



**Confederation of Canadian Unions ([www.ccu-csc.ca](http://www.ccu-csc.ca))**  
Raise Your Voice, Cast Your Vote Campaign – Election 2011  
**Green Party of Canada Responses**

**April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2011**

**Economics**

**1. The Canada Revenue Agency reports that the richest 1% of income earners received almost 33% of all income growth since 1997. According to Statistics Canada, economic inequality has been on the rise since the 1970s, and as of 2005, the richest 10% of Canadians controlled almost 60% of all wealth. How will your party reverse this trend and reduce the growing levels of economic inequality in Canada?**

The Green Party of Canada understands the strong negative relationship between income inequality and every other indicator of the healthy, sustainable economy and a vibrant, caring society we envision for Canada.

We will achieve meaningful progress through a thriving middle-class in a new, "green economy" that is built on world-class research, information and innovation. To encourage the transition from our current carbon-based economy we will immediately establish a cap-and-trade system for large industrial polluters and a consumption "revenue-neutral tax shift" from products and services we want to encourage (e.g. high-quality job creation) to those we want to discourage (e.g. fossil-fuel pollution). These structural changes, together with increased funding and targeted programs for accessible, affordable, quality post-secondary education, will generate thousands of new high-paying "green collar" jobs in manufacturing, construction, high-technology, tourism and other sectors.

Green MPs will empower workers by actively promoting and encouraging collective bargaining as a human right and a charter right. The Green Party of Canada also supports anti-scab legislation and the re-establishment of rights to equal pay for work of equal value.

**2. Federal corporate taxes have almost been cut in half during the past fifteen years by Liberal and Conservative governments. Canada now has a federal corporate tax rate that is below even that of the United States and most OECD countries. At the same time, personal and public debt has soared, and a majority of Canadians, according to opinion polls, support greater funding for social services like health care, child care and education. What will your party do to ensure that corporations are paying their fair share of taxes, like the rest of us?**

The Green Party of Canada's platform includes a plan to tax corporations on their worldwide income similar to the US, UK and Japan. Currently a subsidiary of a Canadian corporation can operate in the Bahamas for instance and only pay 2.5% corporate income tax with no additional payments due when



that money arrives in Canada. By closing this loopholes, all Canadian companies would be treated the same and would have to pay the Canadian rate (with credit paid in other jurisdictions) even if they operate in tax havens.

Moreover, we have pledged to stop the corporate tax rate reduction and roll it back to 19%, the level it was in 2009. GPC will stop the corporate tax rate from going down to 15% in 2012.

The Green Party believes in reforms to our tax system that are fairer and more in tune with Canadians' desire for a healthy environment, a sustainable economy and a vibrant, caring society. Our deficit-reduction strategy will remove the tax burden from middle-class Canadians onto corporations by returning the corporate tax rate to its 2009 level and ending wasteful corporate bailouts and perverse subsidies to corporations.

**3. Economic research shows that more of Canada's resource industries are being taken over by international conglomerates. This has led to the loss of thousands of good-paying jobs in Canada and capital flight (in the form of profits) out of the country. What concrete policies will your party implement to protect Canadian resource industries from foreign domination?**

The Green Party will sponsor and support specific legislation that restricts foreign ownership in Canada in strategic sectors so that Canadians remain in control of the destiny of Canada, reap the benefits from the exploitation of Canadian resources, and retain the right to determine their use and rate of exploitation. We will immediately provide the six months mandatory notice of withdrawal under NAFTA and replace it, the FTAA, and other trade agreements and negotiations with *fair* trade agreements that protect Canadian sovereignty, ownership and control. All Chapter 11-type Investor-State provisions that allow foreign companies to sue our government will be removed. We will also work for a similar shift from free to fair trade under the WTO and other powerful multilateral organizations.

