

# Real CHANGE

## RESTORING TRUST IN OUR DEMOCRACY

After a decade under Stephen Harper, Canadians' faith in government has never been lower. After promising reform, the Conservatives have delivered the most centralized, partisan, self-serving government in Canadian history. Government has grown secretive and closed-off from Canadians, and unprecedented power has been concentrated in the hands of the Prime Minister and his office. Millions of Canadians who elected good people to be their communities' voice in Ottawa have watched those same people become Stephen Harper's voice in their communities.

Canadians deserve an open, transparent government that will focus on their real priorities – economic growth that works for everyone.

Together, we can restore a sense of trust in our democracy. Greater openness and transparency are fundamental to accomplishing this. Liberals have led the way by introducing numerous bills and motions in Parliament to raise the bar on transparency and accountability in government. A Liberal government will implement these proposals, and go even further with new initiatives that expand Canadians' access to information, and give Canadians a real voice in Ottawa.

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### **Our plan includes:**

#### **Real Change to the Senate**

The Senate needs to change. The status quo is not an option. Stephen Harper and Thomas Mulcair have cynically proposed solutions that they know are unworkable, as they require protracted rounds of messy constitutional negotiations. A credible plan

is one that ends the partisan nature of the Senate, so that it can better serve its core function of legislative review and in-depth study. That is why Justin Trudeau removed all Senators from the Liberal Caucus and why we will also create a new, nonpartisan, merit-based, broad, and diverse process to advise on Senate appointments. We will also work to implement the recent recommendations of the Auditor General regarding Parliamentarians' expenses, including through legislative measures where necessary.

#### **Giving Canadians a Voice in Ottawa**

For Parliament to work best, its members must be free to do what they have been elected to do: represent their



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communities in Parliament and hold the government to account. That is why a Liberal government will introduce measures to strengthen the role of parliamentary committee chairs – including elections by secret ballot – and allow for a more robust system of oversight and review for legislation and other matters in the House of Commons and Senate. We will also ensure more free votes by only requiring Liberal Caucus members to vote with a Liberal government on three different measures: those that implement the Liberal electoral platform; traditional confidence matters, such as the Speech from the Throne and significant budgetary measures; and those that address the shared values embodied in the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

## **Open Parliament and Transparent Government**

Liberals led the way on ensuring that all Parliamentarians proactively disclose travel and hospitality expenses. Our Open Parliament Plan will create a common, quarterly, and more detailed parliamentary expense report, and will make the secretive Board of Internal Economy open

by default. We will also make information more accessible by requiring transparency to be a fundamental principle across the federal government. Among other things, we will amend the *Access to Information Act* so that all government data and information is made open by default, and eliminate all fees associated with the Access to Information process, except for the initial \$5 filing fee. Furthermore, we will ensure that Access to Information applies to the Prime Minister's and Ministers' offices, as well as administrative institutions that support Parliament and the courts.

## **Only Justin Trudeau is offering a plan for open and transparent government**

- Liberals have a credible plan to make Senate appointments non-partisan, merit-based, broad and diverse.
- We'll strengthen the role of parliamentary committee chairs and boost oversight and review of legislation.
- The Liberal plan shines a light on how taxpayer money is spent by creating a common, quarterly expense report for all Parliamentarians.
- We'll make government data "open by default" as a guiding principle across our government.

