

Platform crunch: The family policy debate in #Elxn43^[1]

Author:

Source: Scott, Katherine

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AVAILABILITY

Access online^[2]

EXCERPTS

This past week, public policy proposals were piling up fast and furious as each political party vies for the attention of voters rightly concerned about stalled wages and rising living costs—pledges that ranged from first-time home buyer incentives, to caps on cell phone fees, to the relaunch of the children’s fitness and arts tax credits and making post-secondary tuition free.

These duelling pitches underscore some profound differences between the parties in their thinking about families, gender equality and the types of policies best suited to deliver meaningful support—and raise equally important questions for voters to consider. Namely:

- Do the proposed policies acknowledge and address the gendered and unequal division of caring and paid labour, or do they reproduce discriminatory breadwinner roles for men and caregiver/secondary earner roles for women?
- Do they take into account the intersectional nature of discrimination and target the needs of the most vulnerable? Do they tackle women’s lifetime risk of poverty?
- Is the level of support on offer enough to support choice in caregiving, to purchase needed care, for example, or to reduce hours of employment for any family who wishes to do so? Is the money on the table enough to make a difference for women?

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