



Results – Policy Prioritization Vote



These are the 15 Policy Resolutions prioritized by Registered Liberals at the 2018 Liberal National Convention. They appear in the order of priority.

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1 - Implementing Universal Access to Necessary Medicines

WHEREAS:

- The United Nations and the World Health Organization have declared that all nations should ensure universal access to necessary medicines and Canada does not;
- Drug coverage is a fundamental component of receiving proper medical treatment and individuals should have access regardless of financial ability;
- Canada's public and private drug plans leave many patients with little or no coverage, resulting in 1 out of 10 patients not taking their prescribed medication;
- A moderate increase in public spending would reduce the burden on employers, unions, and private insurers;
- A recent report from the Parliamentary Budget Office, estimates that Pharmacare would save Canadians between \$4 billion and \$11 billion per year;
- There have been repeated calls to include prescription drugs in Canada's universal health care system, including:
 - Royal Commission on Health Services (1964, chair Justice Emmett Hall)
 - National Forum on Health (1997, chair Prime Minister Jean Chrétien),
 - Commission on the Future of Health Care in Canada (2002, chair Roy Romanow),
 - Citizens Reference Panel on Pharmacare (2016, chair Peter MacLeod),
 - Several national organisations including Canadian Nurses Association, Canadian Medical Association, Federation of Canadian Municipalities
- "Pharmacare 2020: The future of drug coverage in Canada" (UBC 2015)
- The Liberal Party of Canada adopted a priority resolution at the 2016 National Convention to implement a National Pharmacare plan before 2019;

BE IT RESOLVED the Liberal Party of Canada urge the Government of Canada to:

- Amend the *Canada Health Act* by adding, 'prescription medicines prescribed by a licensed practitioner in accordance with an established formulary' to the definition of covered services;
- Develop, with provincial and territorial cooperation, a universal, single-payer, evidence-based, and sustainable public drug plan, with purchasing power to secure best available pricing, beginning with a list of essential medicines addressing priority health needs and expanding to a comprehensive permanent plan to promote the health and well-being of all Canadians.

Moved by National Caucus, LPC (British Columbia), LPC (Ontario)

2 - Inclusion of Mental Health Services in Medicare and the Canada Health Act

WHEREAS:

- Poor mental health places a burden on all Canadians, particularly those living in poverty and/or working in positions with no provision of health care insurance;
- One in five Canadians experiences a mental health problem;
- Accessible fully funded mental health programs and services have been advocated by many for years;
- Examples of effective community based mental health services exist and have resulted in effective care;
- Studies of effective services to treat mental illness through co-management of mental and physical ailments, where appropriate, has resulted in recovery rates of 60%;
- The sponsors of this resolution researched the literature and held public consultations with 99.5% of respondents supporting this Resolution.

BE IT RESOLVED the Liberal Party of Canada urges the Government of Canada to:

- Amend the *Canada Health Act* and develop a national framework to ensure the inclusion of mental health services within Medicare;
- In consultation with provincial and territorial governments and indigenous groups, establish a systematic universal system of effective funded mental health programs and services as a component of Canada's Health Care funding.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a pilot program evaluate the effectiveness of community based partnerships led by mental health and primary care professionals in each region of Canada for up to a 5-year period with annual reports to Parliament on effectiveness, cost and outcomes.

Moved by LPC (Nova Scotia)

3 - Address the Opioid Crisis through a Public Health Approach

WHEREAS:

- Almost 3,000 Canadians died from opioid-related causes in 2016, and it is estimated that the number will surpass 3,000 in 2017;
- Our Liberal government has restored harm reduction as a key pillar of Canada's drug strategy, saved lives by passing Bill C-37 and facilitating the approval of more supervised consumption sites, and regulated cannabis as part of our commitment to evidence-based decision-making;
- In 2001, Portugal took two broad measures to combat the harms associated with drug abuse: first, Portuguese policymakers significantly expanded treatment and harm reduction services; and second, they eliminated criminal penalties for low-level possession and consumption of all illicit drugs and reclassified these activities as administrative violations;
- Since 2001, a person found in possession of personal-use amounts of any drug in Portugal is no longer arrested, but ordered to appear before a dissuasion commission comprised of representatives from law, medicine, and social work, which can refer a person to a voluntary treatment program, or impose administrative sanctions;
- Since 2001, in Portugal, the number of deaths from drug overdose has dropped significantly, adolescent and problematic drug use has decreased, the number of people in drug treatment has increased, the number of people arrested and sent to criminal courts has declined by 60%, and the per capital social cost of drug misuse has decreased by 18%.

BE IT RESOLVED the Government of Canada should treat drug abuse as a health issue, expand treatment and harm reduction services and re-classify low-level drug possession and consumption as administrative violations.

