



## NDP responses to the CTF/FCE election priorities

### Poverty

- **What is your party's plan to fulfill the National Poverty Reduction Strategy?**

This election is about choices. When it comes down to it, Andrew Scheer and the Conservatives and Justin Trudeau and the Liberals have chosen to compete on who can give better deals to their wealthy friends and rich corporations, rather than help everyday Canadians. The Trudeau Liberals even brought forward a poverty reduction strategy without a single dollar of new spending.

New Democrats have always been in it for you. The NDP's platform is founded on developing social programs and services that help lift people out of poverty. Here's how we're going to implement the National Poverty Reduction Strategy:

- \$10 billion annual commitment to establish a universal pharmacare plan
- \$10 billion in child care in first four years of a NDP government
- \$5 billion in additional funding to help build 500,000 affordable housing units over 10 years
- Ending homelessness within a decade
- Extending the Employment Insurance Sickness Benefits to 50 weeks
- Launching a national income pilot project in addition to continuing Ontario's program
- Establishing a national minimum wage of \$15 per hour
- Develop specific social programs and services in collaboration with Indigenous communities via the principles of self-determination and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People

A NDP government will take a leadership role and work with provinces, territories, and Indigenous communities to help those living in precarious conditions.

- **How does your party plan to work with the provinces and territories in order to reach poverty reduction targets?**

New Democrats believe that health care, education, and housing are rights that must be reflected in federal government priorities to permanently lift people out of poverty and help them live independent, healthy lives.

We are taking a leadership position by offering federal funding and guidance in health care, child care, employment insurance and sickness benefits, and by increasing the minimum wage. Our federal contribution will take pressure off provincial budgets.

Our investment will show provinces, territories, and Indigenous communities that a NDP government will be a collaborative partner in reaching poverty reduction targets with the goal of ending homelessness within a decade.

- **Where does your party stand on developing national daycare and lunch programs?**

The Liberals have been promising a child care program since 1993. Twenty-six years later, the Canadian children who are waiting for that program are now having children of their own.

Justin Trudeau and the Liberals say they'll be different this time, but he also admitted he won't push the provinces to improve child care services. That's not leadership.

New Democrats are different – we're on your side. As a first step towards a national daycare program, we will create more than 500,000 new affordable child care spaces across the country and build a universal child care and early learning system that delivers the service families need.

The NDP's [New Deal for People](#) is our commitment to helping Canadians access the tools to make affordable, healthier choices. A NDP government will establish a national school nutrition program so that children have access to healthy food regardless of where they live or how much money their parents make.

## **Mental Health**

- **What does your party plan to do in order to improve knowledge and access to mental health resources, supports, and services to assist students, teachers, and education support workers in publicly funded, K-12 public schools in Canada?**

Decades of Conservative cuts and Liberal inaction have harmed the services we count on – and Canadians have been left struggling. Provincial Conservative governments make cuts on the backs of children and teachers and support staff that help them. The

Liberals say pretty words when it's election time, but when they are in government they consistently fail to deliver on their promises.

Young people deserve more than empty words. We believe that people should have access to mental health services when they need them.

Democrats have a vision to expand health care services by offering head to toe coverage. By doing so, we will modernize the Canadian health care system to meet the needs of today. For many, that means accessing mental health supports.

Too many Canadians are digging deep into their pockets for necessary health care like mental health treatment. Our pharmacare program means that Canadians can take the medication they need to treat their mental health issues.

A NDP government will also dedicate federal resources to develop a suicide prevention plan, specifically to help Indigenous communities. This puts into action the work that the [NDP has led so far in Parliament](#).

- **How can your party make mental health a greater priority for all Canadians?**

All Canadians should have access to the health care services they need, like mental health supports. A third of Canadians struggling with mental health challenges, who expressed a need for counselling, weren't able to get it.

Under Conservative and Liberal governments, Canada was racing to the bottom on prioritizing health care compared to other OECD countries. In fact, we only spent [7.2% of overall health care costs](#) on mental health, even though [1 in 5 Canadians](#) may experience a mental health problem over a single year.

A NDP government will develop a national strategy on mental health that better coordinates resources and ensures federal investments target high risk populations.

Our universal pharmacare program will mean Canadians can access the medication they need to treat their mental health issues.

- **How can government work to dispel the myths surrounding mental health?**

Both the Scheer Conservatives and Trudeau Liberals have turned their backs on making health care a priority.

New Democrats believe that the best way to dispel myths on mental health is to show that mental health care is part of routine health care. New Democrats will improve

access to mental health supports so that more people will be able to get the care they need.

