



NDP Responds

Note: We have yet to release our full platform but here are the answers to date outlining our commitments.

Confederation of Canadian Unions

Economics

1. *The OCED reports that the richest 1% of income earners received almost 37% of all income growth in the last three decades. According to Statistics Canada, economic inequality has been on the rise since the 1970s, and as of 2012, the richest 10% of Canadians owned almost 50% of all wealth. How will your party reverse this trend and reduce the growing levels of economic inequality in Canada?*

NDP Response: An NDP government will implement a number of measures and introduce legislation that together will help reduce growing economic inequality. These include our commitments to:

- Boost the Working Income Tax Benefit;
- Enact the *Affordable Housing Act* that will ensure secure, adequate, accessible and affordable housing;
- Provide incentives for the construction of 10,000 affordable and market rental housing units;
- Renew cooperative housing operating agreements that are set to expire and invest over \$2 billion in coops and social housing;
- Increase minimum wage to \$15 per hour at the federal level;
- Implement quality affordable childcare where parents pay no more than \$15 a day;
- Scrap the Conservatives' \$2 billion income splitting proposal;
- Close the stock option tax loopholes for wealthy CEOs.

2. *Federal corporate taxes have almost been cut in half during the past twenty 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?*

NDP Response: An NDP government under Tom Mulcair will increase the federal corporate tax rate from 15% to 17%.

We will also close the stock option loophole for CEO's and senior executives. This will raise approximately \$500 million that will be used to reduce family and child poverty.

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?*

NDP Response: The NDP supports foreign investment that promotes economic growth, strong communities and harmonious labour relations, respects our environment and promotes technology transfers. We support strengthening the broken *Investment Canada Act* (ICA) to ensure greater transparency and clear criteria to examine the net benefit to Canada of any foreign takeovers. We have called for a full review of the ICA, including allowing input from stakeholders who may be affected by the deal.

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 or revise in order to create a climate that is easier for unions to organize?*

NDP Response: An NDP government will immediately undo the damage of the vicious anti-labour legislation introduced by the Conservative government. We will repeal Bills C-377 and C-525.

An NDP government will respect the right of Canadian workers to free and fair collective bargaining and will strengthen the laws that protect that right. An NDP government will pass the anti-scab legislation that has been blocked by both the Liberals and Conservatives.

5. *While corporate profits, productivity and GDP have all increased fairly consistently during the past thirty years, Statistics Canada reports that real median family income is about the same today as it was in 1980. Why do you think this has happened, and what does your party propose to change the situation?*

NDP Response: An NDP government under Tom Mulcair will scrap the Conservatives \$2 billion income-splitting measures and re-invest these funds in programs that help all Canadians.

An NDP government will also require big banks and large corporations to implement changes that include:

- Capping ATM fees at 50 cents per transaction
- Addressing unfair fees on everyday transactions

6. *Throughout Canada, 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?*

NDP Response: An NDP government will immediately undo the damage of the vicious anti-labour legislation imposed by the Conservative government. We will repeal Bills C-377 and C-525. An NDP government will respect the right of Canadian workers to free and fair collective bargaining and will strengthen the laws that protect that right. An NDP government will pass anti-scab legislation that has been blocked by both the Liberals and Conservatives.

Rather than protecting collective bargaining rights, the Liberals have even attacked the NDP for the fact that their workers are members of a union.

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?*

NDP Response: The NDP has a longstanding commitment to a federal poverty reduction strategy. We are the only party to have proposed legislation to create such a strategy—legislation that was developed in consultation with low-income and anti-poverty groups.

An NDP government under Tom Mulcair will close corporate tax loopholes that will bring in \$500 million, these funds will be used to directly reduce family and child poverty. We will use these funds to increase the National Child Benefit Supplement and the Working Income Tax Benefit.

We will also restore the federal minimum wage and progressively raise it to \$15 an hour.

We will work with the provinces, territories and indigenous communities to create or maintain a million affordable, quality childcare places at a cost of no more than \$15 a day.

Addressing the crisis in affordable housing and homelessness will be a priority for an NDP Government. Under Tom Mulcair, an NDP government will enact the *Affordable Housing Act* to ensure secure, accessible, adequate and affordable housing. The bill will recognize housing as a right and lead to the development of a national housing strategy. An NDP government will partner with municipalities, provinces and First Nations communities to restore long-term stable investments in affordable housing. An NDP government will renew the federal housing agreements abandoned by the Harper government and will introduce incentives for the construction of 10,000 new rental housing. We will renew co-operative housing agreements that are set to expire and invest over \$2 billion in co-ops and social housing by 2020.

