

Home day-care workers could soon be unionized [CA-QC] ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

A group of independent day-care workers in Blainville, Que. has been given the right to unionize.

The union that has been fighting for them for the past five years says the ruling will give the workers the benefits they deserve.

The union argued they should be recognized as salaried employees because they have to abide by government rules and norms.

The workers don't have access to benefits, according to president Monique Richard.

Independent day-care workers earn just over \$4 per hour after expenses, don't get vacation, sick days or maternity leave nor do they have retirement benefits, says Richard.

The decision could cost the government about \$140 million. Critics say it could put an end to the \$5-a-day day care program.

In 1998, Quebec began subsidizing \$5-a-day care spaces. To qualify for the government subsidies, home day-care centres must be affiliated with a government-run Centre de la Petite Enfance in their region.

The centres enforce the standards of a home day-care's operation such as the number of children they can care for, the number of hours they can work and in some cases, offer replacement workers in case of illness.

Recognizing authorized day-care workers who work out of private homes as public employees could cost the government an estimated \$140 million.

Quebec's Minister of Employment, Social Solidarity and Family Welfare, Claude Béchard, could appeal the ruling.

However, Richard says the government created the program and has a responsibility to provide equal pay and benefits to independent day-care workers.

She says Quebec is willing to pay for the salaries of health-care workers and should do the same for day-care staff.

-Reprinted from CBC Montreal

Region: Quebec ^[2]

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