



Colin Carrie MP Oshawa

The Government of Canada delivers Employment Insurance fairness for the self-employed

Ottawa, ON, November 3, 2009—The Honourable Diane Finley, Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, today announced that the Government of Canada has introduced the *Fairness for the Self-Employed Act*, legislation that would extend Employment Insurance (EI) special benefits, including maternity, parental, sickness and compassionate care benefits, to the self-employed.

“Our Government knows that self-employed Canadians should not have to choose between their family and their business responsibilities,” said Minister Finley at the announcement in Toronto. “Extending access to these benefits is the fair and right thing to do. It is good family policy, and it represents one of the most significant enhancements to the EI program in the last decade.”

Dr. Colin Carrie, Member of Parliament for Oshawa and Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, spoke about the new legislation in Ottawa today.

“This Government believes the self-employed should have the option of getting the same income protection that salaried employees currently receive to cope with major life events, such as giving birth, caring for a newborn or newly adopted child, being sick or injured, or caring for a gravely ill family member,” said Dr. Carrie. “We are now providing these Canadians with greater financial security and peace of mind for the future.”

This measure responds to the Government’s 2008 pledge to help provide improved economic security and support for all those who are self-employed. By introducing this legislation, the Government is delivering on, and in fact exceeding, its commitment. With these changes, self-employed Canadians would be able to voluntarily opt into the EI program and receive special benefits. Overall, the special benefits for self-employed individuals would mirror those currently available to salaried employees under the EI program.

Currently, there are approximately 2.6 million self-employed individuals in Canada. The majority of them have long asked for this support, and the Government is responding to this strongly expressed need.

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This measure demonstrates that the Government continues to make responsive and responsible choices to support Canadians through the EI program. It is just the latest in a series of improvements the Government has already made to the EI program.

Through Canada's Economic Action Plan, the federal government is helping those hardest hit by the economic downturn by providing longer EI benefits, more efficient service and support for training, while protecting jobs through Work-Sharing agreements. The Government has also frozen EI premiums for 2010 at the same rate as 2009.

Most recently, the Government introduced legislation to extend EI regular benefits for unemployed long-tenured workers. Long-tenured workers are individuals that have paid EI premiums for years and made limited use of the program, and who now need additional support while they look for jobs in a recovering economy.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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