

Workers face premium hikes to finance Quebec's parental leave system [CA-QC] ^[1]

Author: Canadian Press

Source: Canadian Press

Format: Article

Publication Date: 7 Sep 2005

AVAILABILITY

See text below.

EXCERPTS

Quebec workers will pay more to finance the province's generous parental leave system, Premier Jean Charest's Liberal government confirmed on Wednesday.

Despite repeated promises to reduce the tax burden in the province, Charest said somebody has to pay for the new system of expanded benefits for parent workers. He noted Quebecers reached a consensus several years ago that they wanted a more generous parental leave system.

"If (Quebecers) don't pay through premiums, they'll pay somewhere else," Charest said after a caucus meeting Wednesday in this community in northwestern Quebec.

"Let's not pretend there is some government somewhere printing money. Government is not some abstraction, government is the taxpayers of Quebec."

Employers and workers will have to chip an extra \$298 million into the \$1.035 billion system.

Workers who make \$30,000 will pay \$23 extra each year while workers who make \$60,000 will pay \$107 more to give Quebec for a system Charest says will be the most generous in Canada.

The revamped Quebec program will cover 75 per cent of a parent's salary for 40 weeks, or 70 per cent for 25 weeks and 55 per cent for another 25 weeks. It will also cover self-employed workers.

- reprinted from the Canadian Press

Region: Canada ^[2]

Quebec ^[3]

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