

Vote 2015: Do you support publicly funded child care? ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

In advance of the Oct. 19 federal election, The Squamish Chief is posing a series of questions on issues of importance to Squamish voters to the candidates for the West Vancouver-Sunshine Coast-Sea to Sky Country riding. The candidates' answers appear in no particular order.

Q: Do you support publicly funded child care?

John Weston, Conservative Party of Canada:

There is one key difference between our plan and the plan of the other parties. Our plan gives benefits to every family in Canada, regardless of how they decide to care for their children, whether they decide to stay at home with their children, whether they decide to use licensed daycare spots, or whether they decide to use another family member.

Whatever their choice is, we respect it, and believe it deserves our support.

We've empowered individual family child care choices by increasing the Child Care Expense Deduction (CCED) by \$1,000. The CCED allows child care expenses to be deducted from income when those expenses are incurred to earn employment or business income, pursue education or perform research.

[We] supported choice in child care by creating the Universal Child Care Benefit in 2006 as a means of direct financial support. This year, we increased the UCCB so that now \$160 per month is provided for each child under the age of six, while children aged 6 to 17 receive up to \$60 per month.

The Liberals say they are committed to affordable, early learning for kids, but as might be expected, are not saying how. The NDP would create a multibillion-dollar plan that would help fewer than 10 per cent of Canadian families. We have a plan, and ours helps all Canadian families.

Ken Melamed, Green Party of Canada:

The short answer is yes. The longer answer is that a national child-care program is one of the best investments our country can make to stimulate the economy and create prosperous communities.

I'll work with members of Parliament and members of the legislative assembly from all parties to deliver a child care program that suits Canadian parents and their children.

I think our federal government can do more to support Canadian parents. For example, the Green Party platform includes tax breaks for employers who create child-care spaces, making hectic mornings more manageable for parents and improving employee productivity. I'll also work to support women who choose to reenter the workforce after having children.

As we work together to jumpstart our economy, we need to make sure we don't leave new parents behind.

Larry Koopman, New Democratic Party:

The New Democratic Party will create a Canadian early childhood education and child-care program with a goal that parents won't pay more than \$15 per day per child.

The NDP's plan would build on the successful child-care model from Quebec. Research from economist Pierre Fortin shows that affordable child care in Quebec helped 70,000 mothers join the workforce and boosted the economy by \$1.75 for every dollar invested by the government.

There are currently 900,000 children in need of care with no access to quality affordable child-care spaces. In many parts of the country, parents face monthly child-care bills in the thousands of dollars. The NDP's plan for affordable child care envisages working with the provinces to create more spaces and reduce parents' costs to no more than \$15 a day.

Pam Goldsmith-Jones, Liberal Party of Canada:

The Liberal Party of Canada and I have always supported a comprehensive, balanced, and flexible child-care support system that meets the diverse needs of our west community. Investing in child care improves the health and social well-being of children and improves the productivity of workers.

In particular, a well developed child-care system helps advance the careers of working women and gives greater opportunities to working Canadians to succeed in and benefit from the economy.

That is why the Liberal Party is committed to creating the tax-free Canada Child Benefit, which will provide more money than the Conservative plan, to families under \$150,000 in income.

Also, we are committed to working toward a national, publicly funded child-care system that is focused on those who need it the most. Our current, outdated child-care system is in need of real change, and a Liberal government will see that through.

-reprinted from The Squamish Chief

Region: Canada ^[3]

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