

MacKay must fight for child-care deal, Island Liberal says [CA-PE]^[1]

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EXCERPTS

If Peter MacKay truly plans to represent P.E.I.'s concerns in Ottawa he will have to go against his party's plans to scrap a \$5-billion child-care deal, Malpeque MP Wayne Easter says.

Easter said Islanders have made it clear the child-care deal, which will result in more than \$27 million for child-care in P.E.I. over the next five years, is important and should not be scrapped.

"If Mr. MacKay is going to be regional minister responsible for P.E.I. then he's going find himself in contradiction with his leader because Islanders have clearly said that they want that early learning and child-care proposal," Easter said in a telephone interview from Halifax.

"So, I would expect that Mr. MacKay is going to be fighting at cabinet to ensure that that remains."

Easter said he also expects the premier to fight to keep the Liberal child-care plan in place.

Child-care leaders are expected to meet with P.E.I. Premier Pat Binns next week to express their concerns about the potential loss of the child-care dollars.

"(Binns) has been unbelievably quiet," said Easter.

Easter said he's worried about the impact cancelling the child-care deal will have for children across the country, and in P.E.I.

"Providing affordable and accessible day care was one of the major initiatives brought forward by the Liberal government," said Easter.

"Mr. Harper has made no secret of the fact that he does not share the same vision of a national child-care program as that of the Liberal government and the governments of all 10 provincial governments, which include many Conservative governments such as here on Prince Edward Island."

Easter said it is not unreasonable to expect MacKay to go against his own government. He said MPs have to do that from time to time if their district or their province is not being treated fairly.

"Mr. MacKay has a job to do to represent the interests of P.E.I. and I expect him to live up to his responsibilities," said Easter.

"He's minister responsible for P.E.I. He's no longer just a critic. We expect him to represent our wishes."

- reprinted from the Charlottetown Guardian

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