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NDP DEMANDS ACTION AGAINST BIG BOX CHILD CARE

Child care critic Olivia Chow concludes cross-country tour

HALIFAX – “Big box” child care is invading Canadian communities and is putting quality child care and the possibility of a national non-profit child care program at risk.

Last week, NDP child care critic Olivia Chow (Trinity-Spadina) concluded her cross-country child care tour by hosting a roundtable discussion with child care providers in Halifax. Throughout the week, Chow has visited communities worried about the rise of big box child care.

After a buying spree of over 1,000 child care centres in the United States, ABC, an Australian-based and the world's largest multinational child care corporation arrived in Canada through 123 Busy Beavers Learning Centres.

Reports from Alberta indicate that 123 Busy Beavers purchased 30 child care centres in that province, 6 of which are now open. The company is also now actively seeking to hire staff and expand. Letters of interest have also been sent to childcare operators in Ontario and British Columbia.

“Our government needs to look at the Australian experience where big box child care corporations dominate and 70% of all centres are run by for-profit providers. Fees rose, quality suffered, and expenses grew as did corporate profits. Quality services for children must be the priority,” said Chow.

The arrival of the \$2.2 billion dollar company will overwhelm small community-based operators especially when provincial governments in BC, Alberta and Nova Scotia offer public subsidies and investment to companies that aim to make a hefty profit from operating child care services.

“With so many children on waiting lists across Canada, everyday families are looking for an answer,” said Chow, whose Early Learning and Child Care act returns to Parliament for support on November 20, the International Day for Children.

“Only the NDP’s Childcare Act will stop the spread of big box child care and build the foundation for a national non-profit, high quality and affordable child care program that working parents have long demanded.”

For more information, please contact:

Nathan Rotman, Office of Olivia Chow, (613) 863-4002