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, \$36 billion worth of cutbacks to the system will take effect over the next decade. What policies will your party implement to ensure that health care in Canada is properly funded and remains under public control?*

NDP Response: The 2004 Health Accord, finally killed outright by the Harper government, presented a vehicle whereby all levels of government could collaborate in making needed changes. A New Democratic government will breathe life back into these important initiatives through a renewed collaborative approach to federal/provincial/territorial relationships with visionary federal leadership. We will initiate discussions toward a new health accord. We have pledged to reverse cuts to health transfers that would remove billions of federal dollars out of our future health services.

Our top priorities will be improved access to primary, long-term and home care, improving prescription drug coverage, better mental health services and measure to prevent long-term illnesses that affect millions of Canadians.

Specific commitments include:

- Helping more Canadians access a family doctor and primary care team by providing \$300 million to support building 200 more primary health clinics and \$200 million to help recruit 7,000 doctors, nurse practitioners and other health care providers
- \$2.6 billion in new funding for universal public drug coverage, phased in over 4 years. This has the potential to generate up to \$3 billion in savings at the provincial level.
- \$80 million over 4 years to improve federal/provincial capacity for drug reviews, listings, joint pricing negotiations and improve safety.
- Improving access to mental health care services for children and youth by providing \$100 million for a Mental Health Innovation Fund for children and youth.
- Investing \$1.8 billion over 4 years to help provinces and territories improve senior care including stronger home care, more nursing home beds and better palliative end-of-life care. This new funding will help expand home care to 41,000 more seniors, help establish 5,000 more nursing home beds and provide \$30 million for palliative care.
- A commitment to work with provinces to establish a national Alzheimer's and Dementia Strategy. An NDP government will dedicate \$40 million over the next 4 years to support a strategy and help provinces and territories improve database and research,

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?*

NDP Response: An NDP government under Tom Mulcair will work with provinces, territories and indigenous communities to deliver a Canada-wide early childhood education and childcare program. We'll create or maintain a million quality childcare spaces in Canada—where parents pay no more than \$15 a day.

10. *Canada's total student loan debt is reaching an incredible \$16 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?*

NDP Response: *There will be a statement forthcoming in the NDP platform*

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?*

NDP Response: In the 41st Parliament, the NDP had the highest proportion of women of any caucus in Canadian history. As 43% of our nominated candidates so far are women, we are also on track to elect a record number of women this year. With the support of such strong female representation in our caucus, the NDP will move quickly to undo the damage done by the Harper government and to introduce important policies to improve the lives of Canadian women.

One of the most critical priorities facing women today is the exorbitant cost of childcare. Too many women are paying more for their childcare than for their mortgage, and other women are prevented from joining the labour force because of the exorbitant cost of childcare. Tom Mulcair's affordable childcare plan will create or maintain one million childcare spaces at a cost of no more than \$15 a day, helping families to pay for childcare fees without breaking the bank.

Another one of the most urgent priorities is to put an end to the violence experienced by too many women and girls. The Harper government has shamefully refused to take action to identify and prevent the root causes of the disproportional violence experienced by indigenous women and girls, but an NDP government will call an inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women within our first 100 days in office. We will also work with women's groups and indigenous organizations to establish a comprehensive national action plan to end violence against women and girls, with dedicated funding and benchmarks.

Economic security is also a pressing priority for Canadian women. Women are more likely to live in poverty and more likely to be working in precarious or part-time jobs. On average, they earn only 74% of the wages paid to men. An NDP government will also restore the federal minimum wage and progressively raise it to \$15 an hour, helping to ensure that more workers receive a living wage. We will restore the age of eligibility for Old Age Security to 65, preventing senior women from falling into poverty, and we will boost the National Child Benefit Supplement and the Working Income Tax Benefit, helping families to rise out of poverty. The NDP's plan for affordable housing will also ensure that more women are able to access adequate, appropriate and affordable housing.

Across the country, not all women have access to the same standard of safe, fully-funded sexual and reproductive health services. The NDP will reverse the Conservative cuts to healthcare and enforce the *Canada Health Act* to ensure that all women have access to the services they need, including abortion services.

Canadian women are underrepresented in Parliament and in leadership positions in the public and private sector. An NDP government will introduce proportional representation, which has been shown in other countries to boost the number of female representatives. We will make sure that all legislation introduced in Parliament is analyzed through a gender-based lens. The NDP will also lead by example, by ensuring that half of all government appointees to crown corporations and government agencies are women. We will restore the mandate of Status of Women Canada to advance the equality of women and girls.

