

## **Bahrain female MPs to lobby for early retirement scheme for women**

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Female lawmakers have lobbied for the approval of a draft law on early retirement for working women. The bill was drafted by the government and referred back to parliament after Al Menber Islamic Bloc tabled the proposal and the Chamber of Deputies passed and forwarded it to the executive authority.

The bill has been backed by male MPs, especially conservatives led by Salafist Adel Al Muawda.

Initially the government had argued that the proposed early retirement scheme for working women would involve huge money. But when the proposal was submitted as a bill and referred to the government, the executive authority drafted it in a law. MPs discussed the draft law and the legal affairs committee approved it saying the bill did not violate Constitutional principles.

After the Chamber discusses the bill the service committee will review it. Female lawmakers have joined forces to fight for the approval of the bill. The 11 female MPs (10 Shura members and one deputy) would 'fight' the majority of male MPs most of whom feel that women should stay at home and take care of their families.

The female MPs are counting on many Shura male members who believe in women's important role in the Kingdom's development process.

The Supreme Council for Women has rejected the proposal saying it was against the principle of gender equality. It said if the proposal was implemented then male employees should also be included. The council said the proposal might reduce women's chances to secure job offers.