



Confederation of Canadian Unions

Economics

1. The OECD reports that the richest 1 percent of income earners received almost 37 percent 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 percent of Canadians owned almost 50 percent of all wealth. How will your party reverse this trend and reduce the growing levels of economic inequality in Canada?

Despite the growing number of two-income households, Canadian families are finding it harder and harder to make ends meet. Green Party programs and policies will reduce income inequality, and ensure all Canadians have the opportunity to prosper.

We will phase-in a national Guaranteed Livable Income, to ensure that no person's income falls below what is necessary for health, life and dignity. Through the Council of Canadian Governments, we will work with the other levels of government whose inadequate poverty band-aid solutions (such as welfare, disability programs) can be rolled up in order to fund Guaranteed Livable Income.

Providing our most at-risk citizens with the resources they need to make ends meet greatly reduces the burden on our emergency and social services, our health care and criminal justice systems – saving Canadian taxpayers money and empowering all Canadians to overcome periods of hardship. As an immediate first step, the Green Party would implement a federal minimum wage of \$15 an hour. By providing a cheque to every Canadian over 18, the carbon fee and dividend system will also assist in providing help to those who need it most.

We will implement a National Housing Strategy based on Housing First principles. Housing First is a proven, recovery-oriented approach that centres on quickly moving people experiencing homelessness into independent, permanent housing, and then providing additional supports and services as needed. This strategy will guarantee dignity and support for Canadians at the margins of our society, and will help address homelessness while at the same time reducing the burden on our emergency and health services.

2. Federal corporate taxes have almost been cut in half during the past fifteen years by Liberal and Conservative governments, supposedly to “create jobs”. 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 will establish a Canadian Sustainable Generations Fund to invest in Canadian jobs, education, infrastructure, small-business, and communities. We will capitalize this fund by expanding revenue through returning corporate tax rates on large corporations to the 2009 level (19 percent), eliminating tax havens and tax credits used by the extremely wealthy, taxing pollution and waste, increasing the efficiency of our tax system, and working with provinces to increase resource extraction royalties. The time has come to redesign our tax system for the 21st century economy. As a starting point, in line with fundamental principles of fairness, efficiency and equity, we will eliminate the exemptions, special cases and tax breaks for favoured interests. These boutique tax cuts have complicated our tax code, needlessly increasing complexity. We must ensure the tax system helps - not hinders - ordinary Canadians.

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?

In recent years, more and more of Canada’s major companies, and control over natural resources, have been bought out by foreign-owned corporations. This is not in the best interest of Canadians.

Green Party MPs will sponsor and support 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. Key strategic resources like energy, communications, transportation, and water should be controlled by Canadian-owned or publicly owned corporations.

We will fight to stop all movement towards Canada becoming a resource colony for multinational corporations.



Labour

4. Statistics Canada reports that on average, unionized workers enjoy 29 percent 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?

Greens believe in the rights of workers to organize and in the free collective bargaining process. Labour rights are human rights.

A strong economy needs a workforce with protected rights. Union members have better job security, higher wages, better health care benefits, and better protection against unfair labour practices. Union members are then able to pay taxes, put money back into the economy, and live healthier lives. That means that union members are able to help pay for public services and also to help grow their local economies. All people in a society, not just union members, benefit from a unionized workforce. We will work to educate the public and employers about the benefits of unionization.

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?

Canadians are feeling more squeezed economically than ever before. Despite a shift to two-income households, the current generation of young families faces increasing costs for housing, education, and childcare, and unprecedented household debt. For the first time in our history, older Canadians are saying that their children will not enjoy the same standard of living as they did at the same age.

While profits, rise, too many Canadians are hurting. As Elizabeth May [said](#) in the House of Commons: “We keep hearing the mantra that cutting corporate tax rates, so that Canada now has the lowest corporate tax rate in the OECD, is helping the job creators. However, we are also seeing that our job creation rate is very low. Youth unemployment is 14 percent.”

