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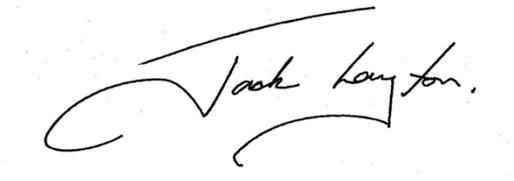
Dear Friends,

We strongly support and value your commitment to ideals of equality, democracy, environmental sustainability and solidarity. New Democrats will continue to work alongside the labour movement to realize our shared goals of workers' rights, employment creation, social justice and equity for all.

Thank you for the opportunity to highlight the New Democratic Party of Canada's position on economic and social policies, democracy and international issues.

We appreciate your efforts to help voters make an informed decision on voting day.

Sincerely,



Jack Layton,
Leader, Canada's New Democrats

Confederation of Canadian Unions (www.ccu-csc.ca)
Raise Your Voice, Cast Your Vote Campaign – 2011 Election
NDP Responses

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?

New Democrats are committed to reducing inequality through the creation of family-supporting jobs with benefits.

New Democrats will focus on strengthening pensions and economic security by increasing the annual GIS immediately to lift every senior in Canada out of poverty.

An NDP government will re-introduce the federal minimum wage law, scrapped by the Liberal Party of Canada in 1996, to set a national pay standard for those who make the lowest wages in our workforce.

We will provide families with a home heating federal sales tax rebate, and cap credit card interest rates at 5 per cent above prime.

The NDP will ensure that those who take EI parental leave are not penalized on Employment Insurance benefits when they return to work. We will provide a more flexible and generous EI Compassionate Care Benefit and introduce a new Caregiver Benefit, to assist low and middle-income families tackle the costs of caring for elderly or dependant family members.

We will restore the integrity of the EI program by amending the Employment Insurance Act to eliminate the two-week waiting period, return the qualifying period to a minimum of 360 hours of work.

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?

New Democrats strongly oppose massive tax give-aways to highly profitable corporations.

New Democrats will restore the Corporate Income Tax rate to 2008 levels and will redirect the revenues to rewards for companies that actually create jobs.

NDP will eliminate federal subsidies to the fossil fuel sector, improve the competitiveness of alternative energy sources and align Canada's fiscal policies with its economic, environmental, and greenhouse gas reduction goals.

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?

New Democrats have a solid plan to protect Canadian resource industries from Foreign domination and ensuring that these investments will bring jobs to Canada. We will strengthen the *Investment Canada Act* by:

- Reducing the threshold for investments subject to review to \$100 million;
- Providing explicit, transparent criteria for the "net benefit to Canada" test, with an emphasis on the impact of foreign investment on communities, jobs, pensions and new capital investments;
- Requiring public hearings that allow for community input into decisions on both the assessment of "net benefit" and conditions to apply to the investment;
- Ensuring public disclosure and enforcement of all commitments undertaken by potential investors

New Democrats will create and support pan-Canadian sector-based strategies to ensure Canadian leadership in the global market – key sectors include forestry, energy and petrochemicals, machinery and equipment, fish and food processing, steel, mining, environmental technologies, aeronautics, information processing, pharmaceuticals, health technologies, tourism, telecommunications, ship-building, cultural industries, agriculture and food, high tech, and automotive.

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 NDP has always believed a strong Canadian labour movement is good for all Canadian workers, good for the Canadian economy and fundamental to ensuring an equitable and just Canadian society. New Democrats will continue to work alongside the labour movement to realize our shared goals of workers' rights, employment creation, social justice and equity for all.

We will continue to stand unequivocally for the right of Canadian workers to organize and bargain collectively. This right has been steadily eroded by successive Conservative and Liberal governments. We will ban use of replacement workers in federally regulated industries. We will continue to propose and

advocate improvements to employment insurance, training and other worker supports, and to put workers' wages and pensions at the head of the line of creditors during bankruptcy proceedings. And we will continue to press for the inclusion of labour rights in Canada's unbalanced bilateral trade deals.

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?