## Gender Equity

- **What does your party plan to do to provide greater economic opportunities to women?**

New Democrats believe that gender equity is a fundamental value because no one should be left behind. Currently, women still make 32% less than men, and the gap is even wider for racialized women, Indigenous women, immigrant women, and women with a disability.

A New Democrat government will ensure that our pay equity policies will end gender-based wage discrimination, require employers to be transparent about pay, and implement and enforce tough and pro-active pay equity legislation and regulations right away.

- **Where does your party stand on implementing a national, universal daycare program?**

Canadians are struggling to keep up with the skyrocketing costs of child care. And affordable spaces are nearly impossible to come by. Instead of helping, successive Liberal and Conservative governments have barely made a dent in the child care costs crushing family budgets.

New Democrats believe that Canadian families should be able to access quality, affordable child care when they need it. That's why we have a bold plan to expand public child care and make it affordable for all families.

As a first step, we'll invest \$10 billion over four years and work with the provinces, territories, and Indigenous communities to create over 500,000 new licensed child care spaces in our first mandate, and establish a national, affordable early learning and child care system that will deliver universal child care by 2030.

A New Democrat government will bring in legislation to enshrine our commitment to quality, affordable publicly funded child care into law, and set out the principles, conditions, and requirements for federal transfer payments to provinces (like the *Canada Health Act*). Quebec will be able to opt out with compensation.

We'll commit \$10 million right away to an Affordable Child Care Action Fund and create a national child care secretariat to oversee the coordination of the work, and to collaborate with the provinces and territories on initiatives such as a workforce strategy

and improved data sharing and research.

- **How does your party plan to increase acceptance and understanding of gender diversity?**

The Trudeau Liberals have failed to back up their words with strong action to address systemic gender discrimination. The Conservatives slashed funding for women's equality while they were in power, setting Canada back decades.

New Democrat government will also work to remove obstacles to **women's political participation** by reforming the electoral system and introducing legislation to encourage political parties to run more women candidates.

When it comes to sexual orientation and gender expression, damaging practices such as so-called "conversion therapy" have no place in Canada. We will develop a national action plan to ban conversion therapy for minors in Canada, and work with provinces and territories to support eliminating this practice in all parts of the country.

We can also do more to end employment discrimination faced by members of the LGBTQI2S+ community. A New Democrat government will add sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression to the *Employment Equity Act* in order to address the disadvantages experienced by the LGBTQI2S+ community – and particularly transgender people – in finding work.

New Democrats will work to achieve gender equality and end gender-based violence for women and LGBTQI2S+ individuals.

## **Strong Unions and Labour Rights**

- **How does your party see unions as central to helping solve many of our societal challenges?**

Justin Trudeau and Liberals turned their backs on organized labour when they legislated postal workers back to work and failed to introduce a federal minimum wage.

New Democrats have heard from many Canadians who feel like they're been left behind because Conservative and Liberal governments have put corporate and wealthy interests ahead of everyday Canadians.

The NDP's [New Deal for People](#) is founded on making life affordable for all Canadians. New Democrats believe that the federal government has an important role to play in making work better, fairer and more secure for everyone. We believe that membership

in a union is the best ticket into the middle class – and it leaves workers and our entire economy better off.

- **What will your party do to ensure that Canadians are empowered through union membership?**

New Democrats will always respect organized labour. We will work in collaboration with unions. We will protect workers' rights by amending the *Canada Labour Code* to enhance safeguards for workers and ban the use of replacement workers in disputes.

We will defend the Rand formula, so that unions can effectively advocate for workers, and we will continue to oppose heavy-handed legislation that suspends the rights to bargain and to strike.

- **What will your party do to protect pensions?**

The Liberals have sided with rich corporations to undermine retirement benefits.

The Liberals' openness to transition to target benefit plans in the public sector, which don't guarantee stable benefits for retirees, puts defined benefits at risk for all Canadians – and we will immediately put a stop to this chipping away of retirement security.

New Democrats believe that the federal government has a critical role to play in protecting defined benefit pensions across the country. New Democrats will protect pensions by making sure that pensioners are at the front of the line when a company goes bankrupt and making sure that unfunded pension liabilities owed to workers and employees' severance pay are the top priority for repayment. We will stop companies from paying out dividends and bonuses when pensions are underfunded.

New Democrats will also create a mandatory, industry-financed pension insurance program to deal with underfunded employer pensions. We make the automatic enrollment in Old Age Security and Guaranteed Income Supplement retroactive.