Meanwhile, our political leaders repeat the dogma that government cupboards are bare. Deep cuts in the tax rate for large corporations have led to a hoarding of cash in big business bank accounts. The former Governor of the Bank of Canada called it “dead money” – and there’s a lot of it. Over \$600 billion, equivalent to 32 percent of our GDP, is held in corporate bank accounts – not being re-invested, not working at all. Dead money. Old-line parties have ignored places to fund needed programs and instead claim there is no new money for health care services, education, pensions, infrastructure, public safety, or scientific research.

We need to raise the corporate tax rate to 19 percent to make sure that corporations pay their fare share. We need to challenge inequality wherever we see it. We need to return to a politics of compassion, not of favours to corporations and deregulation.



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?

There is a growing movement in Canada towards disabling unions and violating their right to represent their members in a collective fashion. In 2013, the Conservative Party of Canada passed a resolution at its convention that supported Right to Work. The Harper Conservatives have passed a number of bills that represent an unacceptable new approach to labour relations. They all dangerously tip the balance in the employer's favour.

The Green Party will fight to repeal recent laws that attack free and fair collective bargaining, including Bills C-4, C-59, C-377, and C-525.

In a series of landmark rulings this year, the Supreme Court told Canada what unions have been saying for years: labour rights are human rights. The Harper Conservatives have made attacks on collective bargaining a consistent part of their legislative agenda. The Green Party fought all these anti-union initiatives and will continue to fight for the rights of Canadian workers. As Justice Abella wrote in *Saskatchewan Federation of Labour v. Saskatchewan*: "Clearly the arc bends increasingly towards workplace justice."

We will fight to protect the rights of unions to organize and will fight any efforts to introduce Right to Work legislation 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?

Though child poverty is prevalent, it need not be permanent. In order to eradicate child poverty, we need to ensure parents have access to good jobs, social support, child care, and affordable housing, to name but a few factors. The House of Commons reaffirmed the commitment to end child poverty in February 2015; we need concrete multi-partisan action to address this issue. We cannot let our children's well-being become a partisan issue.

The Green Party has a series of proposals that we hope all parties will adopt to address child poverty. We need an ambitious and comprehensive program that addresses the multifaceted nature of poverty in Canada, and to recommit to a fair, progressive, and robust social safety net.

We will establish:

- A Guaranteed Livable Income to ensure no one falls below the poverty line;
- A national housing strategy to ensure every Canadian and their family has access to adequate housing;
- Universal child care;



- All the “Calls to Action” of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission that are within federal jurisdiction;
- The landmark Kelowna Accord, and the corresponding \$5.1 billion commitment, to improve education, housing, health care, employment, and living conditions for Aboriginal peoples in Canada;
- A federally funded, community-guided school lunch programs across Canada; and
- An independent Commissioner for Children and Youth to stand up for the needs of children and youth and develop new policies.

As one of the richest countries in the world, there is no excuse for Canada’s failure to eradicate child poverty in our country.

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?

The federal government’s decision to change the federal funding formula for health care to a yearly lump-sum, equal per-capita cash transfer to provinces was much more than a simple financial adjustment. By turning health care into a mere accounting entry in the national budget, the federal government made it clear that Ottawa will no longer engage with the provinces to reform and improve our health care system as it has done in the past. In addition to reducing federal transfers by \$36 billion over 10 years, the Harper Conservatives have indicated an unwillingness to meaningfully engage with the provinces on health care. Funding must be stable and predictable, but it must also be based on an understanding of the unique needs of every demographic in every corner of the country. With proper dialogue and cooperation, this is possible. It is not even necessarily more expensive, as funding coordination will ensure that no money is wasted.

The Green Party of Canada is committed to providing strong federal funding in support of health care. We believe the federal government should fund at least 25 percent of public health care budgets. We will re-negotiate the Canada Health Accord and restore federal investment to support a truly universal public health care system. Green MPs will advocate for increased funding to hire and train more doctors and nurses, purchase new diagnostic equipment, expand long-term residential and home care, and for health human resources.

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?

