

March 13, 2006

His Worship Mayor Peter J. Kelly
Halifax Regional Municipality
Office of the Mayor
1841 Argyle Street
P.O. Box 1749
HALIFAX NS B3J 3A5

Mar 27,

Dear Mayor Kelly:

RE: NATIONAL CHILD CARE PROGRAM

I am writing on behalf of 550,000 CUPE members living and working in communities across Canada. Today, I want to urge you to join other municipalities in pressuring federal and provincial governments to honour the promise of a national child care program.

CUPE wants you to join the movement to protect the early learning and child care agreements between the Government of Canada and the provinces. The federal-provincial agreements on child care were negotiated in good faith. They lay a foundation for a full system of early learning and child care that can start to meet the needs of all Canadian families. Canceling them sets back the development of a national child care program for years to come, leaving families with young children to fend for themselves. Breaking federal-provincial child care agreements would be a breach of public trust and would lead to a cut of almost \$4 billion from child care funding.

We know that the membership of the FCM supports a national child care program. The 2005 FCM Policy Statement on Community Economic Development states:

FCM further supports the creation of a national childcare program, administered by the federal and provincial/territorial governments, to ensure that all children are well cared for and that members of our community are able to fully participate in the workforce, if they so choose.

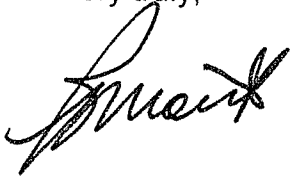
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The FCM clearly recognizes the importance of child care to economic development and social inclusion. The City of Toronto recently passed a motion that commits it to working with families, child care programs and advocates in that city to ensure the federal government fulfils its five-year funding commitment to build a national early learning and child care program in Ontario and across Canada.

As mayors of the Big City Mayors' caucus of the FCM, we urge each of you to take similar action, and to join with community partners in sending a clear message to the federal government, the opposition leaders, and the Premiers. The message is: Canadian municipalities and their residents want politicians to work together to honour the spirit of these agreements.

A first step would be to endorse the Code Blue action initiated by the Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada at www.buildchildcare.ca. Thousands of Canadians have signed an open letter—we encourage you to publicize this grassroots campaign. At least one city has signed on behalf of all its citizens and we look forward to your city doing the same. We also propose that you use your strength as representatives of Canadians living in urban areas to bring the need for a national child care system to the table as part of the national agenda for cities.

Yours very truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul Moist", with a stylized flourish at the end.

PAUL MOIST
National President
Canadian Union of Public Employees