



NDP Responds

Note: We have yet to release our full platform but here are the answers to date outlining our commitments.

Religious Social Action Coalition of Newfoundland and Labrador

1. A National Poverty Reduction Strategy has been endorsed by the Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights in its April 2007 report. The House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance recommended in its 2007 pre-budget report that the Federal government develop a poverty reduction strategy with targets and timelines to reduce child poverty in Canada. Till today there is no movement on this issue. How and by when would you go about setting up a National Poverty Reduction Plan at the Federal Government level?

An NDP government will introduce the NDP's *Poverty Elimination Act*, which requires a national anti-poverty strategy, including targets and timelines, to be developed in consultation with provinces, territories, municipalities, Indigenous governments and communities, low income Canadians, and civil society. In addition to setting an overarching set of goals, the strategy will also target specific vulnerable populations, including Indigenous peoples, persons living with disabilities, seniors, racialized Canadians and newcomers.

The strategy will include measures to address income security, including wages from employment and government income support programs, to increase access to affordable housing and affordable childcare, and to combat social exclusion.

By law, the strategy will be required to confirm to Canada's obligations under international law, including internationally recognized human rights.

Our anti-poverty strategy will be supported by immediate measures we will undertake to improve income security and expand access to affordable housing. This includes boosting the level of the Working Income Tax Benefit, the National Child Benefit Supplement, and the Guaranteed Income Supplement, lifting thousands of families and seniors out of poverty. We will also restore the federal minimum wage and progressively raise it to \$15 an hour, to ensure that work pays a living wage for more Canadians. Finally, we will invest more than \$2.7 billion over 4 years in affordable housing and homelessness programs to ensure that more Canadians have an affordable, secure, and adequate place to call home.

2. How will you act to ensure the 1989 All Party resolution to end child poverty will be realized, even if it is over 15 years later?

Ending child poverty is a priority for the NDP, 26 years after Ed Broadbent first tabled the resolution to end child poverty in 1989. That's why NDP MP Rathika Sitsabaiesan tabled a motion calling on the government to eliminate child poverty in 2014, which was again adopted unanimously by the House of Commons. An NDP government will make good on this commitment. We will adopt a national anti-poverty strategy with targets and timelines to ensure accountability. We will make immediate investments to benefits for low income families, including the National Child Benefit Supplement and the Working Income Tax Benefit. We will also expand access to Employment Insurance to ensure that Canadians have income even when they lose their jobs. And we will restore the federal minimum wage and progressively raise it to \$15 an hour, to ensure that work pays a living wage for more Canadians.

3. At a broader level, how will you work to close the growing gap between rich and poor in Canada?

The Conservative government of Stephen Harper has chosen to invest in tax breaks for wealthy Canadians, rather than in programs that support low and middle income Canadians. An NDP government will end the Conservatives' income splitting plan which only benefits the wealthiest 15% of Canadian households. We will also put an end to tax benefits that primarily go to wealthy Canadians, like the stock option deduction, and put that money dollar for dollar into benefits that support low income Canadians. Finally, we will invest in programs that promote affordability for the majority of Canadians, including affordable housing, affordable and inclusive childcare, and better public transit. Most Canadians receive far more benefit from these kinds of public services than they would ever get from a tax cut or an income benefit.

4. Would you create a Fairness Test or Fairness Impact Study (akin to Environmental and Gender Impact Studies) as one method to close the gap between rich and poor in Canada? Would you include an independent Federal Fairness Commissioner to report annually on progress in closing the gap between rich and poor?

An NDP government will create a National Council on Poverty Elimination. This Council will advise the government on strategies to reduce inequality and poverty and will also be able to provide assessments of the impact of government legislation on poverty and inequality. Our national anti-poverty strategy will also require regular reporting on progress towards reaching our goal of eliminating poverty.

5. Will your party work towards implementing a progressive tax policy to close the gap between the wealthiest and the rest of Canadians?

An NDP government will require large corporations to pay their fair share by increasing the corporate income tax rate. We will also close tax loopholes that primarily benefit wealthy Canadians, including income splitting and the stock option deduction. Finally, we will ensure greater tax fairness by cracking down on tax cheats, especially through tax havens.

6. Following the foot prints of municipalities and businesses in some areas of our Country (livingwagecanada.ca), would you pass a Living Wage Law in place of Minimum wage?

An NDP government will restore the federal minimum wage and progressively raise it to \$15 an hour to ensure that more Canadians are receiving a living wage for their work. We will also encourage the provinces and territories to follow this goal.

7. Will your party work toward creating a universal Early Education/Child Care program like the province of Quebec?

Yes – an NDP government will work with the provinces and territories to create a national, affordable childcare program with parents paying no more than \$15 a day per child.

8. Will your party work to create Universal Pharmacare as a good way to strengthen health care, reduce health care costs and fight poverty?

Yes – an NDP government will work with the provinces and territories to create a national drug plan with a goal of providing universal, comprehensive public drug coverage.

9. What will your party do to make housing more affordable for Canadians?

An NDP government will pass An Act to Ensure Secure, Adequate, Accessible and Affordable Housing for Canadians. This Act would legally require the Minister responsible for housing to sit down with the provinces, territories, municipalities, indigenous governments, housing providers, and civil society organizations to create a multi-year strategy to address housing and homelessness.

The strategy would address both the needs of local communities and of particular populations, including indigenous peoples, persons living with disabilities, and seniors. The strategy would also give priority to those who are most vulnerable, including those who are currently homeless. By law, the strategy would need to conform to Canada's international human rights obligations regarding housing.

In support of this strategy, we will provide more than \$2.7 billion over 4 years. This funding will be used to renew long-term social operating agreements where necessary,

for capital repairs, for homelessness programs, and to build new affordable housing. It also includes \$500 million in incentives for the construction of new affordable and market rental units. This funding will be allocated across the country based on need.

10. How will you work towards implementing the Kelowna Accord in letter and spirit – a promise made to leaders of five national aboriginal organizations in Canada?

The NDP believes it is time for a new era in our relationship with Indigenous peoples, a true nation-to-nation relationship, built on respect and meaningful progress when it comes to bringing about change. An NDP government will create cabinet-level committee chaired by Prime Minister Tom Mulcair to ensure that all government decisions respect treaty rights, inherent rights, and Canada's international obligations. We will implement the principles of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and we will take action on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's recommendations. We will also remove the punitive 2% funding cap on social transfers to Indigenous communities imposed by the previous Liberal and Conservative governments and establish a fair fiscal relationship to close the gap between Indigenous communities and Canadians. This will begin with major investments in First Nations education and critical infrastructure, including housing.