## Labour

**4. Statistics Canada reports that on average, unionized workers enjoy 29% higher wages than non-unionized workers in the same line of work, as well as stronger pensions, superior health and safety standards, longer vacation time, better health and drug benefits, and more rights in the workplace. Does your party believe that unions play a positive role in our economy? If so, what policies will your party implement to create a climate that is easier for unions to organize?**

The Green Party supports the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (1998). Labour rights are human rights. We affirm the 2007 Supreme Court of Canada ruling in the hospitals case that the right to collective bargaining is a basic charter right. We will enshrine the spirit and substance of the Worker's Bill of Rights by reviewing and updating all federal labour statutes to expressly guarantee the right to collective bargaining for all covered employees. We will support anti-scab legislation and we will protect, extend and strengthen legal protections for all current and prospective Canadian union members from unfair trade agreements.



**5. While corporate profits, productivity and GDP have all increased fairly consistently during the past thirty years, Statistics Canada reports that real hourly wages have been stagnant since 1980. Why do you think this has happened, and what does your party propose to change the situation?**

The Green Party understand that strong unions bring higher wages for union members. Trade-related downward pressures on wages, including union formation, two major recessions (1992, 2008), and the election of consecutive, union-busting conservative governments in Canada and the U.S. have all weakened collective bargaining rights.

The Green Party also recognizes that the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) – our national bottom line – is a measure of money changing hands without regard to whether we are reducing social inequalities, advancing sustainability or safeguarding our natural capital of primary resources such as wild fish populations, natural forests and fertile soils. We will establish a national Genuine Progress Indicator (GPI) that is a new and innovative accounting method that embraces a more systematic and comprehensive definition of well-being in order to provide the government with better information so it can do a better job of taxation and revenue-sharing with the other levels of government.

**6. Throughout the United States, working people and their unions, especially in the public sector, are under attack by governments who are stripping away their most basic rights and freedoms. What commitments will your party make to ensure workers in both the private and public sectors will maintain their collective bargaining rights?**

Green MPs will support “anti-scab” legislation and changes to the Employment Standards law to provide equal protection to contract and temporary workers. We will strengthen non-union workers’ rights and protections to close the widening gap between union and non-union workplaces. We will increase federal inspections and establish stronger deterrents to illegal unpaid overtime work to achieve full compliance with Canada Labour Code standards.

Workers need to know their rights, so the Green Party will change federal labour law to include a requirement that a poster outlining workers’ rights be placed in all federally-regulated workplaces as is the case under all provincial labour laws.

We will re-establish in law the rights to equal pay for work of equal value and offer tax rebates to companies that provide on-site daycare, healthy food and facilities for exercise and commuting by bicycle.

A Green government will also introduce legislation to hold Canadian corporations that are working overseas to the same environmental and human rights standards as they are in Canada.

## **Social Policy**

**7. In 1989, the House of Commons unanimously passed a motion calling for the eradication of child poverty in Canada by 2000. Yet today, nearly one in eight children throughout the country live under the poverty line, and one in four Aboriginal children. What specific policies will your party implement to end child poverty in Canada once and for all?**



Our *2011 Green Platform* and *Vision Green* attests to our belief that reducing child poverty is more important than allowing our richest citizens to get richer.

In 2011-14, we commit more than \$2 billion additional dollars to provide universally accessible, affordable early childhood education. We have also pledged to contribute over \$2.5 billion additional dollars to implement a National Affordable Housing Program, over additional dollars to \$18M eliminating personal income tax below the low-income cut-off of \$20,000, and \$24M in additional funding to improve First Nations education and drinking water.

A Green Government will do more, including:

- Provide \$5000/year additional income support to adults currently receiving provincial welfare cheques that is not subject to provincial claw-back;
- Restore the 2005 Kelowna Accord;
- Establish a federally-funded high-quality school lunch program;
- Create a national Children's Commissioner (as recommended by UNICEF);
- Introduce a basic income program for people with disabilities (children with disabilities being twice as likely to live in poverty), and;
- Establish a national affordable housing program.

