

9 October 2019

Dear Mr. Johnson,

Thank you for writing, for providing us with the opportunity to speak to issues important to the Confederation of Canadian Unions. We appreciate your advocacy.

Please find our responses below.

Best regards,

Julia Redmond
Policy Researcher
Green Party of Canada

The Economy

1. According to Statistics Canada, economic inequality has been on the rise since the 1970s, and the richest 10% of Canadians currently own almost 50% of the country's total wealth. How will your party reverse this trend and reduce the growing levels of economic inequality in Canada?

Greens believe in making society more equal. In a Green economy, everyone contributes their fair share to the collective wellbeing. Today, the growing gap between rich and poor indicates that something is wrong. The burden of taxation is not fairly distributed, which is why we are committed to reforming the tax system.

A Green government will make sure that wealthy executives don't continue to get an easy break while average Canadians carry the burden. We will raise the corporate tax rate to match that of the United States, but keep small business taxes the same. We will introduce a wealth tax, making the richest multi-millionaires pay higher taxes to better distribute wealth. And we will remove unfair tax loopholes and give the Canada Revenue Agency the resources it needs to target offshore tax dodging, which leads to billions in lost tax dollars every year that could be spent on much needed social programming and infrastructure.

To support lower-income Canadians, we will phase -in a national Guaranteed Livable Income, to ensure that no person's income falls below what is necessary for health, life and dignity. Through the Council of Canadian Governments, we will work with the other levels of government whose inadequate poverty band-aid solutions (such as welfare, disability programs) can be rolled up in order to fund Guaranteed Livable Income.

Providing our most at-risk citizens with the resources they need to make ends meet reduces the burden on our emergency and social services, our health care and criminal justice systems – saving Canadian taxpayers money and empowering all Canadians to overcome periods of hardship. As an immediate first step, the Green Party would implement a federal minimum wage of \$15 an hour.

2. Federal corporate taxes have almost been cut in half during the past twenty years by Liberal and Conservative governments, supposedly to “create jobs”. Canada now has a federal corporate tax rate that is below even that of the United States and most OECD countries. At the same time, personal and public debt has soared, and a majority of Canadians, according to opinion polls, support greater funding for social services like health care, child care and education. What will your party do to ensure that corporations are paying their fair share of taxes, like the rest of us?

Corporations, like the wealthy, are not currently paying their fair share. To correct this, a Green government will implement the following reforms:

- Apply a corporate tax on transnational e-commerce companies doing business in Canada and require the foreign vendor to register, collect and remit taxes where the product or service is consumed. The e-commerce sector – giants like Netflix, Facebook, Amazon, Google, and Uber command a significant share of the Canadian market but pay virtually no tax.
- Impose a financial transactions tax of 0.5 per cent in the finance sector as France has done since 2012.
- Eliminate all fossil fuel subsidies, including payments and tax write-offs, valued at several billion dollars annually.
- Increase the federal corporate tax rate from 15 to 21 per cent to bring it into line with the federal rate in the United States, our biggest trading partner, freeing up “dead money” to mobilize it for the transition to a green, renewable economy.
- Charge a five per cent surtax on commercial bank profits.
- Prohibit Canadian businesses from deducting the cost of advertising on foreign-owned sites such as Google and Facebook which now account for 80 per cent of all spending on advertising Canada.

We believe in building a fairer society. Making sure Canada’s fiscal choices are fair is a big part of this.

3. Economic research shows that more of Canada’s resource industries are being taken over by international conglomerates. This has led to the loss of thousands of good-paying jobs in Canada and capital flight (in the form of profits) out of the country. What concrete policies will your party implement to protect Canadian resource industries from foreign domination?

In recent years, more and more of Canada’s major companies, and control over natural resources, have been bought out by foreign- owned corporations. This is not in the best interest of Canadians.

