

Conservatives pledge to replace the Liberals' child-care program with cash for parents ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

OTTAWA—A Conservative government will cancel the Liberal government's \$30 billion national child-care program and instead cut bigger cheques for parents as part of a plan they say will get the country's economy growing after the COVID-19 pandemic and address the inequalities it exposed.

The Conservatives unveiled their platform on day two of the federal election campaign to lay the groundwork for the coming five weeks, though there are still details to be worked out — including how much their ideas will cost taxpayers.

But the party says what they will spend is intended to be short-term and in the service of not setting up so-called structural deficits that will see the nation's bills pile up year after year with no way to pay for them.

Among their immediate actions, if they form the government on Sept. 20: they'd pay up to 50 per cent of the salary for new hires, provide tax credits on money Canadians invest in their businesses and put in place a month-long GST holiday for any purchases made at retail stores.

Earlier this year, Conservative Leader Erin O'Toole had laid out five pillars guiding his party's platform development at their national convention and has been introducing elements of it ever since.

But just as the pandemic landscape in Canada has forced changes to everyone's life, the Tories have also been forced to broaden their approach, as they heard consistently their party needed to address affordability issues of everyday life.

The party says their child-care approach is one means to that end. They propose turning an existing child-care expense deduction into a refundable tax credit that would cover up to 75 per cent of the cost of child care for lower-income families.

"Canadian families are tired of Liberal promises and inaction. Our flexible and comprehensive approach will help all families right away and offer extra support to those who need it most," the platform says.

How the Tories would pay for their promises or how much they'd all cost isn't fully revealed in the 83-page platform that features O'Toole on a cover that resembles a fashion magazine.

The Parliamentary Budget Officer is charged with costing out party platforms and that work was only able to begin once Parliament was dissolved Sunday.

Other pledges in the platform include:

- Doubling the existing Canada Workers Benefit which the Tories say amounts to \$1/per hour wage increase for some workers;
- The launch of a new employment insurance program that provides more generous benefits when a province goes into a recession;
- Forcing "gig economy" companies to pay the equivalent of Canada Pension Plan and EI premiums into an account for their workers;
- Invest \$325 million over the next three years to create 1,000 residential drug treatment beds and build 50 recovery community centres across the country;
- Build 1 million homes in the next three years, by among other things freeing up some federal lands for housing development;
- Replace the existing national carbon tax program with a "national, personal low carbon savings account" which means that instead of tax revenues flowing direct to government, then back to Canadians as rebates the tax revenue will go straight into a customer account to be used to buy "things that help them live a greener life."

Region: Canada ^[3]

Tags: federal election ^[4]

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national child care system^[6]

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