We understand that the only way to ensure every child is pulled out of poverty is through an air-tight social safety net. Under a Green Government every Canadian child will live safely above the poverty line through our Guaranteed Liveable Income (GLI). The use of a GLI could eliminate poverty, while allowing precious, vital social services to concentrate on other major challenges like mental health and drug addiction.

**8. Our publicly administered, universal health care system is cherished by Canadians throughout the country. More of our health services, however, are being de-funded and privatized. Recently, a hospital in British Columbia was forced to utilize a local Tim Horton's restaurant as a makeshift emergency room. What policies will your party implement to ensure that health care in Canada is properly funded and remains under public control?**

The Green Party is committed to maintaining and strengthening a publicly administered, comprehensive, universal, portable and accessible health care system. We fully support the Canada Health Act (CHA) and all of its principles and oppose any level of privatized, for-profit health care.

We believe "fixing" our health care system means protecting the core elements of a universal single-payer health care. Our Green MPs will not only support the extension of the CHA, but will seek to exercise its full strength to oppose any steps that open the way to further two-tier health care in this country.

Our *2011 Green Platform* provides \$900M to support a new National Pharmacare Program, a new bulk drug purchasing agency, and legislation to make new drug patent protection times shorter.

The Green Party will protect Canada's public health care system from threats stemming from the American for-profit health care industry under NAFTA. As it is, based on the rules for "national treatment," we are



running the risk of losing our entire universal single payer system in a NAFTA challenge. We cannot take that risk.

We will also focus on health promotion and disease prevention by reducing exposure to toxic substances, promoting active living and providing more information on healthy food choices. The Green Party of Canada will act to remove from use those chemicals known to have a significant risk of human cancer, immunosuppression, endocrine disruption, neurotoxicity and/or mutagenicity. The substances will be regulated within CEPA to restrict use and registration with the goal of reducing and/or eliminating exposure to vulnerable groups within society (pregnant women, the unborn, children, the sick, the poor and the elderly). We will promote a broad-based national program of active living as a prescription for better health and lower health care costs, to be delivered in partnership with provincial, municipal and non-governmental bodies to achieve the goal agreed to by all ministers responsible for physical activity across Canada of increasing physical activity by 10% over the next five years.

**9. Canada is one of the few countries in the western world that doesn't have a national child care program, yet opinion polls show most Canadians strongly support one. What steps will your party take in government to make affordable child care available to parents throughout the country?**

In our platform the Green Party is committed to 2.2 billion dollars in spending over the next three years to a high-quality federally-funded child care program in Canada, accessible to any family that wants to place their children into early childhood education. Specifically, we will work towards supporting workplace child care wherever possible as it has been shown to improve productivity, decrease employee absenteeism, ensure quality care for children (because parents can "drop in" at any time to see their young children), and permits longer breast-feeding of infants. We will re-establish and revamp the 2005 Child Care agreement between the Federal Government and the Provinces and territories.

**10. Canada's total student loan debt is reaching an incredible \$14 billion dollars, and due to the recent economic downturn, many governments throughout the country are once again cutting funding for post-secondary education. What steps will your party take to guarantee funding to Canada's colleges and universities? Will you now commit to reducing tuition fees?**

We are committed to providing universal access to affordable, highest-quality post-secondary education. Under our plan, federal transfer payments to the provinces are increased to counteract the overall rise in tuition fees at post-secondary institutions. We reduce student debt by forgiving portions of student loans, and we boost financial support for students through a Canadian National Student Loan and Bursary Program. The program would provide \$1.2 billion in bursaries over three years for students in need.

Canada's universities need stable, reliable funding to help bring Canada's education system up to a level needed to ensure innovation and create jobs for a prosperous, sustainable economy, and to ensure they are not captive to corporate philanthropy which can taint the academic quality of the educational content and processes. Initial steps include increased federal transfers to provincial governments (ear-marked and tied to postsecondary education), and new investments in undergraduate research fellowships through the federal research councils to support innovation and increase research capacity.