Conservative and Liberal governments (1987-2011) slashed the federal corporate income tax rate from 37.8% to 16.5%, without conditions regarding re-investment, job creation or wage increases. During the first twenty years of that period, 41 corporations affiliated to the Canadian Council of Chief Executives cut their combined workforces by 118,000 employees ("FTA 20 Years Later", Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, 2007). Between 2004 and 2008, Canada lost 322,000 manufacturing jobs, and since then the Great Recession has led to a net loss of 150,000 more jobs from the Canadian workforce. Most of these quality, full-time jobs have been replaced by precarious, part-time, low-paying jobs driving down wages as corporate profits soar.

Liberal and Conservative governments see corporate profit and GDP numbers as the measure of their economic policy, rather than the quality of life of Canadians - which is better enhanced by social investment and higher wages.

New Democrats believe in tying tax benefits to evidence of job creation and re-investment. In our 2011 platform, we introduce a job creation tax credit of up to \$4,500 per new hire while also reducing the tax rate for small. We remain committed to raising the federal minimum wage as a driver for improved wages across the workforce, and we will strengthen the right of workers to organize and collectively bargain for a fair share of rising corporate profits.

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?

New Democrats are appalled by the attacks on working people and their unions in the United States. These attacks are ideological, designed to ensure the wealthy do not have to pay the price for the damage they did to the world's economy.

A New Democrat government would enhance the protection of workers, provide real assistance to help people escape poverty and prevent the massive de-regulation which allowed the very wealthy to wreck our economy.

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?

New Democrats introduced historic Bill C-545, *An Act to Eliminate Poverty in Canada*. New Democrats will work with all parties and stakeholders to ensure the Bill's passage to close the gap between rich and poor. This legislation, would form the foundation for future policies addressing poverty, and was created with leading national non-government poverty organizations. New Democrats will work to establish an objective accountability framework to ensure the Bill's successful implementation once it is passed.

As a practical first step to eliminate child poverty, New Democrats will combine existing supports like the *Child Tax Benefit* to create a non-taxable *Child Benefit* and increase support steadily by up to \$700 per child over the next four years (in addition to the current *UCCB*).

We will table legislation to set goals and targets for poverty reduction in consultation with the provincial, territorial, municipal and Aboriginal governments and with non-governmental organizations.

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?

Jack Layton and New Democrats will lead negotiations on a new ten-year health accord with the provinces and territories in 2014. The accord will guarantee a continued strong federal contribution – including a 6% escalator - to Canada's public health care system – in return for a clear, monitored and enforced commitments to respect the principles of the *Canada Health Act* and to the integrity and modernization of health care;

- We will work with provincial and territorial partners to:
 - Promote a clear commitment to the single-payer system;
 - Make progress on primary care;
 - Take appropriate steps to replace fee-for-service delivery;
 - Take first steps to reduce the costs of prescription medicines for Canadians, employers and governments;
 - Extend coverage to out-of-hospital services like home care and long-term care, beginning with an initial investment of \$2.5 billion over four years in each.
 - Implement first steps towards a Canadian mental health strategy.
- Jack Layton's government will work with the provinces and territories to address the shortage of doctors, nurses and other health care professionals by training 1,200 new doctors over the next

10 years, adding 6,000 new training spaces for nurses over six years and substantially increasing the number of training spaces for other health professionals;

- In collaboration with the provinces and territories, we will establish programs aimed at recruiting and supporting low-income, rural and aboriginal medical students.

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?

Unlike other parties, New Democrats are committed to addressing child care issues.

- We will work with the provinces and territories to establish and fund a Canada-wide child care and early learning program, enshrined in law, beginning with:
 - The creation of 25,000 new child care spaces per year for the next four years;
 - Improvements to community infrastructure to support the growth of child care spaces;
 - The creation of integrated, community-based, child-centred early learning and education centres that provide parents with a "one-stop shop" for family services.

New Democrats are committed to invest more than \$2 B over 4 years to address the issue.

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?