Green Party MPs will sponsor and support legislation that restricts foreign ownership in Canada in strategic sectors so that Canadians remain in control of the destiny of Canada, reap the benefits from the

exploitation of Canadian resources, and retain the right to determine their use and rate of exploitation. Key strategic resources like energy, communications, transportation, and water should be controlled by Canadian-owned or publicly owned corporations.

We will fight to stop all movement towards Canada becoming a resource colony for multinational corporations.

Labour

4. Statistics Canada reports that on average, unionized workers enjoy higher wages than non-unionized workers in the same line of work, as well as stronger pensions, superior health and safety standards, longer vacation time, better health and drug benefits, and more rights in the workplace. Does your party believe that unions play a positive role in our economy? If so, what policies will your party implement or revise in order to create a climate that is easier for unions to organize?

Greens believe in the rights of workers to organize and in the free collective bargaining process. Labour rights are human rights.

A strong economy needs a workforce with protected rights. As noted, union members have better job security, higher wages, better health care benefits, and better protection against unfair labour practices. Union members are then able to pay taxes, put money back into the economy, and live healthier lives. That means that union members are able to help pay for public services and also to help grow their local economies. All people in a society, not just union members, benefit from a unionized workforce. We will work to educate the public and employers about the benefits of unionization.

5. Throughout Canada, working people and their unions, especially in the public sector, are under attack by governments who are stripping away their most basic rights and freedoms. What commitments will your party make to ensure workers in both the private and public sectors will maintain their collective bargaining rights?

We are committed to respecting the labour rights of all Canadian workers. Greens will work unions to ensure that we have the best possible legislative framework to uphold workers' rights, including the right to free collective bargaining.

We will oppose any legislation that infringes on the constitutionally-protected rights to collective bargaining and strikes.

Social Policy

6. In 1989, the House of Commons unanimously passed a motion calling for the eradication of child poverty in Canada by the year 2000. Yet today, nearly one in eight children throughout the

country live under the poverty line, and one in four Aboriginal children. What specific policies will your party implement to end child poverty in Canada once and for all?

Of all Canada's social problems, child poverty may be the most shameful. Despite recent improvements, far too many Canadian children still grow up in poverty.

To eliminate child poverty in Canada, we must start by recommitting to a vision of Canada as a just society built around a progressive, fair, and compassionate social safety network. The Green Party believes reducing child poverty is not just about expanding the middle class; we must undertake real structural change to tackle the root causes of poverty. Poverty is a systemic problem that arises from low wages and insufficient income assistance, a precarious job market, a shortage of affordable housing and quality child care, and cuts in social programs. It is also tied directly to issues of bias and discrimination on the basis of gender, race, sexual orientation, and citizenship, as well as the ongoing legacy of colonization. Eliminating poverty requires systemic action on all these fronts with safe secure housing as a fundamental human right at its core.

Reducing child poverty starts with a stronger commitment to guaranteeing that all families have the ability to provide for their children. Research has demonstrated that programs providing a universal basic income reduce expenditure on health care – since poverty is the single largest determinant of ill health – and the justice system, and increase school retention. Such programs are affordable, but the savings and costs of implementation are experienced in different orders of government. To proceed will require cooperation of all orders of government through a vehicle such as the Council of Canadian Governments, a forum for intergovernmental discussion with provinces, territories, Indigenous nations, municipalities, and local governments.

7. Our publicly administered, universal health care system is cherished by Canadians throughout the country. More of our health services, however, are being de-funded and privatized. What policies will your party implement to ensure that health care in Canada is properly funded and remains under public control?

We believe we can solve healthcare problems within our public health care system. Greens fully support the Canada Health Act (CHA) and all of its principles: public administration, comprehensiveness, universality, portability, and accessibility. We oppose any level of privatized, for-profit health care.

To stop the encroachment of privatized healthcare, a Green government will:

- identify and measure the extent of two-tier health care in Canada and strive for the elimination of two-tier health care as quickly as economically possible;
- extend the national Health Accord; and
- use the full force of federal spending power under the Canada Health Act to oppose any steps that open the way to further two-tier health care in Canada.