The Green Party of Canada believes that post-secondary education is vital if we are going to create an environmentally sustainable, socially just, and economically prosperous nation. The Green Party's platform includes the creation of a Youth Community and Environment Service Corps, which will provide federal minimum wage employment for 160,000 youth. These youth will also be awarded a \$4000 tuition credit to help alleviate the cost of a modern education.

Moreover the Green Party supports:

- Investing in Early Intervention Programs through partnerships with other governments and through additional funding for Targeted Nonrepayable Assistance, Academic Support, Mentorship, and Campus Exposure Programs with an emphasis on low-income, first-generation, and Aboriginal students and communities.
- Establishing a federal research program aimed at understanding and reducing barriers to post-secondary education in the absence of the Millennium Research Program.
- Working with the provinces to support lifelong learning programs aimed at enabling older Canadians to pursue post-secondary education to gain new knowledge and skills.
- Increasing funding for a needs-based Canadian National Student Loan and Bursary.
- Creating programs that directly support low-income, first-generation, and Aboriginal students and communities.
- Transitioning from costly and regressive tax-based credits and RESPs as methods of an affordable post-secondary education system.
- Allowing all students eligibility for guaranteed student loans up to their rate of tuition regardless of parental income and decrease the lending rate to that of the prime rate and extend the time period for which student loans must be repaid.
- Establishing a Student Education Funding Committee, with at least 50% of members having student debt, whose purpose will be to create a student education funding system that better serves the needs of Canadian students.
- Establishing an Opportunity Grant under the Canada Student Grants Program for graduate students with high financial need.
- Extending the payment grace period to 2 years after graduation in which time loans are interest-free.
- Exempting academic materials from the GST and/or any other federal sales taxes that may be implemented in the future.

## Democracy

**11. Although there have been advances towards greater gender equity in Canada, there is still much work to be done. Women only make 75% of men's income, one in seven women live in poverty, while five provinces in Canada still have no pay equity legislation on the books. On top of this, federal funding to women's rights groups has declined 43% since 2006, according to the *Toronto Star*. What specific policies will your party propose to ensure greater gender equity and women's equality in government, business and society?**

The Greens understand that gender equality is fundament to any just society. Our Green MPs will vigorously defend the hard-won rights of Canada's women and work steadfastly with women to advance and ultimately achieve full gender equality at home and in the workplace.



We believe the best ways to break down barriers and advance opportunities for women are through poverty eradication, national affordable child care, programs to eliminate the financial barriers to post-secondary education, national affordable housing, and the adoption of a Genuine Progress Indicator (GPI), which includes measures of unpaid and voluntary work by women.

A Green Government will

- Re-establish funding for Status of Women Canada and other organizations that fund non-profit women's groups and advocate for women's rights;
- Pass pay equity legislation, as recommended by the Pay Equity Task Force and immediately implement full pay equity for women employed in the federal sector, and provide incentives for companies to meet the highest standards of gender and pay equity;
- Strengthen non-union workers' (mostly women) rights and protections;
- Expand supports for low-income mothers;
- Oppose the use of religious justice systems such as Sharia Law in Canada that run contrary to our existing rule of law and that specifically subjugate women and diminish the rights of women;
- Establish specific job re-entry programs for women with children who want to restart their working lives either part-time or full-time.
- Ensure that the criteria for new appointments to public boards and agencies include equal opportunity for women; and,
- Support greater engagement of women in the political life of Canada by advocating that all political parties nominate, train and support more women candidates.

**12. Canada is one of the few countries in the western world that uses a Plurality voting system ("First past the post"). This has allowed parties with a minority of the vote to form majority governments, and has relegated such parties like the Greens, who won almost a million votes in the 2008 federal election, to having no representation in the House of Commons. Where does your party stand on reforming Canada's electoral system to one based on proportional representation?**

The Green Party believes that Canada is running a "democratic deficit" that is undermining and threatening our democracy and our future. We believe Canadians will benefit by reducing the financial barriers to running for political office, lowering the voter age to 16 to encourage more youth participation, and changing to a voting system that more fairly translates peoples' votes into representation in parliament.