4 - Decriminalization of Consensual Sex Work and Sex Trade

WHEREAS:

- The current *Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons Act*, which prohibits the purchasing of sex, does little to protect sex workers and instead pushes them to work underground and in dangerous conditions;
- The current prohibition of buying consensual sex work does not address the underlying issues that make sex work dangerous, but rather creates a climate that makes sex workers unlikely to work with the police and be involved with more serious crimes;

BE IT RESOLVED the Liberal Party of Canada repeal the 2014 *Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons Act*, begin a consultation period with those in the sex work industry and advocacy groups, and move to decriminalize consensual sex work, and the purchase of said sex work, for those over the age of 18;

BE IT RESOLVED the Liberal Party of Canada consult not just with those involved in the sex work, but with surrounding communities to ensure that these changes ensure the safety and wellbeing of these surrounding communities and their families;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that along with decriminalization the Liberal Party of Canada should look to address the true problems facing sex workers by working to increase their access to sexual health clinics, counseling and improve their relationship with local authorities.

5 - Employee Pension Protection Strategy

WHEREAS:

- Some employers have failed to fulfill their commitment to Employee Pension Plans, depriving employees of future retirement income in addition to the loss of part or all their current contributions;
- Private pensions should be the responsibility of the commercial enterprises making the commitment, not the taxpayer;
- The *Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act* and the *Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act* provide "super-priority" to numerous obligations over Employee Pension Plans;
- The Supreme Court of Canada has favoured the payments of these "super-priority" creditors even at the expense of the original Employee Pension Plan Agreements, giving paramountcy to a flawed insolvency law over any provincial recognition of pension rights;
- The previous government, recognizing the unjust treatment some Canadians faced with private defined benefit pensions, granted current year pension contributions super-priority status in the Wage Earner Protection Program;

BE IT RESOLVED the Liberal Party of Canada urges the Government of Canada to develop and implement an Employee Pension Protection Strategy by:

- Prioritizing Employee Pension Plans in the *Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act* and the *Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act* to recognize super-priority for pension debts
- Reforming current federal legislation with the aim of protecting Employee Pension Plans during insolvency proceedings.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the Liberal Party of Canada call upon the Government of Canada to consult with stakeholders, organizations, and third parties in its development of the aforementioned strategy.

Moved by LPC (Ontario)

6 - Implementation of a Guaranteed Minimum Income Model

WHEREAS:

- Almost 5 million Canadians live in poverty;
- The gap between the highest and lowest incomes continues to grow with each passing year;
- Some economists believe that maintaining growth in industrialized countries requires a narrowing of this gap to stimulate household consumption;
- Technological advances, and in particular advances in artificial intelligence, will lead to the loss of many skilled and unskilled jobs;
- People who lose their jobs will have to retrain, perhaps several times in their lives;
- A guaranteed minimum income would constitute an unconditional source of income, which could be used by everyone as he or she sees fit;
- According to some studies, the guaranteed minimum income could replace other provincial and federal government benefits and would require less administrative work, particularly because of the lack of controls;
- A pilot project on Guaranteed Minimum Income is currently underway in Ontario and a similar project is being considered in Québec and other Canadian provinces;
- The federal government could intervene in this jurisdiction, as it did for universal health insurance;

BE IT RESOLVED the Government of Canada:

- Review past and ongoing pilot projects, as well as studies carried out by academic experts on the subject
- Work with the provinces to develop a universal, equitable and sustainable guaranteed minimum income model for the benefit of all Canadians;
- Inform and consult with the public on the implementation of this model.

7 - A Seniors' Ministry

WHEREAS:

- Canadian society is aging rapidly and seniors make up almost 16% of our population; this number is expected to grow to 24% by 2030;
- This trend will have a profound impact on our health care system, social services, and the economy;
- Seniors are a diverse group of individuals with a wide range of capabilities, needs, vulnerabilities and resources;
- Seniors, like other Canadians, deserve the highest possible quality of life and personal dignity;
- Seniors' issues are currently shared between a number of ministers and government departments, committees, and agencies;
- This fragmentation means that seniors do not have a dedicated voice to represent their rights and interests;
- The amalgamation of responsibility for seniors under one dedicated minister would result in a clear vision and coordinated approach to seniors' needs, systemic and cost efficiencies, and consistency in program development and implementation across the country;

BE IT RESOLVED the Liberal Party of Canada strongly urge the Government of Canada to establish a dedicated Ministry of Seniors, with a mandate to:

- Consult and engage with Canada's seniors;
- Protect and vigorously promote the needs and interests of seniors as well as the value of seniors to civil society;
- Establish a national seniors strategy that defines common goals and standards from coast to coast to coast;
- Liaise with provincial, territorial, municipal, and Indigenous counterparts on areas of mutual concern or overlapping jurisdiction including but not limited to health care, housing, income security, home care, long term care, pharmacare, social isolation, elder abuse, and ageism; and
- Develop national standards and monitoring protocols for seniors' programs.