We will work with the provinces, territories and Indigenous communities to establish accessible, convenient, enriched and affordable child care spaces for any Canadian family that seeks it. We will support women to re-enter the workforce whenever they choose after having children. The



Green Party believes that workplace childcare has many advantages – enhanced parenting time and access to children through the work day, extension of breast-feeding opportunities, improved employee productivity, and improving the convenience of public transport when parents and kids share their morning destination. Tax breaks to employers for the creation of child care spaces is one tool among many we will use to ensure that families have the spaces they need.

Several provinces have gone it alone in designing innovative programs that work for their populations. Quebec has \$7 a day daycare (now on a sliding scale up to \$20 a day depending on income). Ontario is moving towards full day kindergarten for four and five year olds. We will ramp up to \$1 billion a year to support existing and new programs that would be cost shared with the provinces. In addition, we support phasing out the Universal Child Care Benefit (UCCB) and allocating the funds to federal support for a substantial increase in the number of regulated affordable child care spaces. (The net cost of the UCCB will be approximately \$6.7 billion by 2017-2018.) Among other things, the Green Party goal is to negotiate with the provinces and territories to ensure that Canada collectively provides regulated child care spaces for 70 percent of children age six or younger with working parents, instead of the mere 22.5 percent provided now.

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?

The Green Party believe that it's time to break the status quo on education in Canada and abolish tuition fees for college, university and skills training programs.

Whether Germany, Austria, Norway, Sweden, or Finland, many of the world's most successful economies have proven that expanding the public education system to include post-secondary increases prosperity, equality, productivity, and economic competitiveness.

We will start investing in Canada's future by abolishing tuition fees for students without adequate financial means, including removing the inadequate two percent annual cap on increased funding for post secondary education for all First Nations and Inuit students. Through consultation and collaboration with provincial governments and universities and colleges, by 2020 we will abolish tuition fees for post-secondary education and skills training for Canadians, guaranteeing that income is never a barrier for qualified students. It is widely recognized that Canada's success depends on an educated population, yet we burden youth with tens of thousands of dollars in student debt.

As our plan to abolish tuition fees is being phased in, we will invest in the success of current students, jumpstart the Canadian economy, and give our graduates a hand-up by implementing a debt-forgiveness program. Our plan will eliminate any existing or future student federal debt above \$10,000. We will abolish charging interest on new student loans and will increase available funding for bursaries.



11. Although there have been advances towards greater gender equity in Canada, there is still much work to be done. Women only make 75 percent 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 percent 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?

It is a black mark against Canada that, in 2015, Canadian women earn, on average, \$8,000 less per year than their male counterparts for doing the same jobs. We will fight to end gender-based discrimination in the workplace and in Canadian society at large, and ensure that Canada eliminates the gender wage gap once and for all.

It is shameful that Canada has no comprehensive strategy to address violence against women, when the majority of Canadian women and girls are victims of violence at some point in their lives. The Green Party supports a National Action Plan on Violence Against Women, which must:

- Bring together all levels of government and stakeholders to develop a strategy;
- Educate the public about violence against women;
- Recognize the unique needs and risk factors for Indigenous women;
- Provide increased funding for women's shelters and sexual assault support centres;
- Ensure appropriate services for women and children impacted by domestic violence;
- Revise laws to increase penalties for domestic violence, and support access to restorative justice processes for Indigenous Peoples;
- Establish a GLI, to ensure no woman is without the means to flee domestic violence; and
- Establish a National Housing Strategy to end homelessness.

With a National Action Plan on Violence Against Women, we can ensure victims and survivors are supported as we work to end gender-based violence entirely.

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?

The Green Party will strengthen those aspects of EI that have been eroded over the past decades, and ensure that the program provides meaningful assistance to Canadians in need, including those living in rural areas and working in seasonal industries. The Harper Conservatives' cuts to EI service providers and changes to the legislative and policy framework surrounding EI have greatly diminished the program's effectiveness. They have unjustly required workers to seek out jobs with longer commute times and lower wages than their jobs that have ended. They also created different classes of workers by penalizing those who



frequently or repeatedly access their earned benefits. These changes are especially punitive to those working in seasonal industries, and those living in rural and remote communities.

