



FEDERAL ELECTION :: JANUARY 23, 2006

DEFEND DAYCARE!

BC PARENTS ADD THEIR VOICES

Let Parents Decide

Letter submitted to a Richmond newspaper

...characterizes the Liberal vision for child care and early learning as "dreary" and asserts that the Liberals believe parents cannot be trusted to care for their kids.

As a fellow parent I take issue with this characterization without completely endorsing the Liberal plan - I think the current child care debate has polarized parents which risks losing sight of the children and the investment in their early learning wherever it takes place. The vast majority of parents want what is best for their children and make sacrifices of one sort or another to make their children's lives meaningful. For some of us that means bringing additional income to our family, for others it means forgoing that income to stay at home - whichever path we choose our kids come first. So when you stay home I believe you should have some recognition fiscally from government in a tax break or credit but I similarly believe I should be able to access the child care services I need for my children.

Let's not let political election campaigns polarize parents, let's demand that Canada supports all families and gives all families what they need to be successful economically and as parents - there is room for both sides in this debate - let's find a party that truly represents us all.

Kate Foreman-Ng
Richmond Parent

Tory daycare plan little more than babysitting money

Vancouver Island News Group / Ladysmith Chronicle (BC)

20 Dec 2005 [Page: 0007]

Letters -- Gennifer Tooke-Arruda, Nanaimo

Editor,

As a working mother, I think that Stephen Harper's plan to dole out cash to families with pre-schoolers is all-wrong. Not only is it short sighted and fiscally irresponsible, it takes away from the real issue "the need for topnotch, affordable, public daycare".

Once again, Mr. Harper is out of touch with ordinary people. Whether he likes it or not, these days both parents have no choice but to work. I think it's so important that we have quality public daycare founded on the principles of early childhood development. What Mr. Harper proposes is nothing more than a babysitting allowance. In my opinion Mr. Harper's plan is more about paying for votes than paying for childcare!

Conservatives Child Care Plan out of touch

Nicky Byres, Parent

The Conservative plan to hand parents of children under 6 years old \$100 a month to spend on child care of their choice reveals just how completely out of touch they are with the reality of families today. 78% of women with children under the age of 12 are in the workforce today contributing their skills and their taxes to the economy. No doubt some of these women would rather be home but \$100/month child care contribution will not replace their paychecks on which their families rely to pay for such things as a mortgage, groceries and quality child care while they are at work. So for those who have to stay in the workforce what they need is quality, affordable child care which is on the cusp of being delivered through the Liberals National Child Care Plan. Support for stay-at-home parents can complement, but will never replace, the need for publicly funded child care.

Saddest of all Mr. Harper, your assertion that children can be cared for by neighbours, friends down the street and relatives, which is sometimes fine but often is not, means that children will be the big losers. By not funding a system which would include a wide variety of programs from which parents could choose, which would be staffed by trained Early Childhood Professionals in licensed environments you will destroy the quality child care available today thus limiting parent choice rather than enhancing it and in so doing jeopardize the future of our young citizens for which we will all pay dearly in the future.

SpinBusters: Parents analyze parties' child-care plans

CTV News and Current Affairs

13 Dec 2005 07:46:25 ET

EXCERPT

JACK LAYTON (NDP Leader): We can get a real national child-care program and we can see real investment in helping to lift the children of this country out of poverty.

THOMSON: NDP leader Jack Layton lays out his party's plans for child-care plans that include spreading \$8.7-billion over four years, giving money to the provinces to spend on licensed, nonprofit daycare centres. And a suggestion: 275,000 new daycare spaces be created.

Now, the Conservatives' platform spreads \$10.9-billion over five years, offers up monthly \$100 payments to parents with children under the age of six and suggests 125,000 new daycare spaces be created. Compare that to the Liberals' plan: \$11-billion over 10 years with the provinces deciding how money is allocated and a suggestion of up to 625,000 new daycare spaces created.

Now that all of the leaders have put their child-care agendas on the table, we're taking the political pulse of some parents. Joining us from Vancouver is working mother Necole Anderson. In Calgary, Geoff Vandermolen, a father of two. And in Ottawa, Brian Lesage, who also has two young children.

Thanks to all of you for taking part in our SpinBusters segment. Appreciate your time. Well, let me begin with you, Necole in Vancouver, and just ask you as you go through these different platforms and the most recent one of course is the NDP plan that we were just listening to, \$8.7-billion over four years, what's your reaction to that?

ANDERSON: Well, generally, I have a very positive reaction to that. I think the more money that child care gets and the more quickly that we get that money, the better off we'll be. We are already so far behind other countries in the Western world that we need to get caught up. The other thing I liked about the NDP plan is the fact that they're going to enshrine child care in legislation, which none of the other plans do. And that it's targeted specifically to nonprofit, regulated child care....

THOMSON: You know, the Tories were the first ones to come out with their daycare plan in this campaign. They're talking about \$10.9-billion over five years. Let me start again once with you, Necole, in Vancouver.

ANDERSON: The Tory plan, the problem with that that I see is that after five years what do you end up with? You end up with where we are today. And one of the other speakers was talking about institutionalized care. Somehow, when daycare is involved "institution" becomes a bad thing. But we have a school system that's an institution, we have a health-care system that's an institution, and those institutions are not bad things. And child care as an institution will not be a bad thing. And I think what people are missing is that this money can be used to create licensed, regulated care in a variety of settings that accommodate families that work part-time. A lot of the problem now with the availability of child care is that it is such a fragile system and it is so fragmented that the wait lists are tremendous. So, there really isn't choice. Myself, I was on the waiting list for months -- 3 1/2 years -- for a 3-year-old's care, for my son....

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