

Let Parliament decide fate of child care program ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

Cancelling the national child care program would be a breach of trust with the public, child care activists charge, calling on Prime Minister-designate Harper to honour the agreements the federal government signed with the provinces.

"There should be no unilateral action by Mr. Harper on child care," says Monica Lysack, Executive Director of the Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada. "Whether Canada has a child care program is too important a decision to make without recourse to Parliament."

The desire for a national child care program is long standing in Canada. The opposition parties support it; the provinces want it. Harper is the odd man out.

"Killing the agreements would destroy what communities have worked so hard to build. In every corner of the country, communities have been engaged with their province in developing child care plans. Initiatives have been announced; contracts have been signed. Turning off the process will have serious repercussions," said Lysack."

Harper is incorrect to equate families' desire for a baby bonus with opposition to a child care program. The majority of Canadians voted for parties that supported access to affordable, quality care.

Dismantling the agreements will also harm federal-provincial relations, says Lysack. "The Federal government's practice of unilaterally breaking its agreements has damaged intergovernmental relations and Harper is set to do it again. His action on child care will be the first test of what a Conservative government will really mean for Canadians. "

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