

NDP Response: Confederation of Canadian Unions

- 1. According to Statistics Canada, economic inequality has been on the rise since the 1970s, and the richest 10% of Canadians currently own almost 50% of the country's total wealth. How will your party reverse this trend and reduce the growing levels of economic inequality in Canada?**

For years Liberals and Conservatives have let the wealthiest corporations and the rich get further and further ahead, while everyday families have fallen further and further behind. Unlike Liberals and Conservatives, we're in it for you and we'll ensure that those who can afford it most are contributing their fair share. A New Democrat government will increase the capital gains inclusion rate to 75 percent, boost the top marginal tax rate and bring in a one percent wealth tax on wealth over \$20 million. By asking those at the top to pay their fair share we can ensure that every single Canadian has access to affordable childcare, head-to-toe health care – including pharmacare, dental care, and mental health care – and other investments that will make life more affordable for millions of everyday families from coast to coast to coast.

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

New Democrats are on the side of everyday workers and families, and unlike Liberals and Conservatives who are only in it for wealthy corporations and the rich, we're in it for you. Our New Deal for tax fairness will ensure that those who can afford it, the biggest corporations and the super wealthy, pay their fair share. We'll close tax loopholes that let big corporations off the hook from contributing to the shared public services and infrastructure that makes our communities better. We'll also roll back the Conservatives' corporate income tax cuts by three percentage points to 2010 levels, because we think that people, not profits, should always come first.

- 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?**

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New Democrats have always been on the side of workers and a New Democrat government will ensure that all Canadians and workers have a bigger say in the resource industry. In the fisheries for example, to keep the benefits of the fishery local, New Democrats will work towards a community-based terminal fishery system on the west coast. On the east coast, we'll work to protect, enshrine and enforce the government's owner-operator and fleet separation policies, while ensuring that our small craft harbours get the upgrades they need for safety and resilience to climate change. New Democrats are in it for you and we'll always be on the side of resource workers.

Labour

- 4. Statistics Canada reports that on average, unionized workers enjoy 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?**

We believe that membership in a union is the best ticket into the middle class – and it leaves workers and our entire economy better off. That's why New Democrats believe that it should be easier – not harder - to join a union that will protect your rights and ensure fair working conditions. We will defend the Rand formula, so that unions can effectively advocate for workers, and we will continue to oppose heavy-handed legislation that suspends the rights to bargain and to strike.

- 5. 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?**

Unlike Liberals and Conservatives, we don't think that union and collective bargaining are bad words, never to be talked about in public. It's thanks to collective bargaining and the labour movement that Canadians are able to enjoy so many things we take for granted: the weekend, overtime and holiday pay, the eight-hour work day – all won by workers fighting hard for our rights. New Democrats have always been on the side of everyday working people. We fought beside workers as they fought for the right to collectively bargain and we'll always fight next to you to protect those rights. Because we're on your side and we're in it for you.

Social Policy

- 6. In 1989, the House of Commons unanimously passed a motion calling for the eradication of child poverty in Canada by the year 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?**

A single child in poverty is one child too many but for over thirty years now liberal and conservative governments have stood by while the gap between the rich and everyone else has grown larger and larger. During elections, liberals have a lot of pretty words about fighting poverty but that's the only thing they ever have to offer. Words. We know that empty Liberal talk won't eliminate child poverty, but we also know that conservative cuts to services are only going to make things worse. Canadian families deserve better than inaction and broken promises, they deserve a government that's never going to stop working to eradicate poverty. Our New Deal for people will make life more affordable by investing in affordable housing and giving families a break on their rent. Our pharmacare, dental care, and child care plans will save families thousands of dollars a year. Our national school nutrition program will ensure kids are learning on full stomachs and we'll never stop working to make life better for children and families.

- 7. 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. What policies will your party implement to ensure that health care in Canada is properly funded and remains under public control?**

Quality medical services are vital for keeping Canadian families safe and healthy. But, in too many places across the country, these services are under threat from privatization and cuts. In Ontario, the Ford government has cut funding for public health, putting essential programs for disease surveillance, immunization, food and water safety, and more at risk – and the Ford government is floating changes to OHIP coverage that could violate the Canada Health Act, while opening the door to for-profit health care companies taking more and more public health dollars. The federal government cannot stand by while health care is under threat – New Democrats will always fight for public health care and stand up to privatization that costs Canadians money and undermines our public health care system.

- 8. Canada is the only country in the world with a universal health insurance system that doesn't include a national drug program. Currently, 2 million Canadians incur over \$1,000 a year in out-of-pocket expenses for prescription drugs, and one in five Canadian families can't**

even afford to fill their prescriptions because of cost. Yet Canada's parliamentary budget officer stated in 2017 that a national Pharmacare program would save \$4.2 billion every year. What steps will your party take in government to create a universal, publicly administered Pharmacare program?

Just as our party led the fight to establish universal public health care for all Canadians, we are leading the fight to expand Medicare – to include quality prescription-drug coverage for everyone, regardless of your job, where you live, your age, your health status or how much money you make. We will begin working with the provinces right away to target a late 2020 start date, with an annual federal investment of \$10 billion. That means access to necessary medicines in the same way that we have access to medical and hospital care – free at the point of care, financed by a public insurance system that covers everyone. It means that you'll need your health card – not your credit card – at the pharmacy till. And it puts an end to costly co-payments, deductibles, and premiums that cost families hundreds and even thousands a year.