Moved by LPC (Alberta)

8 - Affordable Housing

WHEREAS:

- Residents in Canada have the right to affordable housing, regardless of ethnicity, cultural background, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, or disability;
- Students, women, and Indigenous people face particular challenges in finding clean, safe and affordable housing;
- There is an acute shortage of affordable public and non-market housing for those of lower income;
- Those of lower income fear housing security is not reliable or robust enough to meet current needs;
- Many housing complexes were constructed without fully accessible suites;
- The building and development industry does not design or engineer residential housing for ready conversion for accessibility inside and outside the residence;
- The present federal government has shown great leadership in developing a national housing strategy;

BE IT RESOLVED the Liberal Party of Canada urge the Government of Canada to:

- Institute a funding program to modify existing non-market housing complexes to meet current health, safety, and accessibility codes
- Support the principle that the total cost of public non-market housing for lower income residents of Canada should not exceed 30% of their gross annual income.

Moved by LPC (Alberta)

9 - End Taxation on Menstrual Products

WHEREAS:

- Menstrual products are essential for person's wellbeing and a monetary burden should not infringe on their self-autonomy or hinder their ability to buy vital products;
- People should not face gender-based discrimination from a government;
- Revenue for the government has increased despite suppliers being eligible for NAFTA's tariff-free status because companies from the US choose not to apply for tariff-free

BE IT RESOLVED the Canadian government pass legislation to remove tariff code taxes off of essential menstrual products.

Moved by Young Liberals of Canada

10 - Remote Telecommunication infrastructure development for Northern, Remote, Rural Indigenous & Non-indigenous Communities

WHEREAS:

- The internet offers huge opportunities for Indigenous peoples to participate in the world economy through telecommunications, and online marketing;
- The internet can also be used by Indigenous peoples to strengthen their communities;
- Food insecurity is a serious problem in northern and remote Indigenous communities across the territory shared with Canada and there exists a strong body of research and traditional knowledge with respect to food security and northern Indigenous health which would be easily accessible through the internet.

BE IT RESOLVED the Liberal Party of Canada urge the Government of Canada to:

- Partner with Provinces, Indigenous communities and Organizations, as well as Tech and Infrastructure providers, to develop enhanced telecommunications options for First Nation, Metis, and Inuit communities;
- Commit to bringing forth access high-speed internet by 2025 to not only rural and remote communities across Canada but also to First Nation, Metis, and Inuit communities in which Canada shares territory with;
- Partner with Provincial governments & Indigenous governments to enhance distance learning education, and its delivery, to support Indigenous economic growth and learning.

11 - Infrastructure and Connecting Canadians via a Fixed Link

WHEREAS:

- The Island of Newfoundland depends on ferry service for access to goods and services and travel for visitors to or from the Island;
- Weather and ice can lead and has led to significant delays;
- Mechanical problems with aging ferry fleets can lead and has led to significant delay;
- Such delays cause expensive disruptions to businesses, communities, individuals, and governments; and can increase the cost of goods, including food;
- Prince Edward Island was connected to mainland Canada two decades ago;
- Technology has advanced significantly, as evidenced by recent construction of long-distance subsea tunnels in Norway;
- Providing a fixed link between the Island of Newfoundland would better connect the province of Newfoundland and Labrador and all Canadians;
- Construction of such a project would be a major economic stimulus;
- Such a link would provide ongoing benefits to NL and other provinces along the transit route (e.g., Quebec) from more reliable transportation alternatives and the potential for increased tourism

BE IT RESOLVED the Liberal Party of Canada call on the Government of Canada to:

- Fully document the feasibility of such a fixed link, including the attendant economic benefits arising therefrom to the province, the region, and the country, and seek proposals for construction of a fixed link;
- Consider all possible funding options, including public-private partnerships, tolls, and direct funding, to achieve this goal

Moved by LPC (Newfoundland & Labrador)

12 - National Three-Oceans Policy for Security, Environmental Protection and Development

WHEREAS:

- Canada has the longest coastline of any country in the world, fronting on three oceans, and four great lakes;
- Canada needs to reaffirm its position as a leading state in sustainable oceanic research, and development;
- Canada's capacity for oceanic and Arctic scientific research has been diminished by a failure to renew our oceanographic research vessels;
- High capacity submarine fiber optics telecommunications cables are currently being laid to connect Europe and Asia, through the Canadian Arctic without provision of access by the Canadian Government or Canadian Arctic communities, which are restricted to slow and expensive satellite internet services;
- The current national ocean policy "Canada's ocean strategy" needs to be updated to reflect the realities of today.

