

2019 Federal Election **Voter's Guide**



A publication for NUPGE members

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Dear Friends,

Election 2019 is upon us, and we have some serious choices to make. Each election we have the opportunity to play a role in strengthening our democracy. We are making a decision that will affect not only you and your families but millions of others. It is a great responsibility to help determine the path our country will take.

And it's because of this responsibility that we need to make sure we are as informed as possible about what party will be the best to tackle the challenges we will be facing over the next 4 years and into the future.

Through our Constitution, the National Union of Public and General Employees (NUPGE) is non-partisan. But that doesn't mean we don't have strong opinions on the issues that affect us, our families, our work, and our environment.

Our 390,000 members across our 11 Components are guided by the deeply engrained core values they live out every day.

Fairness. Equality. Respect.

Just as the message of our Why Unions Matter campaign says, we want to make life better for everyone, not just ourselves. And come election time, it's only by understanding if, and how, each party plans to do this that we will be successful in building that better world.

In order to help you navigate the often muddy waters of election messaging, we have developed a *2019 Federal Election Voter's Guide*. We want you to have as much information as possible for when candidates come to your door, when you attend an election debate, and when you cast your ballot.

The information in the platform comparison is based on policies parties have released in the run-up to the election. On issues where a party has not yet released a policy for this election or when a policy is very different from what the party has actually done, that party's record in government and its response to government proposals have been used. Often a party's track record actually provides a better indication of what it is likely to do than promises made when it is trying to attract voters.

We need to assess our electoral options with our values, our priorities, and our convictions in mind. When we do that, our choices should become very clear.

In solidarity,



Larry Brown

About NUPGE

The National Union of Public and General Employees (NUPGE) is a family of [11 Component and 3 affiliate unions](#). Taken together we are one of the largest unions in Canada. Most of our 390,000 members work to deliver public services of every kind to the citizens of their home provinces. We also have a large and growing number of members who work for private businesses.

Our mission as a national union is to:

- monitor provincial and federal labour laws and developments
- analyse restructuring of social programs and public services
- report on and contribute to legislation affecting the workplace
- give our members a national presence through participation in the Canadian Labour Congress and internationally through Public Services International
- develop and share successful bargaining strategies with our Component unions
- contribute to a national framework of services and solidarity to benefit all Canadian workers.

A Family of Unions

The National Union is different from most unions; it has a federated structure - in effect, it's a union of unions. Individuals are members of the National Union through their membership in one of our Components. The Triennial Convention, with delegates from all Components, is the supreme governing body. Between conventions, the National Union's governing body is the National Executive Board, which comes from the leadership of all the Components.

National Officers

[Larry Brown, President](#)

[Bert Blundon, Secretary-Treasurer](#)

Autonomous Components

The National Union structure is built on the autonomy and identity of Components, while providing the benefits of belonging to a National Union. Components elect their own officers, set their dues, hire their staff and do their own bargaining. The National Union provides assistance and co-ordination, and national and international representation.

Our dues rate is 2% of component revenues. For each dollar of dues our Components collect, they now pay 2 cents to the National Union. The National Union keeps you plugged into everything, everywhere that can make a difference to what happens to you at work.

All Together Now: Key Issues

Austerity Agenda

Party	Position
Liberal	Has some elements of austerity agenda, but has history of austerity.
Conservative	Has more consistent austerity agenda and pledges to balance budget.
NDP	Supports public investment and public and social services.
Green Party	Supports some public investment and pledges to balance budget.

The Issue

Austerity is an approach aimed at reducing or eliminating government deficits. It is characterized by cuts to government spending and public services, restructuring social programs, and labour market policies that may result in unemployment and lower wages.

Following the global financial crisis (2008–2009), although the Canadian government, like others around the world, immediately responded with economic stimulus packages, they then began what is often described as a period of austerity.

Austerity agendas largely became the norm among Western countries. This was not entirely new in Canada, which had previously experienced periods of austerity as recently as the mid-1990s. It is an approach that spans political parties as well as time.

Canadians are now familiar with hearing the rhetoric of austerity: the need for “fiscal responsibility,” finding “efficiencies,” “tightening our belts,” or “balancing the budget.”

The following are some indicators of an austerity agenda: government spending cuts; privatization, marketization or reduction of public services; reducing or eliminating social policy programs like employment benefits, or health and disability supports; restructuring labour markets to enhance “flexibility,” such as reducing wages. These policies are often justified as necessary sacrifices to eliminate debt and spur economic growth.

However, many economists have questioned the argument for austerity-led growth. In fact, austerity has been shown to exacerbate existing inequities, including widening income inequality, and to disproportionately affect members of vulnerable or marginalized communities.

Below are examples illustrating the extent to which federal parties support austerity. Given it is a broad approach to policy-making, evidence may also be found across sections in this guide (e.g., Privatization).

Track Record & Campaign Promises

Liberal

- Liberal governments in the 1990s made significant cutbacks to government spending, particularly to public services, aimed at repaying debt, and reduced provincial transfer payments for health care, education, etc.

- Moved away from explicit austerity agenda in the 2015 election platform: campaigned on the need for investment, particularly in infrastructure, jobs, and innovation, which would maintain some level of deficit. Budget 2019 forecasts continued deficits.
- In government, made investments in these areas, in public services like child care, and in improvements to EI, and committed to establish national pharmacare.
- In the 2019 campaign, committed to expand direct family benefits (e.g., Canada Child Benefit) and first-time home-buyer supports.
- Supports privatization (e.g., Canada Infrastructure Bank), though it denies what it is doing is privatization (see Privatization section).

Conservative

- Harper government was known for its austerity agenda, including cuts to public services and public sector jobs, underfunding and fragmenting health care, and restricting employment insurance.
- Supports privatization and usually admits they favour privatization.
- 2019 election platform commits to balance the budget over 5 years.
- Emphasizes cutting taxes or offering tax credits rather than investing in public and social spending.
- Has made few commitments to public and social spending, e.g., increasing health transfers.

NDP

- Generally, supports investment in public services, social services and programs.
- 2019 election platform includes commitments to invest in public health care, including universal pharmacare, affordable housing, post-secondary education, universal child care, retirement security, enhancing EI, and creating green jobs.
- Largely opposes privatization, but has no position on social impact bonds.
- Notably campaigned in 2015 on balancing the federal budget.

Green Party

- Largely opposes privatization, but has no position on social impact bonds. How the party views new forms of privatization is concerning.
- 2019 election platform emphasizes government spending in green economy (e.g., infrastructure, worker training), with some commitments on public and social services (e.g., pharmacare, mental health, housing, and post-secondary education). Commits to creating a guaranteed minimum income program, which involves replacing current income supports.
- Commits to balance the budget over 5 years.

Income Inequality

Party	Position
Liberal	Implemented some social programs that help to lower income inequality.
Conservative	Its focus on corporate and personal tax cuts alongside program and transfer decreases will increase income and wealth inequality.
NDP	Committed to reducing income and wealth inequality with a 1% wealth tax and a 2% tax increase for highest-income bracket to fund programs and transfers that would benefit low- and middle-income earners.
Green Party	Its proposal for basic income is based on the Conservative model, in that it would replace other income-support programs for low-income Canadians.

Why Equality Matters

Equality is good for society. People are generally happier, healthier, and more productive when there is less inequality in a society. Crime rates decrease and educational attainment levels increase. Unfortunately, we are now in an extended period of rising income inequality, which began almost 4 decades ago.

Income inequality is one of many forms of inequality. Social inequality can be related to gender, race, ethnicity, age, physical disability, etc. Inequality can also be linked to not upholding human rights. At the same time, an increased focus on redressing human rights through social programs and policies can counter the systemic aspects of both historical social and economic inequalities.

Critical Levels of Inequality

Not since the late 1800's have Western democracies, including Canada, seen the levels of financial inequity we are seeing today. In Canada, the 2 wealthiest families hold as much wealth as the poorest 11 million Canadians combined.

Why Income and Wealth Inequality Matter

As long as income inequality continues to grow, more and more Canadians will be left behind. Problems related to income inequality, like poorer health and rising crime rates, will continue to increase. That's unacceptable.

Greater financial equality would reverse that trend. It would mean a better quality of life for most Canadians. Because greater financial equality helps reduce many social problems, it reduces the number of people who need to access social programs.

Better Public Services and Tax Fairness Essential

The best way to make life more affordable for all is improved public services. Whether it is pharmacare, or a national child care program, improved public services have far more impact than tax cuts, which disproportionately benefit the wealthy.

Paying for the public services people need requires a fair tax system where the wealthy pay their share. That means reversing some of the tax cuts that disproportionately benefit the wealthy. It also means closing loopholes and cracking down on tax havens and other ways the wealthy dodge taxes.

Party Positions

Liberal

- Introduced the National Child Benefit, which has had a positive impact on reducing income inequality.
- Cut the rate for middle-income tax bracket, which reduced taxes for highest-income earners without benefiting most low- and middle-income earners, resulting in the new marginal tax rate for high-income earners having only a limited impact.
- Has still not tackled tax evasion by the wealthy beyond a minor investment of resources. Continued Harper-era policy of signing trade agreements that make it harder for governments to adopt measures that reduce income inequality.

Conservative

- Has no interest in reducing income or wealth inequality.
- Its focus on tax credits to assist people provides little or no support for low- or middle-income earners.
- Platforms historically focus on corporate and personal tax cuts, which create conditions used to justify program and transfer cuts.
- This is a formula that increases inequality in both income and wealth.

