

BULLETIN

Working families hear lots of talk in federal budget but see no real action

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Vancouver—“Working families heard lots of talk that they were the centrepiece of today’s federal budget but the details show it’s only talk, with little action says B.C. Federation of Labour Secretary-Treasurer, Angela Schira.

“No matter how much spin the Conservatives try they’re simply out of touch with the needs of working families,” Schira said.

“It’s disappointing that both our federal and provincial governments simply don’t understand that you can’t solve the labour shortage if you don’t solve the childcare shortage,” added Schira.

“Childcare tax breaks for corporations should have been invested in building real spaces,” Schira said.

“Corporations don’t have a great track record when it comes to childcare.” Schira added that the \$250 million in childcare funding ... announced last year only works out to \$33 million for BC. Before the Conservatives axed the childcare plan BC was set to receive over \$150 million this year. “Those dollars should have been provided to licensed, mostly non-profit, providers to increase spaces now.”

Schira also noted that the \$800 million boost for post-secondary transfers should have been distributed to provinces with the stipulation that those funds be used to lower tuition and increase student grants, making post-secondary education more affordable for working families.

The Federation also pledged to hold the government to account with the Conservatives Budget’s commitment that “any Canadian who needs training will get training.”

“New immigrants, young people and workers trying to improve their skills have been struggling to find training support, while economists are scratching their head wondering why Canada is not making gains in productivity. Today’s announcement of a \$500 million investment in training is only a small step to improving this at a time we need to be making leaps,” said Schira.

The Conservative government also announced today a working income tax benefit of \$500 for individuals and \$1,000 for families for low-income Canadians.

“Three dollars a day is going to do little for families struggling to find affordable housing,” Schira stated. “If they were really concerned about the well-being of low-income earners, Conservatives would not have voted against a \$10 federal minimum wage.”

“There were small steps taken to protect the environment but were still a long way away from believing Stephen Harper is truly committed to addressing climate change and protecting our environment,” Schira said.

While the B.C. Federation of Labour was disappointed the Budget made no mention of a national prescription drug strategy and home care plan, Schira noted that today’s announcement of allowing phased retirement was

a positive step, recommended by the Federation in its recent submission to the provincial government regarding mandatory retirement.

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180 East Columbia
New Westminster, BC V3L 0G7

Website
www.hsabc.org

Telephone 604-517-0994
1-800-663-2017