



Universal Child Care

Key message

- Universal child care creates jobs, provides relief for families, allows parents to participate more fully in the workforce, alleviates poverty and shrinks the wage gap.

What is the issue?

- High quality, affordable child care is a necessity for Canadian families. There needs to be a national strategy, in cooperation with all levels of government, to provide nationally regulated and subsidized child care. The benefits of such action would be enormous, both to the quality of life of Canadians and to our economy.
- Canada's high child-care costs make it particularly difficult for single mothers to find affordable care. Quality is constantly undermined by low wages and poor retention rates for early childhood educators.

Advantages for Canadians

- Economic studies have repeatedly shown that the multi-generational benefits of focused, accountable investments in child care outweigh the costs by at least two to one.
- Access to quality child care services promotes health, advances women's equality, reduces crime, addresses child and family poverty, and deepens community social inclusion.
- Twenty years after Quebec's child care program was introduced in 1996, 70,000 more mothers had entered the workforce, adding \$5.1 billion to Quebec's gross provincial income.

Why Now?

- Canada stands as one of the few economically advanced countries that has yet to produce a child care strategy.
- At just 0.3% of the GDP, Canada's current annual spending on child care falls short of UNICEF's international benchmark spending of 1% of a country's GDP.
- Investing in child care is one of the biggest returns on investment that a government can receive. Pierre Fortin showed in his research that for every \$100 invested into it, Quebec's \$7-a-day child care program returned \$104 to the Quebec government, and \$43 to Ottawa – more than paying for the program.

Questions

- What is your party doing to address the child care crisis?
- Will your party implement universal child care?
- How much money has your party budgeted to spend on early learning and child care?

More information

- Grandparents for Childcare campaign: <https://www.gpfcc.ca/>
- Child Care Now's Affordable Child Care for All Plan: <https://timeforchildcare.ca/the-affordable-child-care-for-all-plan/>



Environment and Climate Change

Key message

- Climate change is a defining issue of our time. The Canadian government must address the warming planet that has caused natural disasters including floods, tornados and forest fires in our country.

What is the issue?

- Canada is experiencing warming at twice the rate of other countries on average, with Northern Canada facing temperatures at three times the global average.¹
- Climate change disproportionately affects the world's poor and vulnerable people – often majority women. Projections by the UN indicate that climate change will cause less secure means of subsistence, more vulnerability to hunger and poverty, environmental degradation, and exacerbation of social inequalities.

Solutions to Address Climate Change in Canada

- Carbon tax makes polluting the environment more expensive and can channel funds into renewable energy sources. For example, the David Suzuki Foundation has reported that Carbon taxes in BC have reduced greenhouse gas emissions.
- The federal government should involve women and children, low income people and indigenous peoples when making decisions on climate change solutions.

Why Now?

- Canada and other western nations are on track to exceed the 2°C of warming target agreed to in the 2016 Paris Agreement by as early as 2040.
- “45% of Canadians select climate change to be the first, second, or third most important issue facing the world today among a list of other important issues—including 28% who choose it as their number one issue” as found in recent polling by Vancouver-based Insights West.

Questions

- What do you see as roles for the municipal, provincial and federal governments with respect to Climate Change action plans?
- How would you use government regulations and enforcement to reduce emissions?
- What type of carbon tax do you recommend? Why Cap and Trade? Carbon Pricing?

More information

- Climate Action Network Canada: <http://climateactionnetwork.ca/>
- 10 Myths about Carbon Tax: <https://bit.ly/2Xijem8>

¹¹<https://bit.ly/33r5TvX>



Homelessness

Key message

- Homelessness comes at a very high cost – to individuals, communities and systems of care.

What is the issue?

- According to the [Canadian Definition of Homelessness](#), homelessness is “the situation of an individual, family, or community without stable, safe, permanent, appropriate housing, or the immediate prospect means and ability of acquiring it.”
- In the [State of Homelessness in Canada 2016](#) report, it was estimated that at least 235,000 Canadians experience homelessness in a given year. The actual number is potentially much higher, given that many people who are unhoused live with friends or relatives, and do not come into contact with emergency shelters. Data from a Ipsos Reid poll in March 2013 suggests that as many as 1.3 million Canadians have experienced homelessness or extremely insecure housing at some point during the past five years.
- Homelessness is not a choice and there are [many reasons](#) why people experience homelessness, including the lack of structural supports for those experiencing poverty, job loss, and inadequate discharge planning for those leaving foster care, hospitals, correctional facilities and mental health facilities.

Advantages for Canadians

- When there are enough services, housing and shelter beds for anyone who needs them, anyone who experiences homelessness does so only briefly, is rehoused successfully, and therefore unlikely to return to homelessness.
- Numerous studies demonstrate that communities save money by providing permanent supportive housing to people experiencing homelessness.
- Homeless persons are more likely to suffer from chronic medical conditions and complications due to housing instability. Emergency rooms, crisis response and public safety systems are utilized at a much higher rate by homeless individuals.

