

Let's be clear and honest about any proposal that seeks to adopt a "levy" to fund any parental leave, be it maternal or paternal. This is an increase in income tax, and must be opposed. Economic conservatism is the belief and practical action of reducing income tax at every opportunity, so that people can make their own choices about spending their hard earned money. Increased taxation, especially increased income tax, reduces people's aspiration to work harder and earn more money. This incentive is important to be nurtured for it leads to entrepreneurship, which in turn gives birth to job creation.

Increases in income tax, no matter how small or for whatever purpose, are fundamentally wrong. They take from the people and give to government, making government unwisely more powerful at the expense of people's self reliance and ability to fund their personal choices through their own hard work, which is also assaulted through reduced incentive.

If we are sincerely committed to empowering individuals and families, through genuine personal choice and freedom, then lowering tax must be a priority. Hence paid parental leave cannot be achieved by increasing the tax burden on individuals or businesses. Instead, consideration should be given to reducing welfare benefits for the unemployed and single parents, where genuine hardship does not exist, and possibly in other areas. I'm sure there is plenty of scope for reducing the benefits of people who are not in the workforce.

This may seem harsh at first glance, but the motivation for it would be twofold. Firstly, it would allow the savings made to be channelled into relief for working parents, as priority should always be given to supporting people who are in the workforce and are contributing to the economy. Secondly, it would create extra incentive for welfare recipients to re-enter the workforce, as they would require paid work instead of benefits to make ends meet. In the long run, this approach will be beneficial for all the individuals concerned, be they welfare recipients or working parents, it will increase productivity in the economy, and foster a self reliant aspirational society.