

# Minority can work, Martin: Parties will come together to boost health, child care systems [CA] <sup>[1]</sup>

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## AVAILABILITY

See text below.

## EXCERPTS

An era of Liberal minority rule began with a promise from Prime Minister Paul Martin to steer a stable, activist government through Canada's patchwork Parliament.

Martin pointed to the great achievements of minority governments past and said all parties have agreed to co-operate in sustaining the weakened Liberals.

He said he would proceed with his platform pledges to strengthen medicare, create a national child-care program and boost funding for cities.

And he predicted he would find support from opposition parties on a case-by-case basis to help pass his key legislation and keep the government from toppling.

"I believe that I do have the required mandate, we do have stable minority government," he said one day after his Liberals sputtered to the narrowest federal election win in 25 years.

The prime minister said he received assurances from all three opposition leaders that none is anxious to defeat the government and trigger another election.

When Parliament resumes sitting this fall, the Liberals will have 135 MPs - less than half of the 308-seat House of Commons.

The opposition benches will be a patchwork of political ideologies for the Liberals to tap into, depending on what bill they want to pass.

Opposition leaders have already said they would support bills on a case-by-case basis.

"We'll work responsibly within the Parliament Canadians have elected," said NDP Leader Jack Layton.

Martin said he wanted the support of voters before hammering out deals on health care and child care with provincial premiers over the coming months.

Negotiating with the premiers will be Martin's key priority over the coming months as he moves toward a fall throne speech.

- reprinted from the Canadian Press

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