Tax incentives won't likely lure employers into child-care quagmire: Swift [CA] [1]

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EXCERPTS

The head of the Canadian Federation of Independent Business says Conservative plans to lure employers into the child-care game will fall flat.

Catherine Swift says tax incentives likely won't be enough to convince small-and medium-sized companies to enter a regulatory quagmire that's prohibitively costly. "It's just not practical," she said Monday in an interview. "Seventy-five per cent of businesses in this country have fewer than five employees."

...

A child-care space must meet a daunting range of safety and design specifics - with good reason, Swift says. But it's difficult for most employers to justify that kind of ongoing expense when "baby waves" come in unpredictable cycles, she added.

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"What we're looking at are significant incentives - up to $10,000 for the creation of (each) space," said Social Development Minister Diane Finley in an interview.

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Critics point out that a similar scheme of tax breaks offered by provincial governments in Ontario and New Brunswick drew little response.

Still, Finley is optimistic that the right formula can be found.

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"I'm confident that business will recognize the value of this," and that parents will push employers and community groups to provide such services, she said.

At least from the business side, Swift isn't so sure.

"I think there would be a little bit of take-up, but I just don't think it's practical for the broad business constituency."

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