NDP

- Committed to reducing income and wealth inequality.
- Proposing a 1% wealth tax generating \$70 billion over 10 years. Promised a 2% tax increase for the highest-income bracket.
- Announced an increase in corporate tax rates.
- Proposed investments in programs and transfers that would benefit lower-income earners and reduce income inequality.

Green Party

- Committed to establish a universal Guaranteed Livable Income, but the plan to fund it by eliminating other income-support programs for low-income Canadians will reduce impact.
- Supports a federal minimum wage of \$15/hour.
- Supports an increase in corporate tax rates.

Labour Rights

Party	Position
Liberal	Has no current information on labour rights in Liberal election platform. Has mixed record since previous election. Made positive changes to <i>Canada Labour Code</i> , repealed regressive Harper-era anti-union bills, ratified ILO Convention 98—Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining. But introduced back-to-work legislation, denying postal workers' collective bargaining rights. Also, blocked Bill C-234, the anti-scab legislation introduced to amend the <i>Labour Code</i> .
Conservative	Has no official policy platform, but past actions and statements are very anti-worker and anti-union. This is expected to continue even if its anti-labour position is not explicit in the party platform.
NDP	Has robust policies to protect workers and expand workers' rights. Frequent mention of workers and labour rights and has supportive policies in election platform. Has highest degree of understanding of, and support for, workers.
Green Party	Has made no explicit mention of labour rights in platform except for supporting labour rights for sex workers. Supports a \$15 federal minimum wage. Rejects back-to-work legislation as a bargaining tool. Overall, the Green Party does not seem to consider labour issues or workers' rights as high-priority issues.

Labour Rights Are Human Rights and Must Be Protected!

Canadian workers' rights have been under consistent threat for decades, but there have been some positive developments as well. Workers have finally gained some measure of constitutional protection for labour rights. In 2015, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that workers have the right to choose their own union, bargain collectively, and have the right to strike. While these rulings are welcome, we still have governments that violate workers' rights and have no respect for the Charter or our Constitution. Workers are forced to go to the courts to defend already-won rights, which takes years of expensive litigation.

Ratification of ILO Convention 98: The Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 – Now Stop Violating Workers' Rights!

The federal government has finally adopted ILO Convention 98. This was a long-overdue step forward by Canada, which had been holding out alongside countries known for poor human rights records. Unfortunately, ratifying this convention has not stopped governments blatantly violating our Charter and international human rights obligations by not respecting workers' right to collective bargaining and to freedom of association.

This Election Vote for Labour Rights

Winning Charter protection of labour rights and ratifying an international convention supporting workers are important steps forward, but more work needs doing on a host of issues, and governments need to take action.

This includes

- mandating a living wage for workers by legislating a \$15/hour minimum wage;
- implementing anti-scab legislation so that the right to strike has meaning in Canada and is not undermined by replacement workers;
- mandating an increase in vacation days in the *Labour Code*;
- stopping the overbroad use of essential workers' legislation to undermine bargaining;
- improving health and safety regulations and ensuring workers have the absolute right to refuse dangerous work;
- stopping *contract flipping*, which violates workers' right of association.

Track Record & Campaign Promises

Liberal

- The Liberal party has not stated its goals for the coming election in relation to workers, and it will be important to press candidates to commit to strong protection of labour rights.

Conservatives

- The Conservative party never explicitly states its intention on labour rights but continues to be the main party attacking workers and undermining labour rights. This is true at the provincial and federal levels. It will be important to expose the party's destructive position on these issues during this election.

NDP

- The NDP is very clear on its support for workers and labour rights. It is explicit about supporting anti-scab legislation, a \$15 minimum wage, stronger health and safety legislation, etc. This clear and positive position is welcome and sets the NDP apart from all other parties on these issues.

Green Party

- The Green Party has taken some favourable positions in relation to workers' rights in the past, but overall it does not focus on the needs and challenges facing workers. While it is not explicitly anti-worker, it seems obvious that labour rights are not an election priority for the Green party. The notable exception is that the party is strong on the need for a 'just transition' to protect workers as we move from the fossil fuel based economy towards a green economy.

Privatization

Party	Position
Liberal	Supports several types of privatization, but intervened in the Cambie case to protect public health care.
Conservative	Supports privatization including P3s, SIBs and contracting out.
NDP	Largely opposes privatization, but has no position on social impact bonds.
Green Party	Largely opposes privatization, but has no position on social impact bonds and there is concern about how new forms of P3 privatization schemes are viewed.

How the Federal Government Has Supported Privatization

Regardless of what methods are used to privatize public services, there are serious problems with privatization. Among the problems that the 3 methods of privatization listed below have in common are

- Secrecy and lack of accountability
- Higher costs
- Poor quality
- Primary goal of serving the public replaced with making a profit for investors

Federal P3 Privatization Schemes

There are 13 federal P3 privatization schemes in operation, under construction, or in the planning stages. These include transportation infrastructure and federal government buildings. With the exception of one P3 privatization scheme that was started when Brian Mulroney was prime minister, all federal government P3s were initiated by the current Liberal government or previous Conservative government.

Using Federal Funding to Encourage the Use of P3 Privatization Schemes

The Liberal government's Canada Infrastructure Bank is just the latest example of federal funds being used to encourage other levels of government to use P3 privatization schemes. Using federal funds to pressure provincial, territorial, municipal and Indigenous governments to use P3s started under the Harper government. PPP Canada was set up to promote the use of P3 privatization schemes, and in many cases, projects were only able to get federal funding if P3s were used.

In each case, by using (or withholding) public funding to pressure other levels of government to use P3s, the federal government is subsidizing privatization.

Social Impact Bonds

The first federal government social impact bond was initiated by the former Conservative government in 2014. Preliminary estimates suggested that administration would account for 60% of the cost, but because the number of participants was lower than expected, the percentage of the cost going to administration may have been higher. In spite of this, the current Liberal government agreed to a second federal government social impact bond in 2016. It also appears likely that a significant portion of the Social Finance Fund, announced in late 2018, will go to subsidize social impact bonds.

Track Record & Campaign Promises

Liberal

- Used P3 privatization schemes in government, and through the Canada Infrastructure Bank, are encouraging other levels of government to use P3s.
- 3 projects getting funding from the Canada Infrastructure Bank are P3s.
- While the Liberal government closed down PPP Canada, which was created by the previous Conservative government, given how the Canada Infrastructure Bank was set up, it will fill a similar function.
- In government, obtained intervenor status in the Cambie case to oppose the attempt to use the Charter of Rights to undermine public health care.
- The Liberal government has already funded one social impact bond project when in government.
- Information released so far about the Social Finance Fund set up by the Liberal government means the door is open to it being used to subsidize social impact bonds and organizations setting up social impact bonds.

Conservative

- When in government, used P3 privatization schemes, and through PPP Canada, encouraged other levels of government to use P3s.
- Opposed the Canada Infrastructure Bank due to the level of funding not because opposed to P3s.
- Funded the first federal government social impact bond when in government.
- Called for greater use of social impact bonds for social services, and for justice and correctional services.

NDP

- Opposed the Canada Infrastructure Bank because against federal funds being used to privatize public infrastructure.
- Enforce provisions of the *Canada Health Act* that prevent privatization and user fees in the health care system.
- No position taken on social impact bonds or on how the Social Finance Fund should be used.

Green Party

- Have traditionally opposed privatization, including P3 privatization schemes.
- Elizabeth May's proposal in July 2019 that SNC-Lavalin be put in charge of providing clean drinking water for First Nations communities as a form of "community service" has raised concerns about the party position on newer forms of privatization in which the privatization process is less obvious.
- No position taken on social impact bonds or how the Social Finance Fund should be used.

Tax Fairness

Party	Position
Liberal	Took steps towards tax fairness, but serious problems remain with enforcement when it comes to tax evasion by the wealthy.
Conservative	A history of tax cuts that disproportionately benefit the wealthy and large corporations and of serious problems with enforcement when it comes to tax evasion by the wealthy.
NDP	Proposals would increase tax rates for the wealthy and large corporations, close tax loopholes, and make it easier to enforce laws against tax evasion.
Green Party	Proposals would increase tax rates for large corporations, reduce income taxes for people living in poverty, with action on enforcing laws against tax evasion.

Fair Taxes Essential for Better Public Services and Lowering Income Inequality

Whether it's health care, education, or measures to reduce the threat of climate change, we want and need better public services. But to afford better public services, and the more equal society and stronger economy that come with them, we need a fairer tax system.

Those who claim that public services are "unaffordable" are wrong. What are unaffordable are the tax cuts, tax loopholes, and tax dodging that allow large corporations and the wealthy to avoid paying their share.

Tax Fairness Measures Would Provide over \$42 Billion More for Public Services

Canadians for Tax Fairness has estimated that even relatively modest measures to improve tax fairness would increase federal government revenues by over \$42 billion. These measures include reversing, or closing, some of the tax cuts and loopholes that allow large corporations and the wealthy to avoid paying their share. They also include tighter rules on tax havens and giving the Canada Revenue Agency the tools needed to go after tax avoidance and evasion by large corporations and the wealthy.

