

Quebec won't launch parental-leave program without Ottawa's money [CA-QC] ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

Quebec won't create its own parental-leave program without federal financial backing, the province's health minister said Tuesday. Pauline Marois said for the province to proceed without a prior agreement with Ottawa could result in Quebecers not getting federal funds to which they're entitled.

Prime Minister Jean Chretien's government has pledged to have an improved national parental-leave plan in place by the end of the year. Chretien has said if Quebec wants to top up the program with its own money, it can go ahead.

But Quebec wanted Ottawa to turn \$500 million in employment insurance money over to the province for a new program.

The Parti Quebecois government tabled legislation last spring to create the new made-in-Quebec parental leave plan.

If Ottawa won't agree to turn over Quebec's share of funds, the issue could be taken before the courts, Marois told a news conference.

"For Quebec to launch a program on its own would mean giving up money that Quebecers now pay into employment insurance," said Marois.

"Quebecers shouldn't be asked to pay twice."

-Reprinted from Canadian Press

Region: Quebec ^[2]

Tags: funding ^[3]

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