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Women and persons with disabilities being left behind on CPP expansion

Ottawa, ON – Women and persons with disabilities will face a significant and unfair disadvantage under proposed changes to the Canada Pension Plan. Canada’s largest union is urging the federal government to address troubling gaps in legislation to expand the CPP that will harm workers already vulnerable to post-retirement poverty.

“Women and persons with disabilities are far more reliant on public pensions. It is deeply troubling that the Liberal federal government is abandoning these already vulnerable workers in the urgently needed expansion of the CPP,” said Mark Hancock, national president of the Canadian Union of Public Employees.

Under legislation reforming the CPP, Bill C-26, special provisions for workers with child raising responsibilities and persons with disabilities that ensure they receive equitable retirement benefits have been excluded from the expanded portion of the CPP, even though they’ve existed for decades in the current CPP.

The “child rearing drop out” ensures that parents are not penalized under the CPP for time out of the workforce to raise children. While available to any parent, this “drop out” provision is used mostly by women.

Similarly, the “disability drop out” ensures persons with disabilities are not penalized for time they are unable to work due to their disabilities and collecting CPP Disability benefits.

As Bill C- 26 currently stands, these “drop out” periods will not be included in the CPP expansion, penalizing women and persons with disabilities, even though they’ve existed in the current CPP for decades.

“Expanding the CPP is the most efficient, effective and affordable way to ensure as many workers as possible can retire with dignity and out of poverty,” said Hancock. “It is inconceivable that Prime Minister Trudeau, or any member of his cabinet and party, would think it is fair to penalize persons with disabilities or workers who provided care for their children. I’m urging him to stay true to his commitment to a more equitable Canada and amend this legislation immediately.”

Representatives from CUPE will be testifying before the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance, currently studying Bill C-26, on Tuesday, November 15, 2016. On behalf of its 639,000 members across Canada, CUPE is urging committee members to push for amendments that protect women and workers with disabilities in retirement.

For more information:

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