More Rhetoric than Action on Tax Fairness

While both the current Liberal government and the previous Conservative government denounced tax havens, their actions did not match their rhetoric. By cutting funding and staff from the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA), the Conservatives made it harder for the CRA to go after those using tax havens or other schemes to dodge taxes. The Liberals reversed some cuts, but the CRA still has less ability to go after well-heeled tax cheats than it did before the Conservative cuts.

Similarly, Canada has lagged behind European countries on introducing measures like public registries of the beneficial owners of corporations and property, which would make it easier to go after tax evasion, money laundering, and the funding of terrorism.

Track Record & Campaign Promises

Liberal

- Partially reversed Conservative cuts to the CRA.
- Continued to allow KPMG to advise on tax policy after KPMG's involvement in a tax-dodging scheme was revealed.
- 3 years after the Panama Papers leak revealed the identities of 900 Canadian individuals and corporations using tax havens, no charges have been laid.
- The 2019 budget introduced a cap on the stock options tax deduction.
- Introduced a 33% tax rate on people with higher incomes, but the impact was reduced by other measures.
- Supports a registry of beneficial owners of corporations to make it harder to use tax havens, but has not committed to the registry being public (making the registry public is seen as a key step to ensuring it's effective).

Conservative

- Made changes to personal and corporate income tax rates when they were in government that disproportionately benefited the well off.
- Cut staff and resources at the CRA, making it harder to deal with tax evasion by wealthy individuals or corporations.
- Continued to allow KPMG to advise on tax policy after KPMG's involvement in a tax-dodging scheme was revealed.
- Supports a registry of beneficial owners of corporations to make it harder to use tax havens, but is not willing to make the registry public (making the registry public is seen as a key step to ensuring its effective).

NDP

- Will increase corporate income tax rates from 2010 levels (from 15% to 18%).
- Will take steps to close the capital gains and stock options loopholes.
- Will introduce a 1% wealth tax on wealth over \$20 million.
- Supports a public registry of beneficial owners of corporations to make it harder to use tax havens.
- Will require Netflix, Facebook, Google, and other digital media companies to pay taxes on their activities in Canada.
- Will make it harder to use tax havens by eliminating bearer shares, by requiring companies prove the economic reason for offshore transactions, and by improving transparency on taxes paid by large corporations.

Green Party

- Will increase corporate income tax rates to 2008 levels (from 15% to 19.5%).
- Will eliminate personal income taxes on incomes below the low-income cut-off.
- Will increase taxes on alcohol, tobacco, and junk food.
- Will look at taxing Canadian revenues of foreign-owned digital companies.
- Will go after money in tax havens.

Public Services

Criminal Justice

Party	Position
Liberal	In government, implemented <i>Criminal Code</i> amendments on sexual assault, reforms for sentencing and for the overrepresentation of vulnerable groups in prisons, and increased funding for more judges and prisoner programming.
Conservative	Will introduce new regulations on firearms ownership and introduce anti-gang law-enforcement initiatives (including mandatory minimum sentences). Will audit all correctional services programs. but the party's focus on tax cuts will reduce the ability to fund these measures.
NDP	Approach to criminal justice is it's not just about the absence of crime, but addressing root causes and creating a justice system that treats everyone fairly. Will include funding services that reduce the risk of crime: increasing social inclusion, promoting public health, ensuring food security, access to education, affordable housing, and increasing youth engagement.
Green Party	Will repeal all Harper-era criminal laws and replace with an approach addressing underlying causes of crime, such as poverty, racism, and inequality. Will make public investments to reduce crime through better programs for youth activity and early childhood education, and other reforms.

Federal Government Record on Criminal Justice

While both the overall crime rate and the incidence of violent crime are lower than the historical average, lack of resources means that there are still serious problems with the criminal justice system.

When federal transfer payments for health care fail to keep pace with need, lack of funding for mental health programs means people who should be treated in the health care system end up in the criminal justice system. Measures like mandatory minimum sentences increase the time people are spending in prison, and because funding for prisons has not kept pace with the need, prison overcrowding is a serious problem. While these decisions may be made at the federal level, they also affect workers in the criminal justice system at the provincial level.

Lack of resources is also contributing to delays in cases coming to court and to cases then being thrown out. Similarly, while the federal government wants to reduce the use of segregation, it is far from clear that the funding for alternatives to segregation will be there.

Track Record & Campaign Promises

Liberal

- Introduced *Criminal Code* amendments, which came into force in December 2018, clarifying sexual assault laws (Bill C-51).

- Introduced legislation to address court delays and to reduce the overrepresentation of Indigenous people and vulnerable populations in the criminal justice system, including those with addictions and mental illness (received Royal Assent on June 21, 2019).
- Approved more funding for judges in 2016 and 2017 federal budgets.

Conservative

- Proposes an audit of correctional service programs, but does not acknowledge that more funding is needed for existing programs at both the federal and provincial levels.
- Will cost share new anti-gang law-enforcement initiatives with provinces and territories.
- Will increase the number of arrested gang offenders held without bail and impose tighter conditions for gang members on parole.
- Will introduce mandatory sentences in federal prisons for various gang-related offences directing gang crime.
- Proposes better background checks for firearms licensing.

NDP

- Will support models of community policing.
- Will work with major cities to ensure they have dedicated hate-crime units in their local police forces, and will convene a national working group to counter online hate.
- Will fight gun crime by prohibiting assault weapons and tackling gun smuggling.
- Will fund anti-gang projects that deter youth from joining gangs.
- Will support community-led initiatives to help prevent youth from falling prey to violent extremism and radicalization.
- Will increase support for restorative justice and victim services.

Green Party

- Will repeal Harper-era criminal laws, creating mandatory minimum sentences.
- Will revise laws to increase penalties for domestic violence.
- Will improve the *Victims Bill of Rights* to include the Marsy's Law provisions from California (ensuring victims are fully informed of their rights).
- Will support restorative justice and community healing programs.
- Will oppose privatization of prisons.
- Will focus on education and meaningful work for offenders while they are incarcerated.
- Will restore merit as the primary criterion for selection of judges.

National Public Child Care

Party	Position
Liberal	Increased funding for child care, but increase was only about half of what's needed.
Conservative	Its proposals to assist parents rely on tax credits, which provide little benefit to those parents most in need of help with child care.
NDP	Proposing a national public universal child care program with licensed providers who are paid fair wages.
Green Party	Proposing a high-quality federally funded child care program, with the goal of universal access.

National Child Care Program Urgently Needed

It has been decades since a new national social program was introduced in Canada. We believe a national public child care program should be a priority in the federal election. Where there is no provincial child care program, child care fees are extremely high. After mortgage or rent, child care is the biggest cost for families with small children. For families with 2 children under 4 years old, child care can be the largest single cost.

Evidence shows that investing in high-quality accessible and affordable child care is not only possible but essential for a thriving economy. Studies show that giving children a head start in early childhood education provides many benefits—female participation in the workforce goes up, family incomes increase, the economy grows more quickly, and student achievement rises, providing a sound basis for future learning.

Quebec Program Shows What Can Be Done

When Quebec instituted its low-fee child care program in 1997 at \$5/day, critics said it was unsustainable. While fees have adjusted over the last 20 years (it's now at \$8.25/day, depending on family income), studies continue to show that for every dollar invested in early childhood education, the economy gets about \$6 worth of economic benefits!

Quality Important

But to produce results, early childhood education needs to be more than just childminding. Children need highly trained educators, with expertise in play-based learning. Recruitment of these educators requires that good salaries with benefits are part of the package.

Track Record & Campaign Promises

Liberal

- Provided \$7 billion over 10 years for child care in the 2017 budget, but 70% of the funding won't be available until after 2022/23. And funding per year is significantly less than the \$1.2 billion/year seen as necessary.
- No attempt made to set national standards; decisions about how child care funding is spent are made by provincial governments.

Conservative

- Will introduce a non-refundable tax credit of 15% for any income received from EI parental

benefits, with an equivalent credit for parents in Quebec who receive payments from the Quebec Parental Insurance Plan. This measure would provide little assistance for low-income parents or those that don't qualify for EI.

NDP

- Will provide \$1 billion for child care in 2020, and will increase that funding annually
- Will establish a national public universal child care program with licensed providers who are paid fair wages.
- Will ensure early childhood education and child care are accessible, affordable, and public.
- Will work with other levels of government, Indigenous communities, families, and child care workers to ensure that care is inclusive and responsive to the needs of all children in Canada.

Green Party

- Will create a high-quality federally funded child care program, accessible to any family that wants to place children into early childhood education.
- Will restore and revamp the 2005 Liberal agreement reached between the federal government, provinces, and territories to achieve a universal and accessible child care program in Canada.
- Will create a national Children's Commissioner.
- Will provide an annual \$1,500 tax credit per child to employers to create workplace child care spaces.
- Will promote and facilitate access to the Roots of Empathy program (an effective, award-winning program developed by a non-profit educational organization), to all Canadian children at some point in their elementary school year.

Pharmacare

Party	Position
Liberal	Prime Minister Trudeau has committed to national pharmacare. No details or timelines have been released.
Conservative	Opposed to universal pharmacare, as confirmed by leader's statements. Supports fill-in-the-gaps approach. This plan would not decrease drug costs and would increase insurance and pharma profits.
NDP	Committed to pharmacare with a 2020 start and an annual investment of \$10 billion from the federal government. Party has consistently supported pharmacare for many years.
Green Party	Committed to expand public health care to include pharmacare by establishing a Crown corporation to purchase and dispense prescription drugs.