A Green Government will establish a Public Inquiry into Democracy that will investigate, among other things, the inequity of our current voting system with a view to replacing it with a system based on proportional representation. The recommendations of the Public Inquiry will be presented as options to Canadian voters.

Other specific actions include enforcing fixed election dates that permit political stability and fair elections and reducing the mandatory \$1,000 candidate deposit to encourage more Canadians to participate in the democratic system.



## International Issues

**13. Canada has one of the poorest environmental records in the entire OECD, and we aren't even close to fulfilling the 2012 greenhouse gas reduction targets laid out in the original Kyoto Accord. What policies will your party implement to reduce climate change and protect the environment? Will your party commit now to end the billion dollar subsidies given to the oil industry and instead use those funds to invest in environmentally-friendly forms of energy?**

The Green Party of Canada recognizes that climate change is one of the largest environmental, economic and humanitarian challenges that we face today. We believe that Canada must take the lead in global negotiations by adopting strong targets here at home. We will ensure Canada does its fair share by meeting domestic emission reduction targets of at least 30% below 1990 levels by 2020 and 80% below 1990 levels by 2040. More stringent targets will be established in response to emerging scientific consensus. Canada will commit to the necessary technology transfers and funding required for developing nations to transition to a post-carbon economy in a fair and equitable way.

The Green Party believes the most effective, efficient, fair and moral way to meet Canada's targets is with a carbon tax that covers 100% of emissions. A tax starting at \$50/tonne will shift the burden from activities worth encouraging (e.g. employment) to those that are not (e.g. burning coal). Low income Canadians will receive tax breaks. A carbon tax will also be applied to fossil fuel exports, except to countries that impose their own. Subsidies to the fossil fuel sector will end immediately and a cap-and-trade system will be implemented for all large emitters.

Our climate change policies are extensive, please visit our policy document [Vision Green](#) for more information.

**14. In November 2008, Prime Minister Harper signed the Canada-Colombia Free Trade Agreement. Colombia has one of the worst human rights records in the world. In 2008 alone, 49 trade union activists and leaders were assassinated in the country, according to the International Labour Organization. 474 have been killed since 2002, mostly by paramilitary death squads, many of whom have been officially classified as terrorist organizations by our own government. Does your party believe that global trade should serve the interests of corporations and the wealthy and powerful, or should trade be fair and take into consideration human rights and democracy, and the rights of workers, farmers, Aboriginal peoples, and the poor?**

The Green Party supports fair trade, not free trade. Every agreement we negotiate will contain the strongest language available under the law to protect human rights, labour standards, cultural diversity, environmental laws and even constitutional rights. As mentioned above, we will re-negotiate NAFTA and all other trade agreements and reorganize key institutions (IMF, WTO, World Bank) with these principles in mind. A Green Government will go further by seeking to place the WTO, the IMF and the World Bank under the authority of the UN General Assembly.

A Green Government will establish new neutral, independent partnerships with Latin and South American countries that display and reflect Green principles. We will actively engage them in partnerships in development aid and economic investment that promote our mutual ideals of fair trade and the promotion of strong civil society, human rights and respect for indigenous peoples and the environment.



**15. Canada currently provides only 0.3% of its Gross National Income to foreign aid, putting us in 14th out of 23 donor countries. Eleven of those countries have reached their 0.7% commitment or are scheduled to do so. How will your party ensure that Canada keeps its international promises and reaches its 0.7% commitment to foreign aid?**

The Green Party of Canada reaffirms Canada's commitment to allocating 0.7% of GDP to ODA and to meeting the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). We will reestablish poverty reduction as an underlying goal of Canada's overseas development agenda, revamp CIDA to focus more on poverty alleviation and fulfill our commitments for the provision of HIV/AIDS retroviral drugs to Africa.

Green MPS will work to de-politicize government decision-making on foreign aid and development investment and will support the immediate restoration of funding to KAIROS, CCIC, MATCH and Planned Parenthood.

