

O'Toole promises Quebec more cash for child care in letter to Legault ^[1]

Author: Bailey, Ian & Curry, Bill

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EXCERPTS

Conservative Leader Erin O'Toole has written a letter to Quebec Premier François Legault in which he opens the door to offering the province more money for child care than what the Conservative Party has outlined in its party platform.

Mr. Legault held a news conference last week in which he praised several elements of the Conservative platform, but also expressed strong concern with the fact that the Conservatives are not committed to honouring signed federal agreements with the provinces related to child care.

Mr. Legault has said Quebec's deal, signed with Ottawa in early August, is worth \$6-billion over five years and that his government is free to use the money in any area it wishes.

"I listened closely to your news conference last Thursday where you spoke about, among other things, the importance of respecting provincial jurisdiction. I have to tell you that I completely agree with you on this," Mr. O'Toole wrote in French to the premier on Monday. "...In our financial plan, we have put aside money for future agreements with the provinces. It is with these funds that I intend to honour my pledge to co-ordinate my approach on child care with your priorities, such as the Quebec child care program that has worked well for over 20 years. As I've said throughout this campaign, we recognize that the child care situation is different in Quebec. That's why our approach must be different with Quebec on this file. Within the first 100 days of a Conservative government, I will sit down with you to conclude an agreement that will allow Quebec and Ottawa to attain their respective objectives. This will respect Quebec priorities related to child care, as well as federal obligations to the other provinces in this area."

The Conservative Party costing document, released last Wednesday, includes \$9.7-billion in the first year only for "fiscal stabilization and provincial agreements."

The Conservative Party's costing document revealed the scale of the difference between Liberal and Conservative plans on child care. The Liberals pledge to spend \$29.8-billion over five years toward a national \$10-a-day child-care program. The Conservatives propose a child-care tax credit instead, at a cost of \$2.6-billion over five years.

Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau criticized Mr. O'Toole's letter Tuesday, accusing the Conservative Leader of frequently changing his policies during the election campaign.

"For weeks and months, he said he would cancel our agreements on child care and would not create any spaces," he said. "Mr. O'Toole is making the wrong choices and now he's trying to modify his platform yet again, because he was caught fighting for things that are not the priority of Canadians and Quebecers."

Mr. Trudeau's main message Tuesday was an appeal to left-leaning voters considering the Bloc Québécois, the Green Party or the NDP to vote Liberal to stop Mr. O'Toole from forming a Conservative government. The appeal to those supporting other parties is a common theme during the last week of Liberal election campaigning.

Mr. Trudeau appeared in Richmond, B.C., on Tuesday alongside Andrew Weaver, the former leader of British Columbia's Green Party, to make his pitch to those considering other parties, highlighting the Liberals' proposals to address climate change.

Mr. Weaver said the Liberal plan on climate change is one that he has been "dreaming of" for most of his life.

Speaking in French, Mr. Trudeau said the Liberal Party is more in line with progressive views on issues such as culture, climate change and firearms policy.

"The Bloc can't stop a Conservative government," he said. "We need progressive Quebecers to choose a progressive government full of Quebecers, ready to fight for their priorities day in and day out."

Region: Quebec ^[3]

Tags: federal election 2021 ^[4]

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