Will This Be the Election Canadians Finally Get Pharmacare?

Canadians take pride in our universal public health care system, especially when compared to the high cost and poor outcomes of the highly privatized US health care system. There are many positive aspects of our cherished Medicare, and our front-line health care professionals provide a high quality of care to patients based on need not on ability to pay. In recent years, however, governments have been targeting health care for privatization. Once inflation in health care costs and population growth are taken into account, federal government transfer rates are effectively a cutting health care funding. This election could reverse this trend if we elect a government that implements universal pharmacare.

The Unfinished Business of Medicare

Medicare was never supposed to end at doctors' offices and hospitals. Yet, in the more than 50 years since it was launched, we have not expanded public health care as originally intended. While it's still a strong and efficient health care system, the most glaring gap in Medicare is the absence of a universal prescription drug plan. Since the 1960's, there have been 5 national commissions that have recommended pharmacare for Canada. Academics and researchers have further added numerous studies supporting the need for pharmacare. Canadians, when polled, strongly support pharmacare. Yet governments have still not committed to universal pharmacare.

Pharmacare Is a Game Changer

Implementing universal pharmacare would positively impact all aspects of our public health care system. Pharmacare would lower costs by between \$4 billion and \$11 billion per year, which is what we currently waste paying the third-highest prices in the world. Pharmacare would improve health outcomes by ensuring access to necessary medications for all patients. Pharmacare would allow for better monitoring and use of prescription drugs in Canada. Patients taking prescribed medication provided by universal public pharmacare is the most significant change that we could make to improve our health care system.

An Overall Commitment to Health Care Is Needed

Governments need to invest in our health care system, and it is critical that we ensure the system meets the changing needs of Canadians. In addition to pharmacare, Canada should also be addressing gaps in home care, long-term care, and mental health care. These services are all

currently outside the *Canada Health Act* and are not receiving the investment needed to meet the needs of Canadians.

Make This the Last Election without Pharmacare

This election should be the last one where we see Canada is the only country with public health care that does not also cover prescription drugs. For the first time, pharmacare is on the ballot as an election issue. Canadians need to demand their candidates and political parties support pharmacare and need to vote for those who will implement it.

Track Record & Campaign Promises

Liberal

- For several years the Liberal government refused to commit to supporting pharmacare even though they were under pressure to do so.
- In 2018, the Liberal-controlled Health Committee of the House of Commons released a report that called for the implementation of universal pharmacare.
- The Liberal government struck an advisory panel, which recommended universal pharmacare.
- Prime Minister Trudeau has committed to national pharmacare, but no details or timelines have been released, so this commitment is yet to be confirmed.

Conservative

- Has long opposed universal pharmacare in favour of more private health care.
- Opposed to universal pharmacare and instead supports a fill-in-the-gaps approach.
- A fill-in-the-gaps approach would not decrease drug costs but would increase insurance and pharma profits, so is not supported by pharmacare advocates.

NDP

- Has long supported implementing universal pharmacare.
- For this election, has committed to a 2020 start date and an annual investment of \$10 billion from the federal government.

Green Party

- Started to strongly support universal pharmacare in recent elections.
- Has committed to expanding public health care to include pharmacare by establishing a Crown corporation to purchase and dispense prescription drugs.

Post-secondary Education

Party	Position
Liberal	Believes education should be managed provincially, with federal standards to ensure consistency. Has launched several initiatives to make accessing education easier for low-income students and students that face other barriers to education. Currently doesn't have a published 2019 platform on the topic.
Conservative	Believes the federal government should not play a role in managing education. Currently doesn't have a published 2019 platform on the topic.
NDP	Believes education should be managed provincially, with federal standards to ensure consistency. Its platform includes several initiatives to remove barriers to education, including working towards making post-secondary education free.
Green Party	Believes education should be managed provincially, with federal standards to ensure consistency. Its platform includes several initiatives to remove barriers to education, including working towards making post-secondary education free.

Post-secondary Education in Canada

Although education in Canada falls under provincial jurisdiction, the federal government still has a role to play, particularly regarding student loans and grants. In 2018/19, the federal government transferred \$14,616 billion through the Canada Social Transfer (CST) to the provinces and territories, part of which was used to support post-secondary education. In 2019/20, provinces and territories will receive \$14,586 billion through the CST.

In September 2019, in an attempt to get federal parties to consider their priorities in the run-up to the 2019 election, student unions from post-secondary institutions representing almost 900,000 students, have joined forces. Together they released a joint letter outlining their top policy priorities: the elimination of interest on federal student loans and the increase of federal grants, the creation of high-quality jobs and work-integrated learning opportunities, and an increase in support for Indigenous students. The goal is to get every party leader to acknowledge the letter and pledge to address the priorities.

Track Record & Campaign Promises

Liberal

- Changed the Express Entry system to make it easier for international students who have studied in Canada to become permanent residents.
- Increased Canada Student Grants by 50% to a maximum of \$3,000 per year, but that figure still falls short in covering tuition costs at most Canadian colleges and universities.
- Budget 2019 announced lower interest rates for Canada Student Loans and Canada Apprentice Loans, and a new interest-free grace period after a student-loan borrower leaves school.
- Committed to spending \$362 million for Métis post-secondary education.

Conservative

- Holds that provincial governments should be responsible for governing education.
- Proposes increasing the government's contribution to RESPs from 20 per cent to 30 per cent for every dollar invested up to \$2,500 a year.

NDP

- Proposes working with provinces and territories to cap and reduce tuition fees and to build towards making post-secondary education part of the public education system.
- Recommends eliminating interest rates on student loans.
- Desires to move away from loans and increase access to grants.

Green Party

- Proposes increasing federal transfers to provincial governments, earmarked and tied to post-secondary education.
- Stated a desire to work towards abolishing tuition and student debt.
- Proposes increasing federal student grants by 25%.
- Recommends establishing a federal research program aimed at understanding and reducing barriers to post-secondary education.
- Proposes exempting academic materials from the GST and/or any other federal sales taxes that may be implemented in the future.
- Will press professional societies to remove unnecessary barriers hindering the recognition of valid professional credentials of immigrants.

Seniors

Party	Position
Liberal	Expanded CPP and increased funding for home care, but decisions to continue Harper-era cuts to health care transfers and lack of protection for pension plans have reduced the impact of the positive measures.
Conservative	Opposed expanding the CPP and will leave decisions about home care and long-term care to provincial and territorial governments.
NDP	Supports further enhancement of the CPP, developing national standards for home care and long-term care and enshrining them in the <i>Canada Health Act</i> .
Green Party	Proposes national objectives for home care and long-term care and expansion of CPP, but proposes risk sharing for pensions and funding some of CPP enhancement from existing pensions.

A Secure Retirement Should Be a Right for All Seniors

After all the contributions seniors have made to our society, we have an obligation to provide them with the respect and dignity they deserve. Yet, more and more seniors have to work longer, live in poverty, and go without at least some of the care they need.

Gaps in Health Care System a Burden for Seniors

While pharmacare is the biggest gap in the health care system facing seniors, there are other ways health care must be improved to better meet the needs of seniors. Because there is no national home care program, seniors rely on a patchwork of services and are often unable to get the care they need. Waiting lists for long-term care are long, and it's hard for many people to find quality care that they can afford. With both home and long-term care, problems with low wages and poor working conditions contribute to staff shortages.

Inadequate Pensions Still a Problem

Major reasons for the poor financial state seniors find themselves in are the lack of workplace pensions, difficulty contributing to private savings, and insufficient financial programs. We know that all Canadians need to have decent pensions that allow them to look forward to a secure retirement. We also know that improving the Canada Pension Plan (CPP) is the best way to provide all Canadians with a secure retirement. The improvements to the CPP that started this year are a step forward, but more is needed.

Track Record & Campaign Promises

Liberal

- Enhanced CPP coverage to steadily increase benefits levels to 1/3 of pre-retirement income, which is a major improvement, but still falls short of the doubling of CPP that the labour movement has traditionally seen as needed.
- Restored the eligibility age for Old Age Security and the Guaranteed Income Supplement to 65.
- Fail refusing to protect private sector pension plans by giving pensioners first priority when companies enter bankruptcy or insolvency proceedings, even after what happened at Sears and other companies where pension plan deficits were allowed to grow while excessive

payments were made to shareholders.

- Providing \$6 billion over 10 years for home care, but decision to continue Harper- era cut to federal transfers for health care will reduce the impact.
- Providing \$1 billion over 4 years for home care infrastructure.
- Will contribute \$190 million/year to support Canada's compassionate caregivers.

Conservative

- Opposed expansion of CPP.
- Proposed Health and Social Programs Guarantee would only increase the Canada Health Transfer and the Canada Social Transfer by 3%, which will make it difficult for provinces and territories to maintain funding for programs like home care and will make it impossible to expand them.
- Will leave decisions to provincial and territorial governments about whether services like home care or long-term care are publicly funded and delivered.

NDP

- Will create a Pension Advisory Commission to develop a long-term plan to protect and enhance Old Age Security, boost the Guaranteed Income Supplement, and strengthen the Canada Pension Plan.
- Will work with patients, caregivers, and provincial and territorial governments to develop national care standards for home care and long-term care and include them in the *Canada Health Act*.
- Will develop and support violence prevention strategies to protect front-line staff and ensure a safe working environment.
- Will make the Canada Caregiver Credit refundable to provide thousands of dollars to the lowest-income caregivers. Many caregivers have given up work completely to be able to care for a loved one.