The Conservatives' cutbacks to Service Canada have caused unacceptable processing delays that have left thousands of Canadians waiting to access the benefits to which they are entitled. Local centres must be adequately staffed to eliminate excessive wait times and unnecessary difficulties when filing claims. To eliminate these delays and ensure that benefits are delivered in a timely manner, the Green Party will re-establish local processing centres for EI claims.

After paying into EI for years, recently unemployed Canadians are finding it far too difficult to access the benefits to which they are entitled. Changes made by previous governments to restrict access to EI are both unjust and short-sighted. Expanding the EI system is both a sensible economic measure and a matter of equity. EI is especially effective in stimulating the economy; every dollar spent keeping unemployed workers from slipping into poverty generates \$1.60 in economic growth. Furthermore, expanding EI coverage will not require finding new money. The EI system has built up a healthy fund.

Perhaps most egregious is the fact that, though the Supreme Court has ruled that the government cannot turn the EI funds into a tax grab, the Conservatives have continued to use the EI surplus to help them balance their books. As part of this practice, they have raised EI premiums to add to their own revenue. The Green Party recognizes that EI money should be used to help Canadians who have contributed to the program, not to fund government spending. Green MPs will work to ensure that money paid into the EI Fund is used only to pay for EI benefits and other spending authorized under the Employment Insurance Act.

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?

Our current voting system is outdated. It is the only voting system that allows a minority of the votes to elect a majority government - with 100 percent of the power. It makes voters feel as if their vote just doesn't count. It is time to replace it. Our promise is to replace the first-past-the-post system with a form of proportional representation within the first year of the next Parliament. We will determine the form of proportional representation best suited to Canada through extensive public consultation by an all-party committee.

Many asked what the impact of a single Green MP could do in the House of Commons - Elizabeth May has shown the power that one legislator can have in improving the tenor and substance of our national dialogue. Our hope is that soon more Green MPs will join her to restore a Canada that works together.



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?

The Green Party will immediately repeal Bill C-51. Green Party Leader Elizabeth May was the first MP and party leader to stand against Bill C-51, and the first to call for its repeal. Bill C-51 will not make Canadians safer. It will do the opposite.

According to security experts, changing CSIS from an intelligence gathering service into a secret police force empowered to “disrupt threats” could well lead to the kind of interagency confusion that allowed the Air India attack in 1984 to happen. We will work to end the intolerable mass surveillance of Canadians by our security organizations. We need real civilian oversight of our security apparatuses, not just review after the fact. We need to stop online surveillance and warrantless disclosure and their mass violation of Section 8 of the Charter: the right to be secure against unreasonable search or seizure.

The RCMP should disrupt threats, CSIS should gather intelligence, and both need oversight. Bill C-51 cannot be fixed. It must be repealed in its entirety. We need to go back to the drawing board and think more deeply about what needs to be done to protect the security of Canada.

We believe that digital rights are human rights. As the web grows and evolves, we will face new legislative and regulatory challenges. We need politicians who are willing to defend those rights, stand up for users and passionately advocate for an Internet that is open and free, where Canadians have a right to privacy.

We will stand up for Canadians' privacy. We will end mass surveillance. We will repeal Bill C-51.

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?

Climate change is the biggest challenge Canada has ever faced. The consequences of failing to address it will be catastrophic, yet the current government has obstructed domestic and international action at every turn. Canada fought against the original G7 pledge for a decarbonized economy by 2050 - the target is now 2100 - and our domestic targets are not only weak, sadly they are also unreachable under the Harper Conservatives current policies.

