

1991-12-19

Press release : Social Welfare Cuts Further Breach of PESP Says WP

The Workers' Party

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Recommended Citation

The Workers' Party, "Press release : Social Welfare Cuts Further Breach of PESP Says WP" (1991).

Materials. 124.

<https://arrow.tudublin.ie/workerpmat/124>

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THE WORKERS PARTY

19 December 1991



P R E S S R E L E A S E

S.W. CUTS FURTHER BREACH OF PESP SAYS WORKERS' PARTY

The Workers' Party Spokesman on Social Welfare, Deputy Eric Byrne, has described the package of cutbacks announced today by the Minister for Social Welfare, Deputy Brendan Daly, as a further unilateral breach of the PESP. Deputy Byrne said it now appeared that the government had totally turned its back on the PESP.

"The PESP committed the government to ensuring that 'social welfare recipients are protected and their living standards maintained and, where possible, improved', but the result of today's package of measures will be to worsen the situation of many claimants. The public can draw their own conclusions about the priorities of a government which in the same week announces these major social welfare cutbacks and introduces legislation to increase by 25% the maximum pension entitlement of government ministers."

"People have been paying PRSI on the understanding that it would entitle them to a certain level of benefits should they need it, but now they find that their entitlement has been unilaterally changed by the government".

"Married women are likely to be particularly hit by a number of the cuts, especially the change in the contribution conditions for disability and treatment benefits. The decision to withdraw treatment benefits from persons earning more than £25,000 per year, will presumably mean that entitlement will also be withdrawn from their spouses."

"The decisions to apply a number of these changes to new recipients only will mean that claimants in the same circumstances will be receiving different rates of support, and it will further complicate an already complex social welfare code".

"The decision to tax disability and injuries benefit represents a fundamental shift in government policy. It is clearly the thin end of the wedge and is likely to be followed by the imposition of tax on all social welfare benefits. There is no shortage of income in this country which is evading taxation and the government should be going after this and not unfortunate social welfare recipients", Deputy Byrne said.

ends

Tony Heffernan - Press Officer

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