

Religious right defend Tory child-care plan [CA] ^[1]

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Source: Calgary Sun

Format: Article

Publication Date: 21 Apr 2006

AVAILABILITY

See text below.

EXCERPTS

The man who led a national campaign against same-sex marriage is now heading a major offensive against critics of the Conservative child-care plan.

Charles McVety, president of Canada Christian College, is rallying social conservatives to counter what he calls "Liberal-friendly advocacy groups." "They have a very slick, well funded, well-oiled lobby," he said in an interview. "But it's a Liberal lobby funded by the former Liberal government."

The most high-profile child-care advocates vehemently deny using Liberal or federal funds for lobbying work. They say they rely on volunteers, member donations and the Internet to get their message out.

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McVety, who also heads the Canada Family Action Coalition, says several other family-values groups will add to the effort. They include the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, the Institute for Canadian Values and REAL Women of Canada.

It's the latest volley in an escalating battle between those who support Conservative efforts to directly fund parents, and those who prefer the Liberal plan to improve child-care services across Canada.

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"We're going to come out very shortly with a detailed report showing the funding of organizations like the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care," McVety said.

"Sounds like a nice advocacy group. But when you look into it, where does their money come from?"

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But Kira Heineck, executive director of the coalition, says federal funding to her group is "minimal."

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Funding from the federal departments for Social Development and Status of Women is being used for specific projects but not advocacy work, Heineck stressed.

Debra Mayer of the Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada also denied using federal funds for anything but specific research projects.

"You really have to be showing where every penny goes," she said. "The lobbying we engage in is funded by our members. And our books are open - we're a non-profit organization."

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- reprinted from the Toronto Star

Region: Canada ^[2]

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