

# MP advances child care bill [CA] <sup>[1]</sup>

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AVAILABILITY  
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## EXCERPTS

Little Finnegan Awai is less than a year old and already he's feeling the pinch of Canada's growing child-care shortage.

"I'd say we're on about 10 wait lists, and I signed up for the majority of those as soon as Finnegan was born," his mother Jane Worton said last week. "We're moving up on some of the wait lists, but the closest we've come is No. 12, which means that if a space comes available, 11 other people will have a crack at it before us."

Worton was among more than a dozen moms, dads, infants and toddlers who gathered at Victoria MP Denise Savoie's constituency office last Wednesday to watch Parliament vote on second reading of Savoie's private member's bill, the Early Learning and Child Care Act.

Also known as Bill C-303, the act is aimed at increasing federal day care funding and creating affordable child care spaces for parents across the country. With widespread support from the Savoie's fellow NDPers, along with opposition Liberals and Bloc Quebecois members, the bill passed by a margin of 144-115.

It's rare for private members' bills to survive a vote in Parliament but even more unusual for them to receive Royal assent from the sitting government.

...

Bill C-303, which now moves to committee for detailed examination by MPs, would require the government to spend about \$1.2 billion a year over the next 10 years, Savoie said.

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In spirit at least, C-303 is an attempt to revive the \$5-billion national child care program established in the dying days of Prime Minister Paul Martin's Liberal government. The program was scrapped by Stephen Harper's government last spring. As a result, B.C. stands to lose \$455 million in transfer payments when previously allocated funds dry up at the end of June.

Soon after, the Tories unveiled a universal child care benefit, which provides \$100 a month to families with children under age six in care. The Harper government also promised to create 125,000 child-care spaces across Canada, including 25,000 in B.C.

However, Linda Reid, B.C.'s Minister of State for Child Care, said the federal government has yet to commit any operating funds for the new spaces.

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- reprinted from the Victoria News

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