Green Party

- Will develop, with provincial and territorial governments, a set of national home care objectives in a National Home Care Policy.
- Will increase CPP in phases, with "some of the increase could be covered by redirected reductions in workplace pensions for those with workplace pensions. Redirected GIS savings could be used to offset some of the required contribution increase."
- Will explore risk sharing for pension plans, including the CPP.
- Will resist the shift to voluntary defined contribution plans with inefficient and expensive fees for a myriad of market-driven plans.

Human Rights

Anti-racism Measures

Party	Position
Liberal	Supports funding anti-racism measures and created several new initiatives around the issue in Budget 2019. The party currently does not have a published 2019 platform on the topic.
Conservative	Has no proposed or specific anti-racist measures. And actions of individual Senators, Members of Parliament, and people in senior roles in campaigns are worrying.
NDP	Supports anti-racism measures and has several items in its platform devoted to ending racism.
Green Party	Supports anti-racism measures in various areas of its platform, but doesn't have a section dedicated specifically to anti-racism measures.

Hate crimes on the rise in Canada

According to Statistics Canada, hate crimes have been steadily rising in Canada since 2014. In 2017, hate crimes jumped up 47% from the previous year, from 1,409 to 2,073. In 2018, the number of hate crimes dropped to 1,798, but Statistics Canada warned that 2018 still saw the third-highest number of hate crimes since data collection began in 2009. In June 2016, during Ramadan, the Great Mosque of Quebec City was the location of a high-profile hate crime and Islamophobic attack when a pig's severed head was left outside the mosque. In January 2017, a shooter entered the mosque during prayer hours where he killed 6 Muslims and injured 19.

These crimes are not occurring in isolation. They are increasing at the same time as more politicians are claiming that it's acceptable if people from particular ethnic or racial groups are excluded or not entitled to share in our country's wealth. And as we are seeing, if hate crimes are left unchecked, they will increase in severity.

Track Record & Campaign Promises

Liberal

- Budget 2018 provided more than \$19 million over 5 years as a first step towards recognizing the significant and unique challenges faced by Black Canadians.
- Budget 2019 proposes to provide \$45 million over 3 years, starting in 2019/20, to support a new Anti-Racism Strategy.
- Plans to introduce a new digital charter to combat hate speech, misinformation, and online electoral interference.

Conservative

- No specific anti-racism legislation has been proposed recently, though its campaign website refers to unity in diversity.
- When arguing with a Muslim anti-racism advocate who was testifying in front of the justice committee, Conservative MP Michael Cooper read a passage from the manifesto of the

fascist who murdered 51 people in Christchurch, New Zealand. Scheer removed Cooper from the justice committee, and Cooper issued an apology, but no further action was taken. Cooper is still the Deputy Shadow Minister for Justice.

- Andrew Scheer's 2017 leadership campaign was staffed by individuals with far-right connections.

NDP

- Will convene a national working group to counter online hate and protect public safety. Will make sure that social media platforms are responsible for removing hateful and extremist content before it can do harm.
- Will ban carding by federal law enforcement and will work with local partners across Canada to end this practice in all jurisdictions across the country.
- Will conduct a comprehensive review of the existing employment-equity regime to help close the racialized wage gap.
- Will strengthen labour laws and ensure diverse and equitable hiring within the federal public service, and in federally regulated industries.
- Will work with the provinces and territories to develop and enforce effective employment-equity legislation, and to collect and analyze data on the racialization of poverty.

Green Party

- No specific anti-racism legislation proposed, but may introduce initiatives in criminal justice reform and anti-poverty measures to correct the racialized nature of the issues.

Environment and Climate Change

Party	Position
Liberal	Environmental protection and climate action, also fossil fuel development.
Conservative	Environmental protection and climate action through technology and market solutions.
NDP	Environmental protection and climate action efforts with focus on equity.
Green Party	Environmental protection and climate action as party's cornerstone issue.

11 years to cut emissions by 50%

Climate scientists have for decades reported that human activity has contributed to the Earth's warming and environmental harm. We are already seeing the effects, including species loss, deforestation, air and water pollution, food insecurity, extreme weather, and displaced communities, with a growing sense of urgency to act. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has reported that in order to prevent catastrophic effects, we must cut greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions 50% by 2030, and to net zero by 2050, to keep global warming to 1.5 °C. With the window to act narrowing, and polls showing that a majority of Canadians are worried, climate change is poised to be a key issue of the 2019 federal election.

Track Record & Campaign Promises

Liberal

- Pledged to ban single-use plastics as early as 2021.
- Implemented carbon tax in 2019.
- Signed the global Paris Agreement to keep warming to well below 2 °C, but commitment to reduce GHG emissions by 17% below 2005 levels by 2020, and by 30% by 2030 are the targets of the former Conservative government.
- Developed the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change, a climate plan of measures to cut emissions, build adaptation and resilience, and promote clean technology and jobs.

Conservative

- Climate platform focuses on investing in "green technology, not taxes.
- Will repeal the carbon tax. Instead, will set emissions limits for companies and require companies who exceed the limit to invest in emissions-reducing technology.
- In government, subsidized fossil fuels, funded pipelines, and expanded tar sands.
- Will promote oil and gas production (e.g., speed up project approvals, repeal Bill C-69, which changed environmental impact assessment) and export of energy.
- In government, reduced environmental protection, scaled back environmental impact assessment process, and limited ability of scientists to speak to media.
- Will collaborate with Indigenous peoples to address climate change.
- Will promote conservation (e.g., of species, protected areas, wetlands on private lands).
- Will combat pollution, improve recycling, and minimize plastic packaging.

NDP

- Will enact reduction targets for GHG emissions to keep global warming to 1.5 °C and will continue carbon pricing, including household rebates.
- Will focus on jobs in transitioning to low-carbon economy, creating more than 300,000 good jobs and protecting workers most impacted by changing economy (e.g., employment support and retraining).
- Will invest in emissions-reducing infrastructure and will require building retrofits across sectors, beginning with social housing and government buildings—retrofitting all housing by 2050.
- Will update and expand public transit, emphasizing low-carbon projects (e.g., electric trains and buses) to electrify transit by 2030. Will promote community planning, active transport, and accessibility to Canadian zero-emissions vehicles.
- Will invest in Canadian-made renewable energy and clean technology, funding community-owned and -operated projects, and will change the decision process for energy projects, and work with Indigenous and northern communities. Will achieve net carbon-free electricity by 2030, and 100% free by 2050.
- Opposed Trans Mountain, Keystone XL pipelines, and supported Energy East.
- Will strengthen environmental protection, conservation, and environmental rights.
- Will ban single-use plastics, improve waste management and recycling, develop a food-waste strategy, and create local food hubs.

Green Party

- Will invest in the green economy (e.g., renewable energy infrastructure, green technology, local food systems, and training programs for workers in transition).
- Will cut GHG emissions by 60% below 2005 levels by 2030, and to zero by 2050.
- Will end fossil fuel industry subsidies, promote divestment, phase out coal-fired electricity, and implement and invest in a strategy to deliver renewable energy across the country.
- Will ban foreign oil imports, using Alberta oil while moving to zero GHGs.
- Will use carbon-pricing using fee and dividend system (model of the current federal plan).
- Will assist sectors/communities to adapt to climate impacts, will offer tax credits for energy-efficient home renovations, and require retrofits for all buildings by 2030.
- Will invest in green infrastructure for public transportation (e.g., rail, electric buses), active transportation infrastructure, and offer rebates for energy-efficient vehicles.
- Will value Indigenous leadership in climate action.

Immigrant and Refugee Rights

Party	Position
Liberal	Supports increasing the number of immigrants and refugees coming to Canada.
Conservative	Supports immigration and accepting refugees, but proposes overhauls to the system for more selective criteria for admitting immigrants. Some comments on immigration and refugees appear designed to stir up tensions.
NDP	Platform contains many promises on the topic. Supports fixing the immigration system to get rid of backlog and will work with the provinces to address gaps in settlement services.
Green Party	Platform contains many promises on the topic. Proposes overhauls to the immigration system, including a new <i>environmental refugee</i> category.

Reasons people come to Canada haven't changed

People coming to Canada as immigrants and refugees today are coming for the same reasons as earlier immigrants and refugees did. They seek a better life for themselves and their families, or they are fleeing persecution, exploitation, and war. Like the immigrants and refugees who came to Canada before them, including the ancestors of most Canadians, given a chance, they will make a major contribution to our country.

Unfortunately, the arguments for turning away refugees and restricting immigration haven't changed much either. The same arguments used to justify the infamous Chinese head tax or the appalling decision to turn away Jewish people fleeing Nazi Germany are resurfacing today.

Changes introduced by the Harper government in 2012 restricted protections for refugees, limited certain kinds of immigration, and diminished the rights and protections of newcomers to Canada.

False information behind criticism of UN's Global Compact for Migration

The tension around the UN's Global Compact for Migration illustrates how false information is being used to stir up fear and resentment. In 2018, Conservative leader Andrew Scheer was quoted as saying that the compact, a non-binding statement of principles, "gives influence over Canada's immigration system to foreign entities." He was corrected by a former immigration minister for Stephen Harper, Chris Alexander, who tweeted, "Scheer's statement is factually incorrect: this Compact is a political declaration, not a legally binding treaty: it has no impact on our sovereignty." That such an inaccurate claim was made by the Leader of the Opposition is worrying, particularly as it was later revealed that international opposition to the initiative was traced to far-right activists.

