



CANADIAN UNION OF PUBLIC EMPLOYEES
BRITISH COLUMBIA DIVISION

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September 16, 2010

Mr. Dave Anderson
President & CEO
WorkSafeBC
PO Box 5350, Stn Terminal
Vancouver BC V6B 5L5

Dear Mr. Anderson:

I am writing on behalf of the more than 80,000 members of CUPE BC to express our strong concern that your organization is contracting with a for-profit childcare company to provide child care services for the families of WorkSafeBC employees.

Our union has consistently advocated for quality, affordable and accessible childcare in British Columbia. As you know from your survey of WorkSafeBC employees, the difficulty of finding any child care spaces—never mind the quality, affordability or accessibility—is a top of mind issue. I'm sure you don't need me to tell you that a similar survey of virtually any large organization would return near-identical results.

Low and middle-income British Columbian families are finding it increasingly difficult to make ends meet, to balance the chequebook at the end of the month. The recent introduction of the HST has added considerably to that challenge. It's no secret that in today's economy parents often must work more than one job, so the cost of child care becomes a major hurdle for working people. I think it's a great first step for an organization like yours to understand the reality for parents and to bring child care "closer to work" so that parents can know their children are properly looked after and are in a safe, secure, nurturing and educational place.

But I find it extremely disturbing that a CEO of a major BC organization—a public body, no less—would choose to enter into a contract with a major, commercial provider that will charge parents higher rates than already-available not-for-profit childcare facilities.

CUPE BC strongly urges you to use whatever influence you have at your disposal to encourage the provincial and federal governments to properly fund public childcare spaces in BC, rather than enter into a contract that will benefit private investors vastly more than it does employees, parents or WorkSafeBC.

Just as with workers compensation, introducing the profit motive to what ought to be a public service does nothing to improve the situation.

We often hear that children are our greatest natural resource. Let's do more to treat them that way. I encourage you to continue your efforts to bring child care closer to where your employees are, but to do so by thinking "outside the big-box" of a for-profit child care model. Work with not-for-profit child care providers to develop a solution that meets WorkSafeBC's needs, your employees' needs, and, above all, that contributes to a better, more accessible child care system for all BC families.

Sincerely,

Barry O'Neill
President
CUPE BC Division

Barry O'Neill, President
Mark Hancock, Secretary-Treasurer

BON/LW
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cc. The Honourable Gordon Campbell, M.L.A.
Premier of British Columbia

Ms. Carole James, M.L.A.
Leader of the Official Opposition

The Honourable Mary Polak, M.L.A.
Minister of Children and Family Development

Ms. Mable Elmore, M.L.A.
Deputy Opposition Critic for Children and Family Development

Mr. Raj Chouhan, M.L.A.
Official Opposition Critic for Labour

Ms. Susan Harney, Chair
Coalition of Child Care Advocates of B.C.

Mr. Jim Sinclair, President
B.C. Federation of Labour

Ms. Sandra Wright, President
Compensation Employees' Union

Mr. George Morfitt, Chair, Board of Directors
WorkSafeBC

Mr. Phillip Legg, Board of Directors
WorkSafeBC