

Quebec Liberals consider indexing daycare fees to income ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

"We're asking the commission on tax reform to look at it."

For the first time, Premier Philippe Couillard is talking about indexing daycare fees: the wealthy would pay more, the poor would pay less.

Reaction was swift; political parties, daycare and social groups all slammed the idea.

"When you put a tarif on something, the user-payer approach, it's not the best way that everybody contributes," said Amélie Châteauneuf from the Front commun des personnes assistées sociales.

The Parti Québécois' proposal would be that everyone pay \$2 more each day.

"The system needs to be universal, fair and equitable," said PQ MNA Mathieu Traversy.

PQ interim leader Stéphane Bédard added: "The Liberals are reneging on two of their election promises: they're stopping the creation of new daycare places and raising fees."

However Bédard continued to plead his case in Question Period.

"The Premier needs to answer our questions."

Couillard insisted a program review is essential if Quebec wants to achieve zero deficit in 2015-2016, and this could mean indexing daycare fees to family income.

"It's not good for the economy," argued Coalition Avenir Quebec leader François Legault.

"We need to decrease taxes and then after, we may look at that."

Finance Minister Carlos Leitaó agreed that it's still early; indexing will not appear in his budget next week.

"The commitment we made during the election campaign is that we would not increase from \$7 to \$9, and that we would index fees, which is what we're going to do. Beyond that, we're going to examine the way that network is funded," he said.

Once Leitaó's "transition budget" is tabled, the Liberals said they will launch two commissions: one to evaluate all government programs and a second to look at Quebec's taxation system.

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