Track Record & Campaign Promises

Liberal

- In 2017, the Liberals pledged to increase the annual number of immigrants accepted into Canada by 340,000 by the year 2020, with 60 per cent of the growth in the economic class.
- Instituted a policy to block people from making asylum claims if they have already done so

in the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, or New Zealand.

Conservative

- Will do more to promote private sponsorships of refugees, but plans to end illegal border crossings at unofficial points and to close the loophole in the Safe Third-Country Agreement will leave many people at the mercy of the Trump administration's refugee policies.
- In 2018, the Conservative party pulled an attack ad that depicted a black man carrying a suitcase walking over a tweet from Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. The tweet from Trudeau's Twitter account was used routinely by Conservative MPs to blame Trudeau for an influx of asylum seekers entering Canada.

NDP

- Will establish a clear path for the resettlement of LGBTQI2S refugees.
- Will end the cap on applications to sponsor parents and grandparents, and take on the backlogs that delay reunification for years.
- Will take on unscrupulous immigration consultants by ensuring that the industry is regulated by the government.
- Will suspend the Safe Third-Country agreement with the United States, allowing people to make asylum claims at official border crossings.

Green Party

- Will eliminate the Temporary Foreign Worker Program and increase immigration where labour shortages are established.
- Will press professional societies to remove unnecessary barriers hindering the recognition of valid professional credentials of immigrants.
- Will establish a program to deal with the estimated 200,000 people living in Canada without official status that leads to full landed-immigrant status for those who have become contributing members of Canadian society.
- Will seek to have the regulations governing the practices of immigration consultants toughened and enforced, and will increase penalties in the *Criminal Code* for those convicted of human smuggling.

Indigenous Rights

Party	Position
Liberal	Supports implementing many of the Calls to Action identified in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's report, but has a mixed track record on Indigenous issues.
Conservative	Has a mixed voting record on Indigenous issues, particularly on the Indigenous right to sovereignty. Has often ignored the federal government's responsibility to provide the funding needed for services like clean drinking water on reserves.
NDP	Supports implementing many of the Calls to Action identified in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's report and has several items in its platform devoted to Indigenous issues.
Green Party	Supports implementing many of the Calls to Action identified in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's report and has detailed promises devoted to Indigenous issues.

Slow progress to reconciliation

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was established to hear from Indigenous people about the damage done by the residential school system and to look at how to "redress the legacy of residential schools and advance the process of Canadian reconciliation." Many of the 94 Calls to Action issued by the TRC reflected the fact that the federal government has often failed to provide the funding needed for Indigenous people to receive the services that almost all other Canadians are able to rely on.

The last 4 years have seen positive steps, but there is still a long way to go. The number of long-term drinking water advisories on First Nations reserves has dropped, but as of September 3, 2019, there were still 56 long-term drinking water advisories on First Nations reserves. On September 6, 2019, the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal has issued its 8th non-compliance order against the federal government for failing to compensate First Nations children and families who suffered as a result of discrimination in child welfare services.

National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

Launching a National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (NIMMIWG) was a campaign promise the Liberal government acted on in December 2015. The Inquiry's final report was released in June 2019 and included 231 Calls for Justice.

Track Record & Campaign Promises

Liberal

- Committed to create a MMIWG National Action Plan.
- Attempts made to implement over 80 per cent of the Calls to Action under federal or shared purview. As of June 2019, 9 Calls to Action are fully implemented, 54 are underway, and 13 others are in early planning stages.
- The number of long-term water advisories on Indigenous reserves was reduced from 102 (as of November 2015) to 56 (as of July 2019). The Liberal government says there will be zero by 2021.

- In 2017, the Liberal government split Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada into 2 departments without consulting First Nations.

Conservative

- Intense opposition from Conservatives in the Senate caused Bill C-262 to die, preventing it from becoming law. Bill C-262 represented an attempt to have Canada align its laws with the global minimum human rights standards for Indigenous peoples (UNDRIP).
- Conservative critic for Crown-Indigenous relations, Cathy McLeod, stated the Conservative party would commit to a National Action Plan after the MMIWG Inquiry, but did not say if they supported all the Calls for Justice.
- Proposed the creation of a pan-Canadian energy corridor and has stated the idea “would entail a great deal of dialogue with provincial governments and Indigenous populations.”

NDP

- Will make the investments required to ensure clean water and will lift all drinking water advisories for good by 2021. Will support Indigenous-led water management training programs and water system operations as an immediate priority.
- Will address violence against Indigenous women, girls, and LGBTQ2S people by working with Indigenous peoples to implement the Calls for Justice of the MMIWG Inquiry, including resuming and expanding rural and remote bus routes and passenger rail service.
- Will create a national task force to address the chronic over-representation of Indigenous peoples in the federal prison population.

Green Party

- Will work towards the creation of an Aboriginal Lands and Treaties Tribunal Act in partnership with Indigenous peoples to establish an independent body to decide on specific claims, ensure that treaty negotiations are conducted and financed fairly, and ensure that treaty negotiations and claims resolutions do not result in extinguishing Indigenous and treaty rights.
- Will set a date for the repeal of the *Indian Act*, ideally in less than 10 years, to allow all nations and interested parties to prepare.
- Will review all existing federal policies on self-government, in consultation with Indigenous representatives, to ensure they are achieving the goals of Indigenous peoples.

LGBTQI2S Rights

Party	Position
Liberal	Supports LGBTQI2S rights and designated funds in the 2019 budget to support existing LGBTQI2S initiatives and create new ones.
Conservative	Party removed the traditional definition of marriage from their policy book in 2016, but MPs have mixed track records when it comes to voting on recent LGBTQI2S legislation.
NDP	Supports LGBTQI2S rights and has several items in their platform devoted to enhancing LGBTQI2S rights.
Green Party	Supports LGBTQI2S rights and has several items in their platform devoted to enhancing LGBTQI2S rights.

Gender identity and gender expression are human rights

There have been positive steps made in the area of LGBTQI2S rights since the last federal election. In June 2017, Bill C-16 officially amended the *Canadian Human Rights Act* to include gender identity and gender expression to the list of prohibited grounds of discrimination. It also amended the *Criminal Code* to deal with hate crimes related to gender identity and gender expression. Bill C-16 was introduced by then Liberal MP Jody Wilson-Raybould. MPs from the Liberal party, the NDP, and the Green Party voted unanimously to accept Bill C-16. 40 Conservative MPs voted against Bill C-16, including Conservative leader Andrew Scheer.

However, there is concern that the federal government has still not ended the ban on blood donations by gay or bisexual men who are sexually active. Instead, the federal government reduced the period of time that gay and bisexual male donors have to be abstinent before donating blood.

Track Record & Campaign Promises

Liberal

- As government, passed Bill C-16.
- In June 2019, sent letters to all provincial and territorial ministers of justice and health, urging them to halt conversion therapy in their jurisdictions. The Liberals said they would, in the meantime, explore amendments to the *Criminal Code* to “prevent, punish and deter” conversion therapy.
- Instead of keeping the 2015 campaign promise to end the ban on gay and bisexual men who are sexually active from donating blood, the Liberals reduced the period of time from 5 years to 1 year that gay and bisexual male donors have to be abstinent before donating blood. In 2019, the Liberals further reduced the waiting period to 3 months.
- Budget 2019 proposes to provide \$20 million over 2 years, to invest in capacity building and community-level work of Canadian LGBTQI2S service organizations.

Conservative

- As party leader, Scheer has declined to walk with other federal leaders in any Pride Parades. But in a 2019 campaign speech, he’s quoted as saying, “I find the notion that one’s race, religion, gender, or sexual orientation would make anyone in any way superior

or inferior to anybody else absolutely repugnant.”

- Scheer will allow elected MPs to freely vote on bills against abortion or same-sex marriage, but has said he would oppose attempts to reopen debate on such social issues if he becomes prime minister.
- In June 2017, Scheer moved a motion in the House of Commons that condemned the actions of Vladimir Putin’s Russian government against LGBTQI2S individuals.
- Party opposes forced conversion therapy, but Scheer is waiting for further details before taking a stance on efforts to impose a federal ban on the discredited practice.

NDP

- Vowed to end the discriminatory blood ban and put in place policies based on public health evidence to secure the blood supply.
- Will develop a national action plan to ban conversion therapy for minors in Canada, and will work with provinces and territories to support eliminating the practice in all parts of the country.
- Will work with the provinces to make sure there is equal access to gender- confirming surgery across the country, and that these procedures and medications are covered by public health plans.
- Will establish a clear and permanent path for resettlement of LGBTQI2S refugees in Canada.
- Promised to add sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression to the *Employment Equity Act*.

Green Party

- Promises to support public education to end prejudice and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.
- Will end the targeting by Canada Customs of LGBT bookstores and other LGBT businesses.
- Will improve protections for transgender people and raise awareness of the policies for inclusion, including respecting pronoun choices.
- Will ensure Canada advocates internationally for an end to state-sanctioned discrimination and violence against LGBT people.