8. Canada is the only country in the world with a universal health insurance system that doesn't include a national drug program. Currently, 2 million Canadians incur over \$1,000 a year in out-of-pocket expenses for prescription drugs, and one in five Canadian families can't even afford to fill their prescriptions because of cost. Yet Canada's parliamentary budget officer stated in 2017

that a national Pharmacare program would save \$4.2 billion every year. What steps will your party take in government to create a universal, publicly administered Pharmacare program?

A universal, single-payer national pharmacare program is urgently needed. No Canadian should have to make a choice between filling the prescriptions they need and paying rent or putting food on the table for their family. Greens were the first to call for a universal pharmacare system in Canada, and we remain committed to implementing such a program.

Universal pharmacare is the best way to accomplish both life-saving and cost-cutting goals. The Green Party would complement this program by creating bulk drug purchasing agency and shortening drug patent protection times. We would also apply the approach of the UBC Therapeutics Initiative to ensure the meticulous review of new medications before they are approved. This will certify the efficacy of new drugs and prevent registering drugs that hurt more people than they help.

We support the recommendations made by the Parliamentary Committee on Health to expand the Canada Health Act to include prescription drugs dispensed outside of a hospital, and we support the evidence and budgetary analysis on pharmacare from the non-partisan Parliamentary Budget Officer. However, greater federal leadership is needed to ensure these recommendations become a reality.

Medicine should not only be for those who can afford private insurance. The Green Party believes in a truly equitable health care system, which can only be achieved through the implementation of universal pharmacare.

9. Canada's total student loan debt is reaching an incredible \$28 billion dollars, and many governments throughout the country are cutting funding for post-secondary education. What steps will your party take to guarantee funding to Canada's colleges and universities?

The financial burden of student debt is at historic levels. The Green Party of Canada believes that universal access to quality post-secondary education and skills training is a right, not a privilege. Moreover, post-secondary education is part of Canada's treaty obligations to Indigenous People and a key focus for reconciliation.

A Green government will make college and university education free for all Canadian students. It will forgive the portion of existing student debt held by the federal government, remove the two per cent cap on increases in funding for Indigenous students and ensure that all Indigenous youth have access to post-secondary education.

Many universities are caught in a spiral of fundraising to provide education of diminishing quality. Dramatic funding cuts dating back to the 1990s mean universities have come to depend on part-time contract instructors, higher tuition fees and fundraising to balance the books. A Green government will reinvest in the system and allocate \$10 billion to post-secondary and trade school supports. This will be funded by redirecting existing spending on bursaries, cancelling tuition tax credits, saving the costs of administering the student loan system, and redirecting the hundreds of millions of dollars of student loan defaults written off every year. Tuition scholarships provided by colleges and universities can be used to offset other student costs.

The Green Party platform will also call for funding in federal-provincial transfers to universities to be tied to a measurable focus on student-professor contact, mentorship, policies of inclusion and tenure track hires.

10. Although there have been advances towards greater gender equity in Canada, there is still much work to be done. Women only make 75% of men's income, one in seven women live in poverty, while five provinces in Canada still have no pay equity legislation on the books. What specific policies will your party propose to ensure greater gender equity and women's equality in government, business and society?

It is a black mark against Canada that, in 2019, Canadian women earn, on average, \$8,000 less per year than their male counterparts for doing the same jobs. We will fight to end gender--based discrimination in the workplace and in Canadian society at large, and ensure that Canada eliminates the gender wage gap once and for all.

Greens welcomed the government's launch of a Strategy to Prevent and Address Gender-Based Violence given that the majority of Canadian women and girls are victims of violence at some point in their lives. We are committed to a National Action Plan on Violence Against Women, which must:

- Bring together all levels of government and stakeholders to develop a strategy;
- Educate the public about violence against women;
- Recognize the unique needs and risk factors for Indigenous women;
- Provide increased funding for women's shelters and sexual assault support centres;
- Ensure appropriate services for women and children impacted by domestic violence;
- Revise laws to increase penalties for domestic violence, and support access to restorative justice processes for Indigenous Peoples;
- Establish a Guaranteed Liveable Income (GLI), to ensure no woman is without the means to flee domestic violence; and
- Establish a National Housing Strategy to end homelessness.