Questions

- Homelessness exists in all communities in Canada. Are you aware of the programs and projects that are in place in your riding to prevent homelessness? What are your ideas on how to prevent homelessness and how to address the current homelessness situation in your riding?”
- Would your government be willing to work in your riding to shift the focus from emergency services to preventative strategies and to fund them adequately?

More information

- Homeless Hub <https://www.homelesshub.ca/about-homelessness>



Immigration, Refugees and Asylum Seekers

Key message

- The current situation of refugees desperately seeking safe haven is critical. Article 14 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that everyone has the right to seek asylum from persecution in other countries. Canada has adopted the 1951 Refugee Convention and we must do our part to protect the world's most vulnerable.

What is the issue?

- According to the UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), nearly 70.8 million people were displaced in 2018 – a new high caused by continued war, violence and persecution.
- Refugees and asylum seekers continue to arrive in Canada and the system to process their claims is a lengthy one. For claimants to be properly vetted and then welcomed into Canada, the system must be effective and efficient. Resources must be expanded to provide the requisite, training, counselling, and infrastructure to the appropriate municipal, provincial, territorial, and federal entities.
- Under the Safe Third Country Agreement between Canada and the US, refugee claimants are required to request protection in the first country in which they arrive. If one country denies a claimant refuge, they cannot seek sanctuary in the other country. The US is the only designated safe third country, and claimants travelling from the US to seek refuge in Canada are forced to bypass this agreement by entering at irregular border crossings.

Advantages for Canadians

- Historically, refugees have contributed to building our rich and diverse society. There are countless success stories of refugees resettling in Canada. For more facts about refugees and immigrants in Canada check out: <https://thecic.org/popular-misconceptions-about-canadian-immigration-and-refugees/>

Questions

- What is your party's position on the Canada-US Safe Third Country Agreement? Will you maintain, suspend, revoke or otherwise amend it and if, so, how?
- Will your party ensure that federal, provincial, and territorial governments work together to provide the requisite resources and infrastructure to welcome these vetted refugees and asylum seekers into Canada? If so, how?

More information

- UNHCR Global Trends Report released 19 June 2019 <https://www.unhcr.org/figures-at-a-glance.html>
- Canadian Council for Refugees <https://ccrweb.ca/en/refugee-facts>



Indigenous Women and Girls

Key message

- Discriminatory policies and laws, the intergenerational impact of residential schools system, racist attitudes, stereotypes and implicit biases have contributed to inexcusable human rights abuses for First Nations, Métis and Inuit women and girls.

What is the issue?

- The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada shed some light on the impacts of centuries of colonialist structures and discrimination, especially on the horrors of the sixties scoop and the residential school system and its inter-generational impact.
- The ongoing tragedy of the missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls highlights the necessity to factor in gender and the intersection of discrimination systems, when looking at ways to instigate change.
- CFUW supports Indigenous peoples' fight to end colonialism and discrimination.

Why Now?

- One-third of all First Nations living on-reserve use drinking water systems that negatively affect their health (Globe and Mail 2016).¹
- First Nations children are placed in child-welfare 12 times more than non-Indigenous children, due largely to poverty, poor housing, parental addictions and mental-health issues (Truth and Reconciliation Commission 2015).
- Former Indigenous Services Minister Jane Philpott stated that the alarming number of First Nations children in child welfare is a “humanitarian crisis.”
- Indigenous women are 3 times more likely to experience violence than non-indigenous women. (GSS 2014)

Questions

- What has your party done to address the final recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls?
- What is your party doing to address the current piecemeal approach to ending boil water advisories on First Nations reserves?
- Resources
 - [Indigenous Ally Toolkit](#) by the Montreal Urban Aboriginal Community Strategy Network:
 - To find out on which Indigenous Community territory you are on as well as the regional languages and the treaty in effect you can consult: <https://native-land.ca/>

¹<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/indigenous-water/article31589755/>



Pay Equity

Key message

- Pay equity is not simply about women being paid less than men for the same work. It is about women's work being devalued, and women not being given the same opportunities for positions of leadership.

What is the issue?

- The gender wage gap is the difference in earnings between women and men in the workplace. It is a widely recognized indicator of women's economic equality, and it exists to some extent in every country in the world.
- The pay gap disproportionately affects women of colour, Indigenous women, LGBTQ2+, immigrant women, and women with disabilities.
- Pay equity is the law and it remains a human rights issue that is vital to women's economic equality and ending sexism in Canada.

