



Child care in the House of Commons

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Ms. Rona Ambrose (Edmonton—Spruce Grove, Conservative Party of Canada): Mr. Speaker, the Conservative Party will honour the child care agreements with the provinces, however, our party is willing to go one step further and to put money directly into the hands of parents so that they can make their own child care choices.

The difference between the Liberals and the Conservatives is that the Conservative Party supports equality and choice. Why is there not one red cent of the \$5 billion Liberal day care scheme going to parents who choose to stay at home with their children or choose other child care options?

Hon. Ken Dryden (Minister of Social Development, Liberal): Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind the member opposite that the commitment that was made in last year's election campaign was not just \$5 billion over five years for a system of early learning and child care but it was for a national early learning and child care system.

It was \$5 billion over five years but on the way to building a true national early learning and child care system. It is a commitment made now and a commitment to deliver now and in the future in order to build a national early learning and child care system.

Ms. Rona Ambrose (Edmonton—Spruce Grove, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this is about equality and choice and the government is discriminating against certain parents.

Our party has spoken to parents from coast to coast and what they are asking for is a workable program that financially empowers them with choice and provides their children with the tools they need to succeed.

In fact, studies have shown that almost all working parents would stay at home part time if they could afford to. Why do the Liberals refuse to financially empower all parents equally?

Hon. Ken Dryden (Minister of Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will remind the member opposite that in last year's election campaign the commitment was a \$2,000 tax credit. That \$2,000 tax credit would have the magnificent impact of affecting those who are the worst off, those who are the poorest in the country, to the amount of \$320 per child.

The average cost of child care in the country is over \$8,000. That is a tax deduction. That is not child care.