BE IT RESOLVED the Canadian government:

- Commission a 21st century comprehensive integrated three-Oceans Policy, including environmental protection, economic and social development, scientific research, sovereignty and security;
- Implement a strategy to re-establish Canada's oceanographic research capabilities, including acquiring oceanographic research vessels for the short, medium, and long term;
- For purposes of security, sovereignty and Arctic community development, make full access to telecommunications (internet) capacity a requirement for any trans-Arctic telecommunications cables transiting through Canada's Arctic waters.

Moved by LPC (Nova Scotia)

13 - Reclaiming and Sustaining Canada's Healthcare

WHEREAS:

- In 2014, over 4 million Canadians had no family doctor;
- Waitlists for specialists and surgical procedures are among the highest they have ever been, with significant regional disparities, including for rural areas and indigenous peoples;
- In 2017, the International Commonwealth Fund ranked Canada's health care ninth among eleven high-income countries;
- The Federal Government commissioned the Advisory Panel on Health Care Innovation, (2015) chaired by Dr. David Naylor, to identify "areas of innovation that have potential to sustainably reduce growth in health spending while leading to improvements in the quality and accessibility of care";
- The panel reported Canadian healthcare "in crisis", and identified numerous areas for systemic improvement;
- In 2017 a majority of senior Registered Liberals identified an urgent need for:
 - Better access to family doctors and healthcare services
 - Reduced wait times for specialists and medical procedures
 - Innovation for service delivery efficiency and cost reduction;

BE IT RESOLVED the Liberal Party of Canada urge the federal government to:

- Accept the Naylor Report's recommendations to lead systemic reform of healthcare;
- In cooperation with provinces, territories, and professional organizations, identify and implement methods to:
- Provide every Canadian access to family physician supervised primary care
- eliminate wait times to access specialists and surgical procedures that adversely affect Canadian's health
- Foster continuing innovation to reduce costs, enhance efficiency and ensure consistent health care delivery throughout Canada;
- Report regularly to Canadians on progress toward achieving the above improvements including data based on patient-derived metrics.

14 - Canadian Environmental Bill of Rights

WHEREAS:

- On June 16, 2010, all Liberal Members of Parliament present in the House of Commons voted in favor of Bill C-469 (40-3), an Act to Establish a Canadian Environmental Bill of Rights, to “safeguard the right of present and future generations of Canadians to a healthy and ecologically balanced environment”;
- In a 2015 report, the International Institute for Sustainable Development calculated poor air quality resulted in the premature death of 7,700 Canadians and smog cost Canada \$36 billion;
- The United Nations (UN) recognizes environmental rights as a basic human right, and on March 7, 2016, the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights concluded that Canada has failed to provide adequate environmental protection;
- Tens of thousands of synthetic chemicals now contaminate our air, water, soil, food, and homes, with some of those chemicals linked to increasing incidences of certain chronic diseases;
- New technologies are being used with few independent, peer-reviewed studies and no transparent, inclusive, in-depth discussion on possible environmental and health impacts;
- Experts at the *Université du Québec à Montréal*, the David Suzuki Foundation and stakeholders across Canada contributed to the preparation of this resolution;

BE IT RESOLVED the Liberal Party of Canada urge the Government of Canada to enact legislation establishing a Canadian Environmental Bill of Rights, whose purpose is to ensure all Canadians have access to adequate environmental information, justice in an environmental context and effective mechanisms for participating in environmental decision-making in accordance with the provisions of Bill C-469 (40-3).

15 - The Need for Stable, Quality Jobs - The Key to a Stronger Middle Class

WHEREAS:

- Senior Registered Liberals across Canada identified the need for “stronger government efforts to create stable, quality jobs for all Canadians, with an emphasis on creating real opportunities for the younger generations” as a priority issue ;
- Statistics Canada estimates that the Canadian economy has lost 7% of its mid-skilled jobs during the past 10 years, resulting in a decline in median incomes during the past decade;
- Many middle-aged workers displaced by these losses have been forced to take lower level part-time jobs with limited benefits. Similarly, many younger, well-educated Canadians are also forced to take lower level part-time jobs that do not support progress toward a middle class life-style;
- While Canada has supported innovation through education, R&D, and tax incentives, there is limited evidence that such innovations translate into a sufficient number of quality jobs for Canadians; and
- Other countries such as China, Germany and South Korea provide models of cooperation among government, industry and academia leading to globally competitive corporations and associated jobs in new economic sectors;

BE IT RESOLVED the Government of Canada:

- To provide leadership in partnership with Canadian businesses, unions and educational institutions for identifying new business sectors in which Canadian corporations can create the necessary advantages to compete internationally thereby supporting stable, quality jobs for all Canadians; and
- To develop the necessary programs to ensure Canadian innovations translate into stable, quality jobs by encouraging and supporting Canadian corporations to grow and compete in the global marketplace.