Rights for People with Disabilities

Party	Position
Liberal	Supports funding new initiatives around accessibility in Budget 2019. It currently doesn't have a published 2019 platform on the topic.
Conservative	It currently doesn't have a published 2019 platform on the topic.
NDP	Supports legislation for people with disabilities and has several items in its platform devoted to the issues.
Green Party	Supports legislation for people with disabilities and has several items in its platform devoted to the issues.

Accessible Canada Act

The *Accessible Canada Act*, or Bill C-81, was introduced by the Liberal government in order to enhance the full and equal participation of persons with disabilities in society. It's the first piece of federal accessibility legislation in Canada. The *Accessible Canada Act* has been criticized by advocacy groups for limiting its scope to federal agencies and programs, and for use of the passive "may" instead of the stronger "shall" needed for accountability. It has also been criticized for its failure to name various forms of sign language as official languages of deaf Canadians.

Track Record & Campaign Promises

Liberal

- Announced an investment of \$290 million over 6 years, starting in 2018/19, to implement the act and to ensure that the federal government leads in accessibility improvements, and to promote broader inclusion of persons with disabilities beyond the federal jurisdiction. The *Toronto Star* reported that \$290 million is not nearly enough to remove all the barriers faced by people with disabilities.
- Promised \$3 million of a \$20 million autism fund budgeted in 2018 will go toward 6 new initiatives to assist people living with autism.

Conservative

- Promised to renew the Ottawa-Carleton Association of Persons with Developmental Disabilities contract, which currently employs 34 workers with disabilities to shred documents for the federal government.

NDP

- Vows to strengthen labour laws and ensure diverse and equitable hiring within the federal public service, and in federally-regulated industries.
- Upholds the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and will strengthen the Accessibility Act to cover all federal agencies equally, with the power to make and enforce accessibility standards in a timely manner.
- Will launch a full review of income security programs and expand employment programs to make sure that quality employment opportunities are available to all.
- Will make Employment Insurance work better by extending sickness benefits to 50 weeks of coverage and creating a pilot project to allow workers with episodic disabilities to access benefits as they need them.

- In addition to putting in place a universal, publicly funded national pharmacare program that will offer full benefits to all Canadians, it will restore door-to-door mail delivery for those who lost it under the Conservatives, and create affordable, accessible housing in communities across the country.
- Will work with Canadians living with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) to develop and implement a national autism strategy that will coordinate support for research, ensure access to needs-based services, promote employment, and help expand housing options.

Green Party

- Promised to create a Canada Disabilities Act (CDA) to express Canadians' vision of a more equitable society and to alleviate the current confusion resulting from the multiplicity of acts, standards, policies, and programs that prevail.
- Will work with provinces to support a national equipment fund to provide equipment such as wheelchairs and accessibility tools to assist persons with disabilities to fully participate in work and community life.
- Will provide federal health transfer payments to provinces and territories directed to rehabilitation for those who have become disabled, e.g., loss of limbs.
- Will enforce the *Employment Equity Act* to ensure that persons with disabilities have equal opportunity for long-term employment and advancement.
- Will institute a basic income for people living with disabilities so that none live in poverty by creating a national Basic Income program for working-age adults with disabilities. Will redesign the Canada Pension Plan Disability Benefit test to incorporate the Disability Tax Credit (DTC) definition of disability and permit employment, rather than use the CPP(D) definition that requires a "severe" disability to be lifelong and to be the cause of any incapacity to pursue any gainful occupation.

Women's Rights

Party	Position
Liberal	Supports women's rights and safe access to abortion, but currently doesn't have a published 2019 platform on the topic.
Conservative	Supports women's rights, but several MPs have signaled their desire to roll back abortion rights. Party currently does not have a published 2019 platform on the topic.
NDP	Supports women's rights and has several items in its platform devoted to gender equality and enhancing women's rights.
Green Party	Supports women's rights and has several items in its platform devoted to gender equality and enhancing women's rights.

Closing the wage gap

Women currently represent 47 per cent of the workforce in Canada. According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, in 2016 Canada ranked eighth highest for gender pay gap out of 43 countries. The gap widens for women of colour, women with disabilities, and women in the LGBTQI2S community. Depending on the way you compare wages, Statistics Canada reports that on average for every \$1.00 earned by a man, women earn approximately \$0.69–\$0.87 for doing the same type of work. Racialized women earn approximately \$0.58, and Indigenous women earn approximately \$0.46. Regardless of the actual numbers, the fact that a gender pay gap exists in Canada is unacceptable.

Track Record & Campaign Promises

Liberal

- Introduced the *Pay Equity Act*, a regulation affecting all federally regulated workplaces in the public and private sectors. It requires employers to establish pay-equity plans or establish pay-equity committees. A pay-equity commissioner is currently being hired to administer and enforce the act.
- Have launched several initiatives to get more women involved in politics, in male-dominated fields, and in management positions.
- Budget 2019 proposes that by 2023/24, investment in the Women's Program (which tackles systemic barriers impeding women's progress) will total \$100 million annually.
- Have said they'll reintroduce Bill C-337 should they be re-elected in the fall. The bill mandates sexual assault sensitivity training for lawyers seeking to be judges in federal courts; it passed unanimously in the house, but died in the senate after being blocked by Conservative senators.

Conservative

- Scheer said that he will not reopen the abortion debate if elected. Yet, when he was running for the Conservative Party leadership, he also promised to allow free votes among his caucus if they bring the issue forward.
- Rachael Harder (the Shadow Minister for the Status of Women) and 11 other Conservative MPs attended an anti-abortion rally in May 2019.

NDP

- Promises to put an end to gender-based waged discrimination, and will require employers to be transparent about pay and about implementing and enforcing tough, pro-active pay-equity legislation and regulations.
- Pledged to develop a National Action Plan to end gender-based violence. And pledged to back it with funding to ensure that shelter services and other programs are available in all regions of the country, especially in areas that have traditionally been underserved.
- Promises to promote policies for domestic-violence leave in workplaces, to improve police training on sexual assault, and to require universities to develop plans to end sexual violence on campus.
- Will enforce the *Canada Health Act* to make sure that the provinces make medical and surgical abortion available in all parts of the country, without barriers.
- Will strengthen labour laws and ensure diverse and equitable hiring within the federal public service and in federally regulated industries.

Green Party

- Party opposes any possible government move to diminish the right of a woman to a safe, legal abortion.
- Promises to expand programs in reproductive rights and education to avoid unwanted pregnancies, and to expand supports for low-income mothers.
- Vows to pass pay-equity legislation, as recommended by the Pay Equity Task Force; will immediately implement full pay equity for women employed in the federal sector and develop tax incentives for companies to meet the highest standards of gender and pay equity.
- Opposes the use of religious justice systems, such as Sharia law, in Canada that run contrary to our existing rule of law and that specifically subjugate women and diminish the rights of women.
- Will establish specific job re-entry programs for women with children who want to restart their working lives either part-time or full-time.
- Will ensure that the criteria for new appointments to public boards and agencies include equal opportunity for women.
- Will support greater engagement of women in the political life of Canada by advocating that all political parties nominate, train, and support more women candidates.
- Will create better policies and programs to end violence against women.

Public Policy

Affordable Housing

Party	Position
Liberal	National Housing Strategy will create 100,000 new affordable housing units over 10 years, but housing built by private for-profit developers only has to be affordable for 10 years.
Conservative	No proposals on rental housing, and ideas for encouraging home ownership are mainly in areas that are under provincial and municipal jurisdiction.
NDP	Proposing an additional 500,000 affordable housing units over 10 years and a federal foreign-buyers' tax to reduce speculation that pushes up housing prices.
Green Party	Proposing funding for co-ops and non-profit housing providers, but have also called for subsidies private developers to include affordable housing units in new developments.

It's Getting Harder for Working People to Afford a Place to Live

Rising housing costs mean it is increasingly difficult for many Canadians to afford a place to live. High housing costs are also adding to the problem of income inequality.

Over the last 40 years, the average price of a home has increased from 5 times the average income to 10 times. In 23 of 36 major cities in Canada, a person earning minimum wage can't afford to rent a one-bedroom apartment.

The result is that over 235,000 Canadians are homeless for at least some of the year. Others are paying a lot in transportation costs and spending several hours a day commuting, because the only places they can find to live are a long way from their work or from the services they need.

High Cost of Housing Helping to Increase Income Inequality

The increases in rents and housing prices are also adding to the problem of income inequality and passing it on to future generations. Until recently, middle-income earners who rented could hope to save up enough for a down payment on a home. That's no longer possible in much of Canada. Instead, high rents mean many people are only able to buy homes if they have family members who can afford to help them.

Federal Government Can Make a Difference

Until the early 1990s, federal government funding played an important role in getting new affordable housing built. On average, over 20,000 affordable housing units a year were built under federal and provincial housing programs. Cuts to federal funding for new housing in the 1990s are a big part of why housing costs have risen so much.

Public, Non-profit, and Co-op Housing Stays Affordable

Because the up-front costs are lower, it's tempting for governments to subsidize private for-profit landlords to build affordable housing. The problem is that, as soon as they are legally allowed to do so, private for-profit landlords will increase rents to the point where the housing is no longer

affordable. In contrast with private for-profit housing, public housing, housing co-ops, and non-profit housing units stay affordable.