The NDP has a long, proud history of fighting for women's equality and we will continue to fight to improve the lives of Canadian women and girls in government.

12. Employment Insurance (EI) has been cut and made more difficult to access by federal governments during the last two decades. What will your government do to restore EI benefits and ensure that the program is available to Canadians searching for work when they need it?

NDP Response: Under the Conservatives, fewer than 4 in 10 unemployed Canadians receive regular EI benefits when they need them. The NDP wants to ensure that more Canadians and middle-class families can access the support they need if they lose their jobs, need to take parental leave, become ill or need to care for a loved one. An NDP government will roll back the Conservatives' reckless reform that will make it harder for small seasonal businesses to keep their skilled and experienced workers. The NDP would also introduce legislation to ensure EI premiums can never be stolen again.

There will be additional information included in the platform

Democracy

13. 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 2011 federal election, to having only one seat in the House of Commons. Where does your party stand on reforming Canada's electoral system to one based on proportional representation?

NDP Response: Tom Mulcair is committed to making 2015 the last unfair election. The NDP will introduce a system of mixed member proportional representation during its first term in office. The NDP has a clear, principled position: we want Senate abolition. It's wrong to have this unelected, unaccountable body making laws for Canadians. The NDP will repeal Harper's *Unfair Elections Act*.

14. It is the view of the Confederation of Canadian Unions that Bill C-51 unnecessarily violates the rights and freedoms of Canadians and is based on the politics of fear and not tangible security requirements. Will your government repeal Bill C-51?

NDP Response: Tom Mulcair and the NDP voted against Bill C-51, and we're the only party that will repeal it.

International Issues

15. *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?*

NDP Response: Under Tom Mulcair an NDP government will:

- Meet our international climate change obligations through a transition to a clean economy;
- Reduce Canada's reliance on fossil fuels and support energy efficiency and conservation;
- Implement a cap-and-trade system that puts a price on carbon;
- Kick-start our clean energy sector to make Canada a global market leader;
- Eliminate the Conservatives' billion-dollar subsidies to the fossil fuel industry;
- Restore Canada's international reputation on the environment;
- Attend the climate meeting in Paris this November with climate change targets and a plan;
- Provide stable, predictable investments in public transit to help Canadian cities contribute to reducing emissions.

16. *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? Will you commit to enforceable workers' rights standards as a condition in global trade agreements?*

NDP Response: The NDP believes in trade agreements that benefit Canadian families and communities in the long term. We believe that when we sign an economic agreement with a country, one of the objectives should be to improve and elevate their environmental, labour and human-rights standards. The NDP voted against the Canada-Colombia Free trade Agreement.

17. *The Investor-State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) provisions of EU-Canada Comprehensive and Economic Trade Agreement (CETA) clearly favour investor protection over sovereignty. Will your party oppose these kinds of ISDS provisions contained in CETA and other trade and investment agreements?*

NDP Response: New Democrats are not in favor of the ISDS provisions included in CETA. The NDP believes Canada and Europe have fair, impartial judicial systems that are perfectly adequate to protect investors. We also believe that the State's right to legislate in the public interest should be protected in all trade and investment agreements and not be superseded by the interests of a corporation.

18. *Canada currently provides only 0.24% of its Gross National Income (GNI) to foreign aid, putting us 14th out of 23 donor countries in the OECD. 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 commitment of providing 0.7% of its GNI to foreign aid?*

NDP Response: An NDP government under Tom Mulcair will reverse decades of Liberal and Conservative cuts to global aid and set a long-term timetable to meet Canada's commitment to the UN global aid target of 0.7% of GDP.

19. *Although Canada was a founding member of the International Labour Organization (ILO) and has been active in the ILO since 1919, it has yet to ratify all of the core conventions and recommendations of the organization, and its record on properly implementing those ratified conventions is unimpressive. Will your Government ratify and fully implement all of the core conventions and recommendations of the International Labour Organization?*

NDP Response: Under the Conservatives, Canada's record on labour rights is shameful, including Canada's failure to ratify core conventions of the ILO with regard to collective bargaining and the minimum age of labour. The Supreme Court of Canada has recognized the right to collective bargaining as a charter protected right. Canada's signature on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child also creates an obligation for us to protect children from economic exploitation. It is time for Canada to ratify these conventions and to implement them in keeping with our commitment to tripartite consultation with provinces and territories, employers and workers.