Advantages for Canadians

- We believe the empowerment of women is essential to dismantling the structural and societal issues that hinder our development as a community, both locally, and globally.
- When women are given equal pay, opportunities to be in positions of leadership, and the ability to live life without threats to their safety and well-being, positive advancements for all occur.

Why Now?

- Canada is ranked as having the 8th highest gender wage gap out of a list of 43 countries examined by the OECD, based on 2016 data.
- 74 cents: The average amount earned by full-time working women in Canada for every dollar earned by men, according to Statistics Canada (Census 2016).
- On average, it takes women 15.5 months to earn what a man earns in 12, according to the Ontario Equal Pay Coalition.

Questions

- What is the gender wage gap in your province?
- What is your party doing to address the discriminatory pay gaps that are a violation of human rights?

More information

- Ontario Equal Pay Coalition Tool Kit: <http://equalpaycoalition.org/action-kit/>
- Canadian Women Foundation- Pay Gap Myths infographic: https://www.canadianwomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Infographic-Mind-The-Gap_Updated2018.jpg



National Pharmacare

Key message

- All Canadians should have access to the medications they need. A universal, public, comprehensive, accessible and portable national Pharmacare program would cut costs and lead to a healthier population.

What is the issue?

- Canada is the only country in the world with universal health care that does not also provide universal drug coverage and we consistently pay among the highest prices for prescription drugs. Twenty per cent of Canadians have inadequate coverage to meet their needs. One in four households in Canada can't afford to fill their prescriptions.
- A universal, public Pharmacare program would help Canadians better manage their health, lead to reduced medication costs and allow for better monitoring of the effectiveness and safety of medications.
- It would also reduce the burden on other parts of the health care system.

Advantages for Canadians

- Canadians would save between \$4 and \$11 billion with a national drug plan that had interprovincial cooperation in buying. With no plan, Canadians drug costs as a share of GDP have more than tripled since 1985.
- The disparity in drug costs, insurance coverage and drug availability would be eliminated. Today, prescription drug coverage is provided through a patchwork of 100 public and 100,000 private insurance plans. Many Canadians can't afford insurance or prescription drugs and do without, suffering poor health and requiring more expensive, taxpayer-funded medical services as a result.
- One in six hospitalizations could be avoided if prescription drugs were used appropriately.
- A universal, public Pharmacare Plan would allow for better monitoring of medications, support, evidence-based drug coverage, and reduce the burden on other parts of the health care system.

Questions

- Will your party implement a universal, public, comprehensive, accessible and portable Pharmacare program?
- Will your party ensure that federal and provincial governments work together effectively to implement universal, public Pharmacare?
- Will your party ensure a comprehensive, evidence-based formulary, so that Canadians can access the medications they need to maintain and improve their health?

More information

- Canadian Health Coalition: <http://bit.ly/2Wguae4>
- Advisory Council on the Implementation of National Pharmacare: <http://bit.ly/2PJxia8>



Poverty

Key message

- Poverty is a fundamental determinant of health. The rate of poverty in Canada is 9.5% based on Canada's official Poverty Line (formerly known as the Market Basket Measure).¹

What is the issue?

- The rate of poverty remains at 1 in 10 Canadians, with women more likely than men to live in low-income households.
- Among women, lone mothers have the lowest adjusted income (\$25,300), followed by those who are unattached (\$37,000).²
- 1 in 5 children (1.3 million) live in conditions of poverty.
- 1 in 2 Status First Nations Children live in poverty.
- Over 80% of reserves have a median income below the poverty line.³
- Homelessness results from the lack of structural support for those living in poverty.

Solutions to Address Poverty in Canada

- Most studies of poverty and social assistance programs conclude with recommendations to streamline and coordinate programs and tax-based measures and/or increase the levels of benefits payable to those in need.
- Increasingly, researchers and policy makers are also urging consideration of a different strategy for tackling poverty, one based on some type of basic or guaranteed annual income for all Canadians.⁴

Why Now?

- Using the most cautious estimates, the direct (social assistance, and benefits) indirect (health care, criminal justice system, special education), and societal costs (loss of productivity, instability) of poverty are twice that amount.⁵

Questions

- What do you see as roles for the municipal, provincial and federal governments with respect to Poverty?
- Do you support a Basic Income Program? How should such a program be implemented?
- What other initiatives would support a reduction in poverty?

Additional Resources

- A Backgrounder of Poverty in Canada (2016).
http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2016/edsc-esdc/Em20-53-1-2016-eng.pdf

¹ Stats Canada 2018

² Fox, D. and Moyser, M. (2018) Women in Canada: A Gender-based Statistical Report

³ www.cwp-csp.ca

⁴ Eggleton, A. and Segal, H. (2006)

⁵ NCWR (2011) The Dollars and Cents of Solving Poverty, Volume 130, p75 <http://publications.gc.ca>