**Mags Abbott women’s Officer for UNISON West Cheshire Branch speaking on behalf of the North West Region Women’s Committee.**

I am moving motion 27: “Single parent Rights Campaign: Supporting single parent being added to the Equality Act 2010 as a protected characteristic”.

Despite significance changes in social attitudes since the 1960s, Single parents have continued to face stigma and discrimination but they are still not protected in single parent specific laws.

Single parents are often the most vulnerable to policy changes – such as the recent cuts to universal credit and rules around COVID isolation which left single parents unable to see any other adult.

In the media single parents are constantly vilified – even by our current prime minister who in 1995 in The Spectator Magazine said the children of single mothers are “ill raised, ignorant, aggressive and illegitimate”

Research from the campaign group Single Parent Rights have identified that up to 80% of single parents face discrimination in various areas of their life from housing to employment and even discounts for holidays where discounts are enjoyed by two parent families!

Despite this, single parents are not afforded protected characteristic status in the Equality Act 2010 alongside those who are married or in a civil partnership. This means direct discrimination towards single parents is not illegal.

Single parent discrimination disproportionately hits women who make up over 85% of single parents in the UK.

Single parent discrimination has huge impacts on single parents and their children, financially, emotionally and practically and contributes to poorer mental health, higher poverty rates and lower employment rates.

By adding single parents to the Equality Act 2010 employers, businesses and landlords would need to ensure they do not discriminate against single parents and where discrimination occurs single parents would have a clear legal route to challenge this.

This legal change would lead to multiple benefits, from higher employment rates to better mental health, benefitting single parents, their children and wider society.

Backing this [campaign](https://www.ellamentalmama.com/) will put Unison at the forefront of supporting single parent members in gaining equality within - and outside - the workplace.  [r](https://www.ellamentalmama.com/)

Conference I request you to support this motion to:

1) Support single parent being added to the Equality Act 2010 as a protected characteristic.

2) Lobby the Government to implement single parent friendly policies and create a National Policy

3) Check that UNISONs own policies, work practices, training etc. support single parents.

Thank you, Conference-I move!