

S.L.M.P.

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## 5,000 slam maternity leave curbs

The Government should not try to control Hong-kong's population through labour laws which "discriminate against women workers who give birth to more than two babies."

This is the view of 5,000 workers who have signed a petition that will be presented to the Labour Department and the Social Welfare Department tomorrow, a spokesman for the Young Workers' Centre, Mr Wong Keung-sang, said yesterday.

Mr Wong said the workers centre fully agrees with the Family Planning Association's slogan of Two is Enough.

"But we do not think that it is appropriate for the Government to use labour laws to deter women workers from bearing more than two children, because this is a violation of human rights," he said.

Mr Wong was referring to a recent report on maternity leave protection prepared by the Government.

He said the 5,000 signatures were collected from blue and white collar workers living in housing estates near such industrial areas as Kun Tong, Lam Tin, Pak Tin, Shamshuipo and Tsz Wan Shan.

Meanwhile, the workers centre also reported the views of speakers at a recent seminar on "The restriction of maternity welfare to the first two babies."

One of the speakers, the assistant lecturer in Social Work at the Baptist College, Mr Mok Tai-kee, said such a law will eventually create a "second-class" status for the third and subsequent babies.

The vice-chairman of the Birthright Society, Miss Kwok Suk-wah, also said it would be a violation of human rights to directly or indirectly deter women from having more than two children.

She said that such a law may lead to more abortions.

The vice-chairman of the centre, Mr Yan Siu-kit, also said the proposed legislation is a mistake on the Government's part.

The president of the Industrial Relations Association, Mr K. K. Woo, said four weeks' maternity leave is enough for pregnant women.

Longer maternity leave, he said, may encourage women to have more children.