

Social activists put pressure on Tories [CA] ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

A coalition of social activist groups is urging Stephen Harper to backtrack on a number of his priority issues, including child care and closer ties with the United States.

The Council of Canadians, Egale, the Friends of Canadian Broadcasting, the Child Care Advocacy Association and the Quebec-based Coalition Solidarite Sante all say Prime Minister Harper is out of step with the majority of Canadians.

The activists offered these priorities:

- Honour the child-care agreements negotiated by the last government.
- Stop the trend toward privatized health care.
- Strengthen the CBC with stable, long-term funding.
- Reject a re-opening of the same-sex marriage debate.
- Stop talks on further economic and security integration with the United States.

...

Harper has said he plans to stick to his agenda for the next Parliament, which opens on Monday, including introducing a new kind of family benefit for child care. However, he said during the election campaign that a same-sex marriage debate isn't a big priority.

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Monica Lysack of the child-care association, said Harper's proposal to pay parents \$1,200 a year for each child under six does nothing to provide day-care spaces.

"Child care is of central importance to the well-being of our nation," she said.

...

- reprinted from the Canadian Press

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