9. Canada's total student loan debt is reaching an incredible \$28 billion dollars, and many governments throughout the country are cutting funding for post-secondary education. What steps will your party take to guarantee funding to Canada's colleges and universities?

Today, thanks to years of Liberal inaction and Conservative cuts, the average student with debt owes \$27,000 at the end of an undergraduate degree. That's not fair, and it's an inequality that sets young people up to fail. Our New Deal for students and families will ensure that everyone has access to high-quality post-secondary education, regardless of their income. Over the long term, this means working with the provinces and territories to cap and reduce tuition fees, and building towards making post-secondary education part of our public-education system so kids can go from kindergarten to a career without the barrier of cost. This is an important goal and we believe that with the right leadership and political will, we can get there. There are steps we can take to make education more affordable right now. Trudeau promised he'd make post-secondary education more affordable but, on his watch the federal government has taken billions on student debt interest. Unlike Liberals an NDP government would immediately end interest on student loans and significantly increase access to grants.

10. 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. What specific policies will your party propose to ensure greater gender equity and women's equality in government, business and society?

Gender equity is a fundamental value for New Democrats, and we're committed to building a Canada where no one is left behind. Right now, Canadian women make 32% less than men, and the gap is even wider for racialized women, Indigenous women, immigrant women and women living with a disability. The Liberals promised that they'd make gender equity a priority but four years later the only thing they've prioritized are their rich friends and big corporations. Canadian women deserve better than empty Liberal talk and half measures. That's why a New Democrat government will prioritize pay equity to put an end to gender-based wage discrimination, requiring employers to be transparent about pay and implementing and enforcing tough and pro-active pay equity legislation and regulations right away. We'll also invest \$10 billion in our first term to create a national affordable child care system to ensure that women are better able to participate in the workforce.

Democracy

11. 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. Where does your party stand on reforming Canada's electoral system to one based on proportional representation?

Justin Trudeau said he would fix the democratic deficit. Before being elected, he promised to deliver reform that would ensure every vote counts – and to make 2015 the very last federal election to be held under this unfair electoral system. But once in power, he broke his promise to Canadians and turned his back on progressive democratic reforms. It's time to make our voting system fairer, and actually deliver democratic reform to make sure that everyone's vote counts. A New Democrat government will bring in mixed-member proportional representation that works for Canada – and we will do it in our first mandate in government. We'll establish an independent citizen's assembly to recommend the best way to put it in place for the next election to ensure both local representation and a federal government that reflects the voters' choice of parties. Once Canadians have the opportunity to experience the new voting system and compare it to the old one, we will hold a referendum to confirm the choice.

12. Canada's ethics commissioner recently found that Justin Trudeau improperly influenced several cabinet ministers to intervene in an ongoing criminal case against Quebec-based construction company SNC-Lavalin. What specific policies will your party introduce to fight corporate corruption and influence-peddling at the federal level?

Unlike liberals and conservatives who are only in it for big corporations and the wealthy, New Democrats are in it for you and. That's why a New Democrat government will take immediate steps to boost accountability, end insider benefits and take the influence of big money out of government for good. We'll bring in tougher penalties in the Conflict of Interest Act to ensure that the abuse of public trust is treated seriously, and fully ban cash-for-access events. We will prohibit government officials from accepting donations from anyone whose private interest could be benefited by their decisions. The rule of law also has to be free from political interference. Unfortunately, the attempts to interfere in the case against SNC Lavalin have made it clear that for this liberal government, there is one set of rules for the well-connected – and another set of rules for the rest of us. A New Democrat government will immediately launch an independent public inquiry into alleged attempts by Prime Minister Trudeau's office to interfere in the former Attorney General's decision-making authority.

International Issues

13. Canada has one of the poorest environmental records in the entire western world. What policies will your party implement to reduce climate change and protect the environment? Will your party also 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?

Canada currently spends \$3.3 billion per year on oil and gas subsidies, more per capita than any other G7 country. If that wasn't enough, Justin Trudeau spent another \$4.5 billion to buy a pipeline and gave another \$1.6 billion in handouts to the oil patch. New Democrats know that public funds are best spent supporting the transition to renewable energy, rather than on profitable oil and gas companies. We will fulfill Canada's G-20 commitment to eliminate these fossil fuel subsidies and redirect these funds to low carbon initiatives. By investing in renewables instead of fossil fuels, our New Deal for climate action and good jobs will ensure that Canada is still a world leader in energy production and will create over 300,000 good new jobs in the low carbon economy.

14. Canada currently provides only 0.3% of its Gross National Income (GNI) to foreign aid, putting us 19th out of 41 donor countries in the OECD. Eight of those countries have already reached their 0.7% commitment. How will your party ensure that Canada keeps its international promises to reach its commitment of providing 0.7% of its GNI to foreign aid?

Canadians all believe that we have an important role to play in helping the world's most vulnerable. But under Justin Trudeau, Canadian international assistance spending has fallen to the lowest levels in 50 years, even as we face a migration crisis and rising global poverty. We will make different choices. A New Democrat government is committed to

boosting Canada's international development assistance, with the goal of contributing 0.7 percent of our Gross National Income to international aid. Canada must do our fair share to help achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals for 2030, including alleviating poverty, ensuring decent work, protecting the rights of Indigenous communities and supporting global peace and justice. To improve global health, Canada should contribute more to The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria to end these epidemics and support health care systems in developing countries. We'll also step up efforts to promote gender equality abroad with a strong international agenda to promote rights and security and access to education for women and girls, including ensuring that women have a seat at the peace table.

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