to care for a different newborn, thereby enabling the couple to do what qualified Canadian EI recipients are entitled to do – collect benefits while they are playing a critical role as parents for the next generation. "MBC is pleased Mr. Martin has chosen to move on to the Federal Court of Appeal. This case is about fairness for multiple-birth newborns. These infants deserve the same individualized care as singletons, which would become possible if Mr. Martin wins his appeal," said MBC Advocacy Coordinator, Gail Moore.

MBC has provided educational resources and peer-to-peer support to multiple-birth families in Canada since 1978. In 2005, on National Multiple Births Awareness Day (May 28), MBC began a Call to Dialogue regarding current provisions for maternity, parental and compassionate care leave under the federal Employment Insurance Program. In 2010, MBC held a rally on May 28 on Parliament Hill to bring the message to Ottawa that "Canada's EI Parental Leave must reflect the needs of multiple-birth infants." Supporting documents including correspondence with the Ministers responsible for this portfolio and international comparisons of parental leave benefits are posted in the Awareness Day section of the MBC website – www.multiplebirthscanada.org.

For more information about Multiple Births Canada, call 1-866-228-8824, or visit www.multiplebirthscanada.org.

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