With a National Action Plan on Violence Against Women, we can ensure victims and survivors are supported as we work to end gender-based violence entirely.

Democracy

11. Canada is one of the few countries in the western world that uses a Plurality voting system ("First past the post"). This has allowed parties with a minority of the vote to form majority governments. Where does your party stand on reforming Canada's electoral system to one based on proportional representation?

Greens, like so many Canadians, were deeply disappointed by the Liberal government's choice to renege on their promise to implement electoral reform. We firmly believe that these reforms are needed so that Canadians can feel properly represented in Parliament, and stop feeling the pressure to vote strategically rather than with their conscience.

Our party will ensure that the 2019 election is truly the last “first past the post” election. By March 2020, we will launch a Citizens Assembly on Electoral Reform with the mandate to make recommendations to parliament on an electoral system that would “make every vote count.” Legislative changes to implement the recommendations of the Citizens Assembly would be made in time for the 2023 federal election.

12. Canada’s ethics commissioner recently found that Justin Trudeau improperly influenced several cabinet ministers to intervene in an ongoing criminal case against Quebec-based construction company SNC-Lavalin. What specific policies will your party introduce to fight corporate corruption and influence-peddling at the federal level?

Greens believe we have a responsibility to ensure that influence does not get misused in the way of the SNC-Lavalin scandal again. We will implement the recommendations of the McLellan Report, including such policies as mandating a clear written exchange of views. We will also develop a clear framework for the use of Deferred Prosecution Agreements (DPAs) and require that the Director of Public Prosecutions to report on any negotiated DPAs in her annual reports.

International Issues

13. Canada has one of the poorest environmental records in the entire western world. What policies will your party implement to reduce climate change and protect the environment? Will your party also commit now to end the billion-dollar subsidies given to the oil industry and instead use those funds to invest in environmentally-friendly forms of energy?

A Green government will pass into law a Climate Change Act requiring a 60 per cent cut in climate-changing emissions below 2005 levels by 2030, reaching net zero in 2050. This target is required to meet the recommendations of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change to keep warming under a 1.5 degree Celsius increase. Interim targets would be set at five-year intervals beginning with 2025. To achieve this, the government of Canada must use every tool available, including regulation, public spending, and pollution pricing.

The focus will be on limiting production and use of fossil fuels, the largest source of emissions. Greens will not approve any new oil, gas, coal, or mining projects, including pipelines. We will eliminate subsidies to fossil fuel industries, the money from which will be redirected to fund a shift to renewable energy. Throughout this transition, we will provide support for all those affected by the loss of jobs in the fossil fuel industry, including retraining and bridging programs for workers.

The Green Party will also work to overcome the partisan barriers to climate action by establishing a cross-party inner cabinet to deal with climate change.

Green MPs will work tirelessly for the protection of the environment, and if in opposition, will hold the government to account to ensure we preserve the environment for future generations.

14. Canada currently provides only 0.3% of its Gross National Income (GNI) to foreign aid, putting us 19th out of 41 donor countries in the OECD. Eight of those countries have already

reached their 0.7% commitment. How will your party ensure that Canada keeps its international promises to reach its commitment of providing 0.7% of its GNI to foreign aid?

Canada's long-standing commitment to multilateralism builds on Lester B. Pearson's legacy as a Nobel Peace Prize laureate. A Green government will support such international engagement, recognizing that isolationism and nationalistic jingoism create a dangerous path and must be vigorously resisted. We will strengthen Canada's role in promoting peace and global cooperation.

Greens will increase Canada's overseas development assistance budget to reach former Prime Minister Pearson's goal of 0.7 per cent of GNI, which Canada has never achieved but which many in the donor group of our allies have already surpassed.

