

"If not now, when?" Liberals waste another shot at equitable recovery with Budget 2021 ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

Canada's largest union says the Liberal government has wasted another opportunity to fund a strong and equitable recovery with Budget 2021. Instead of learning from the failures of Canada's care system during the pandemic, the Trudeau government is refusing to do what it takes to protect vulnerable residents in long-term care, promising yet another child care plan that may never see the light of day, and refusing to act on pharmacare.

"With this budget, we had a shot at fixing the way we care for our vulnerable in this country, and paying for it by getting the ultra-rich and the pandemic profiteers to finally pay their fair share. Instead, the Liberals are offering another patchwork of half-measures that won't get the job done," said CUPE National President Mark Hancock. "After all we've learned about our broken systems over the past 14 months, this is unconscionable. If not now, when?"

The budget reveals the Liberals have no plan to take meaningful action on fixing the issues that have plagued Canada's long-term care homes throughout the pandemic. "The Liberals have been promising national standards since September, with nothing to show for it, and they still refuse to do what's ultimately needed to save this vital part of our health care system: take profits out of long-term care," said CUPE National Secretary-Treasurer Charles Fleury.

The budget pledged \$30 billion over 5 years towards child care – not something they will be able to deliver on before a looming, mid-pandemic federal election.

"The Liberals have been promising child care in election years since 1993," added Fleury. "It's the oldest trick in the book."

There was also precious little in the budget towards creating a national pharmacare program, which comes after the Liberal Party teamed up with the Conservatives in February to defeat an NDP bill to establish pharmacare. "After promising pharmacare in the 2019 election and watching a pandemic in which millions of Canadians could not afford their vital medications, the Liberals still refuse to act," added Hancock. "The worst enemy of Liberal promises is the Liberal Party itself."

After waiting two years for a federal budget, and after the year they've been through, Canadians expected and deserved a lot better.

Region: Canada ^[3]

Tags: federal budget ^[4]

child care workforce ^[5]

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