

Social conservatism in Canada: Examining the rise of the far right through the issue of child care ^[1]

Background Paper to CLC Women's Conference, "Fighting the Blues &em; What the Social Conservative Agenda Means to Women"

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AVAILABILITY

Report in pdf ^[2]

Excerpts from the report:

On April 19, 2006, the Globe and Mail reported what many in Canada may have known intuitively in listening to the debate raging around the Conservative Party plan to replace funding for a national child care strategy with a \$1200 annual allowance for parents. "Social Conservatives to sell Tory daycare plan", read the headline of the story revealing that on April 3 - the day parliament re-opened - the Conservative government had met with far right-wing groups to strategize around how to convince the public that a taxable \$1200/year/preschool child is preferable to setting-up a public system of early childhood learning and care.

In order to try and avoid negative publicity toward Prime Minister Harper's office, the Globe reported, Conservative Senator Anne Cools was charged with organizing the meeting, from making phone calls to facilitating the discussion. When questioned about the meeting, Sandra Buckler, spokesperson for the Prime Minister's Office admitted that it had taken place, but refused to name the groups and individuals in attendance. "The only thing I can possibly say is that we're reaching out to all interested groups who agree with our child care plan", Buckler said.

Exactly which groups support the Conservative policy of a parental allowance instead of publically funded child care, and what is their thinking? REAL Women, one of the organizations at the April 3 meeting, describes itself as upholding the ideal that "even in a changing world, every family, who so chooses, be able to look after their children in their own home". Hand-in-hand with this is the view that women staying at home to raise children are making a "career choice", as well as a "long-term investment in the well-being of their children and in the future stability of the next generation."

Region: Canada ^[3]

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