New Democrats are committed to making post-secondary education more affordable and will take the following steps to address issues in this area by:

- Keeping tuition fees affordable by working with provinces and territories to implement the NDP's *Post-Secondary Education Act* to guarantee stable funding and ensure all Canadians have access to post secondary education;
- Providing a \$800 million yearly transfer to the provinces and territories to lower tuition fees;
- Increase funding to the Canada Student Grants Program by \$200 million a year, targeting accessibility for disabled, Aboriginal and low-income students, in particular;
- Raising the education tax credit from \$4,800 per year to \$5,760 per year to help with increasing education costs;
- Investing in training of 1,200 new doctors over the next 10 years, adding 6,000 new training spaces for nurses over six years and substantially increasing the number of training spaces for other health professionals in order to address the shortage of doctors, nurses and other health care professionals;
- Making life more affordable to students by legislating a cap on credit card interest rates (of prime

- plus 5%) that often target young people;
- Establishing programs aimed at recruiting and supporting low-income, rural and aboriginal medical students, in collaboration with the provinces and territories

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?**

New Democrats have been strong advocates of women rights in Canada. New Democrats lead by example - 40% of candidates nominated by New Democrats in the 2011 federal election are women. New Democrats are committed to take the following steps to address the rights of women by:

- reversing Stephen Harper's attacks on pay equity and immediately implementing the recommendations of the 2004 Pay Equity Task Force to establish a pro-active pay equity regime enshrined in law;
- restoring funding to women's programs and organizations cut by Stephen Harper, including the Court Challenges Program;
- working with provinces and territories to expand access to shelter and transition houses to support women fleeing violence;
- supporting a coordinated federal response to violence against Aboriginal women, led by Aboriginal communities, and including the ongoing funding of Aboriginal women's organizations;
- making Status of Women Canada a full ministry responsible for advancing women's rights, including a mandate for advocacy and research in line with Canada's international obligations;
- supporting the work of the new UN Women's Agency.

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?**

New Democrats strongly believe that current representation in the House of Commons does not reflect views of Canadian society. We also observe senators using the system for partisan ends and at tax payers' expense.

Jack Layton and New Democrats will propose electoral reform to ensure Parliament reflects the political preferences of Canadians. To this end we will propose a new, more democratic voting system that

preserves the connection between MPs and their constituents, while ensuring parties are represented in Parliament in better proportion to how Canadians voted. Your vote will always count.

We will propose the abolition of the Senate. All Canadian provincial legislatures have done this many years ago, abolishing their un-elected second chambers to the benefit of democracy.

In the meantime, to limit Senate abuses, we will bar failed candidates and party insiders from being appointed to the Senate, and ban senators from fundraising for political parties.

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?

New Democrats will provide strong federal leadership in addressing environmental issues by working cooperatively with the provincial, territorial and aboriginal governments, non-governmental organizations, scientists, all business sectors, the international community and other interests.

New Democrats will undertake the following steps to deal with climate change issues:

- re-introduce legislation to ensure that Canada meets the long-term target of reducing our greenhouse gas emissions to a level 80 per cent below that of 1990 by the year 2050, and will establish interim targets for the period 2015-2045;
- put a price on carbon through a cap-and-trade system, which will establish hard emissions limits for Canada's biggest polluters to ensure companies pay their environmental bills and to create an incentive for emissions reductions;
- work closely with the Obama administration in Washington to ensure a coordinated response to climate change, and we will seek at every opportunity to advance an integrated continental cap-and-trade system that ensures a level economic playing field for North American businesses;
- establish effective programs to help Canadian communities deal with the unfolding impacts of a warming planet, as well as live up to our international obligations to assist developing countries in mitigating and adapting to climate change.
- end subsidies for fossil fuel companies and redirect revenues raised through the auctioning of emissions permits equitably across Canada into investments in green technologies, business and household energy conservation, public transit, support to renewable energy development, and transitioning workers to the green economy;
- meet Canada's G-20 commitment to cut subsidies to non-renewable energy and end the federal bias towards non-renewable energy production.

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 NDP strongly supports a fair trade model that benefits the citizens of Canada, not simply the interests of wealthy multinational corporations. We believe that global trade should serve the interests of people, create jobs and contribute to the economic growth of the country.

New Democrats support fair trade negotiations that are open and transparent, where the voices of Canadian citizens can be heard and the government held accountable. More specifically, we need to make sure that trade negotiations take into consideration human rights and democracy, and the rights of workers, farmers, Aboriginal peoples, and the poor.

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?**

New Democrats are committed to get Canada on track to fulfilling our longstanding commitment to increase our Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) budget to 0.7 per cent of GDP with an immediate increase of \$500 million and further increases each year; we worked very hard to make poverty reduction the criterion for CIDA's aid and development programs, and; we have also called for Canada to take a leadership role in a multilateral effort to establish global financial levy on speculative capital flows, with the revenues going to achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and climate adaptation in the South.