

B.C. daycare, cruise ships top priorities after Trudeau's re-election ^[1]

John Horgan wants federal share of health costs increased

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Source: Terrace Standard

Format: Article

Publication Date: 21 Sep 2021

AVAILABILITY

Access online ^[2]

EXCERPTS

A re-elected Justin Trudeau government is a relief for B.C. Premier John Horgan, who has made subsidized child care a cornerstone of his government for four years, but the growing burden of health care in the COVID-19 pandemic remains on Horgan's agenda for Ottawa.

Trudeau signed a series of big-budget funding agreements with B.C. and other provinces to expand \$10-a-day child care before the Sept. 20 federal election. Conservative leader Erin O'Toole proposed to replace that with an income-based tax credit that would serve the needs of shift workers and others who don't want institutional nine-to-five daycare.

"We have always been committed to \$10-a-day child care," Horgan said before Monday's federal vote that returned an almost identical Liberal minority government. "In 2017 we started down that road. We recommitted in 2020, but we did so with the assurance that we would continue to work with the federal government to be full participants in what should be a national program."

Another pressing federal issue for B.C. is a bid by Alaska politicians to make permanent the pandemic exemption for foreign-flagged cruise ships to stop in Victoria, Vancouver or Prince Rupert on their way from Seattle or other U.S. ports.

Horgan has emphasized that Alaska Senator Lisa Murkowski and Congressman Don Young are both Republicans dealing with a Democrat-controlled U.S. Congress, and he expects an update from the Canadian ambassador in Washington D.C. this week on whether the initiative has a chance to pass. Murkowski and Young pushed through the temporary exemption, with Young taunting Horgan for downplaying the possibility last year.

O'Toole's pledge to increase health transfers to the provinces to six per cent per year would have fit with B.C.'s aggressive expansion of senior and health care. The B.C. NDP government has increased wages for long-term care employees and is recruiting more to reach the province's target for care hours per day. Its latest move is to end contracted food and housekeeping services in hospitals, transferring the workforce to direct employment by regional health authorities.

Region: British Columbia ^[3]

Tags: federal election 2021 ^[4]

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