The Green Party will take swift and concrete action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and return Canada to a global leadership role in the fight against climate change. Canada should commit to cut greenhouse gas emissions by at least 40 percent below 2005 levels by 2025. Our long-term target is to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050, with further cuts to greenhouse gas emissions of at least 80 percent, compared to 1990. To accomplish these reductions, we will establish a revenue-neutral Carbon Fee and Dividend system to phase out carbon emissions and promote renewable energy. Carbon Fee and Dividend will put a clear price on carbon



pollution, and every dollar generated by the carbon fee will be returned to Canadians through an equal, per-capita dividend payment.

The Green Party also supports making our fair share of global contributions to the Green Climate Fund. Our goal should be an annual commitment of \$500 million each year beginning in 2016. Finally, we will cancel the \$1.3 billion dollar annual subsidy to fossil fuel companies that distort the market.

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?

Much like the Canada-Honduras trade agreement recently signed by the Harper Conservatives, it is unconscionable that Canada would make trade deals in the interests of Canadian mining companies with flagrant disregard for human rights, democracy and the rights of workers, farmers Aboriginal peoples and the poor. As Elizabeth May said of that deal in the House:

“This trade deal is with a country that has just had a populist democratic leader knocked out by a coup. It has a military regime that suppresses human rights, indigenous rights, and labour rights, but we would rush to an agreement that would only benefit certain parts of Canada.

I love my country, but an agreement like this would support Canadian mining companies' taking advantage of indigenous rights in other countries. [...] This agreement would work against the interests of equity, democracy, civil society, and human rights in Honduras.”

The Green Party is committed to promoting economic trade but only trade that protects and enhances local quality of life and builds local economies.

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?

While there are many damaging aspects of CETA, the TPP, and other trade and investment agreements, Greens are most concerned about the inclusion of dangerous investor state provisions. The Green Party does not support deals that elevate corporate interest over the public interest by allowing corporations to sue governments over laws that reduce their profits such as those that strengthen environmental, labour and consumer regulations. Investor state provisions are anti-democratic and costly for taxpayers. Canadians have already had to pay hundreds of millions in damages under NAFTA, and could be on the hook for another \$6 billion. According to statistics from the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development



(UNCTAD), Canada is one of the most sued countries in the world under these investor state agreements. Other countries have been sued under Investor State agreements for putting health warnings on cigarette packs, increasing the minimum wage, protecting public health, banning nuclear energy and fracking and for an even wider range of environmental policies.

We were the only party to oppose the Canada-Korea Free Trade Agreement in the House of Commons and we will continue to oppose all trade deals that forfeit Canadian sovereignty. Not only do these trade deals expose Canada to frivolous suits, as Elizabeth May [pointed out](#) in the House debate on that agreement, the Harper Conservative's trade deals lock in our endemic trade deficit rather than taking concrete steps to reduce it.

18. Canada currently provides only 0.24 percent 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 percent 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 percent of its GNI to foreign aid?

Nearly half of the world's population lives in absolute poverty (less than \$2 USD per day) and 1.2 billion people live on less than \$1 USD. Poverty is the single largest determinant of ill health. Each day, an estimated 50,000 people die from poverty-related causes, and one child dies every three seconds. Four decades ago, Canada committed to eliminating global poverty, and we set a target of spending 0.7 percent of our GNI on official development assistance (ODA). We reaffirmed this target in 1992, but we have never come close to meeting our goal. In 2000, Canada and all UN members set eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to achieve by 2015. The first goal is "to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger."

As you point out, Canada's level of ODA is now one of the lowest of the contributing donor nations. The Green Party supports meeting a target of 0.7 percent of GNI for ODA and believes it can be reached in the next decade through strategic poverty reduction planning.

A Green government will also work with our global partners to establish clear paths to meet our Sustainable Development Goals. The Green Party was a vocal advocate for placing the MDGs at the centre of Canadian diplomatic and international efforts and we believe that we must do the same with our new targets.

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?

In 2012, Elizabeth May seconded Bill C-378, An Act to prohibit sweatshop labour goods, in accordance with labour standard recognized by the International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions and protocols. Worker's rights are human rights and the Green Party is dedicated to ratifying and fully implementing all of the core conventions and recommendations of the ILO.