Track Record & Campaign Promises

Liberal

- National Housing Strategy will provide a combination of grants and loans to build 100,000 affordable housing units and repair 300,000 others over a 10-year period, with most of the funding coming after 2021/22.
- National Housing Strategy provides funding for many units to be built by private for-profit landlords who are only required to keep the units affordable for 10 years.
- Introduced interest-free second mortgages to cover part of the down payment for first-time home buyers.
- Will waive the federal portion of the GST/HST on the construction of new affordable rental units.

Conservative

- Will rework mortgage stress test.
- Will work with municipalities and provinces to remove regulatory barriers in the hope that more homes will be built.
- When in government, Conservatives took no action to extend programs to fund affordable housing that was due to expire.

NDP

- Will create 500,000 units of affordable housing over 10 years, with \$5 billion of the required funding increase to be allocated in the first year and a half after the election.
- Will double the Home Buyers' Tax Credit to \$1,500 for first-time buyers.
- Will waive the federal portion of the GST/HST on the construction of new affordable rental units.
- Will reintroduce 30-year terms to Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's (CMHC) insured mortgages for first-time home buyers to allow for smaller monthly payments.
- Will introduce a federal foreign-buyers' tax.
- Will introduce a public beneficial-ownership registry for property to address the problem of money laundering pushing up housing prices.

Green Party

- Will subsidize private developers to include a percentage of affordable housing in their housing projects.
- Will provide funding to co-op and non-profit housing providers to build and restore housing
- Will remove the "deemed" GST whenever a developer with empty condo units places them on the market as rentals.

Anti-poverty Measures

Party	Position
Liberal	Has supported anti-poverty initiatives and launched a Poverty Reduction Strategy. It currently doesn't have a published 2019 platform on the topic.
Conservative	Has supported anti-poverty initiatives, though has also proposed cuts to services that support Canadians living in poverty. It currently doesn't have a published 2019 platform on the topic.
NDP	Has supported anti-poverty initiatives and has several items in its platform devoted to ending poverty in Canada.
Green Party	Has supported anti-poverty initiatives and has several items in its platform devoted to ending poverty in Canada.

Promise to End Child Poverty in Canada

In 1989, an all-party House of Commons resolution to end child poverty in Canada by the year 2000 was put forward. In the 30 years following the resolution, steps have been taken to reduce child poverty, but the resolution to end it outright has failed.

The Vulnerable Most Likely to Live in Poverty

It is important to recognize that people of all ethnicities and abilities live in poverty, but marginalized groups, such as people of colour, Indigenous people, single mothers, members of the LGBTQI2S communities, and people with disabilities are more likely to live in poverty.

In 2018/19, the federal government transferred \$75,416 billion through the Canada Social Transfer (CST) to the provinces and territories to support post-secondary education, social assistance, and social services. In 2019/20, provinces and territories will receive \$78.7 billion through the CST.

Party Positions

Liberal

- Committed to developing Canada's first Food Policy, a coordinated and collaborative approach to addressing food-related issues. The policy aims to ensure that Canada's agriculture and agri-food sector continues to succeed and helps to grow the economy as a trusted global source of healthy food.
- Budget 2019 proposes to invest \$134.4 million over 5 years, on a cash basis, beginning in 2019/20, with \$5.2 million ongoing in a suite of new measures, as directed by the Food Policy.
- In 2018, launched a Poverty Reduction Strategy, which established short-term and long-term targets of 20% poverty reduction by 2020, and 50% poverty reduction by 2030, from the 2015 level.
- Working on legislation to adopt an official poverty line, create a national advisory council on poverty, require the development and implementation of a poverty-reduction strategy, and to designate a responsible Minister and require the Minister to table annual reports to Parliament.

Conservative

- Has stated they will maintain the current Child Benefit, tax free.
- Promised to remove the GST from home-heating bills and home-energy costs.
- Vowed to make parental benefits tax free.

NDP

- Will launch a full review of income security programs.
- Will continue and expand employment programs to make sure that quality employment opportunities are available to all.
- Promises to lead a National Seniors Strategy that will work with the provinces, territories, and Indigenous governments to make seniors health care a priority, reduce isolation, and tackle seniors' poverty.
- Vowed to make the Canada caregiver credit (CCC) refundable, which will provide thousands of dollars to the most low-income caregivers.

Green Party

- Will remove taxes from the lowest-income categories so that no taxes are paid by those below the poverty line.
- Will allow income assistance recipients to keep 100% of the wages they earn, up to the low-income cut-off level, to encourage people to get back into the job market.
- Will offer people the mobility they need to find work, shelter, and other necessities through free transit passes for those on income assistance.
- Will extend maternity/paternity leave for new parents outside of EI to 2 years, and for one additional year for parents who pay into EI.
- Will increase the Guaranteed Income Supplement for seniors by 25%.
- Will top up the income support for single parents on welfare during the time they are attending school or job-training programs.
- Will ensure financial assistance for low-income spouses and relatives who provide end-of-life care at home for patients who would otherwise need to be hospitalized or in institutional long-term care.
- Will develop a comprehensive plan to improve our social safety network so that it eliminates child poverty.
- Will restore employment insurance to seasonal workers.
- Will restore adequate staffing to Service Canada to ensure access to the EI program for workers entitled to benefits.

Electoral Reform

Party	Position
Liberal	In government, reneged on a promise of electoral reform and currently has no official position.
Conservative	Requires a referendum before any electoral reform can be implemented and doesn't officially favour any particular option.
NDP	Introduce proportional representation (Mixed-Member Proportional) for the next election, and once Canadians have the opportunity to experience the new voting system, hold a referendum to confirm the choice.
Green Party	Replace the Single Member Plurality system with a system of proportional representation.

Why Electoral Reform Is Important

Electoral reform is important because of the numerous defects with the current electoral system, the Single Member Plurality (SMP) system, also known as first past the post (FPTP). Its central failing is that, under SMP, a political party can secure a majority of seats in a legislative assembly without having a majority of the votes. For example, in 2011, the Conservative Party of Canada won a majority of the seats (54%) in the House of Commons with just 39.6% of the overall votes. 4 years later, in 2015, the Liberal Party of Canada won a majority of the seats (54%) in the House of Commons with just 39.5% of the overall votes. In both cases, the parties were able to govern with 100% of the parliamentary power. An electoral system that grants 100% of the power with less than 40% of the support from the voting public is by definition undemocratic and must be replaced.

The Federal Government Promise of Electoral Reform

Reforming Canada's electoral system was a foundation of the Liberal Party of Canada (LPC) platform in the 2015 electoral campaign. During that campaign, LPC leader Justin Trudeau promised that "2015 will be the last federal election conducted under the first-past-the-post voting system." When the party won enough seats to form government, it struck a parliamentary committee, conducted town hall meetings, and sent out a national survey on the issue.

The Special Committee on Electoral Reform held hearings and public meetings in every province and territory between June and November of 2016, tabling a majority report on December 1, 2016. Among the 13 recommendations made by the committee was that a form of proportional representation be implemented and that a national referendum be held on the issue. On February 1, 2017, the newly appointed Minister of Democratic Institutions, Karina Gould, announced that the government was no longer pursuing electoral reform, and it was not listed as a priority in her mandate letter from Trudeau. In the letter, Trudeau wrote that "a clear preference for a new electoral system, let alone a consensus, has not emerged" and that "without a clear preference or a clear question, a referendum would not be in Canada's interest."

Later, Trudeau admitted that it was because the committee recommended a form of proportional representation rather than a preferential ballot system (which he favoured) that his government reneged on the promise of electoral reform. In a [2018 CBC interview](#), Trudeau said, "I will not move towards any form of proportional representation, but if people want to talk about a different system that might benefit Canadians, like a preferential ballot, I'd be open to that."

Track Record & Campaign Promises

Liberal

- No official position.
- In government, reneged on a promise of electoral reform when a parliamentary committee proposed proportional representation.

Conservative

- Holds that a referendum is a non-negotiable prerequisite before electoral reform can be implemented.
- Open to considering electoral reform, but it does not officially favour any particular option.

NDP

- Will replace SMP with a Mixed-Member Proportional (MMP) system of proportional representation
- Will establish an independent citizens' assembly to recommend the best way to put MMP in place for the next election, and once Canadians have the opportunity to experience the new voting system, will hold a referendum to confirm the choice
- Will lower the voter age to 16.
- Will hold social media platforms responsible for flagging and removing fraudulent accounts, and will respond promptly to harassment, threats, and hate speech.

Green

- Will replace the SMP system with a system of proportional representation.
- Will reduce financial barriers to running for political office.
- Will lower the voting age to 16 to encourage more youth participation.



NATIONAL UNION OF PUBLIC AND GENERAL EMPLOYEES

- B. C. Government and Service Employees' Union (BCGEU)
- Health Sciences Association of British Columbia (HSABC)
- Health Sciences Association of Alberta (HSAA)
- Saskatchewan Government and General Employees' Union (SGEU)
- Manitoba Government and General Employees' Union (MGEU)
- Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU)
- Canadian Union of Brewery and General Workers (CUBGW)
- New Brunswick Union of Public and Private Employees (NBU)
- Nova Scotia Government and General Employees Union (NSGEU)
- PEI Union of Public Sector Employees (PEI UPSE)
- Newfoundland & Labrador Association of Public and Private Employees (NAPE)

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15 AURIGA DRIVE
NEPEAN, ONTARIO
CANADA / K2E 1B7

[613] 228-9800
FAX [613] 228-9801

www.nupge.ca

national@nupge.ca

