

Confederation of Canadian Unions
Political Party Questionnaire for 2019 Manitoba Provincial Election

Greetings,

The Confederation of Canadian Unions (CCU) is the nation's largest federation of independent labour unions. Founded in 1969 on the initiative of labour organizers Kent Rowley and Madeleine Parent, the CCU is dedicated to the establishment of a democratic, independent Canadian labour movement free of the influence of American-based international unions. The CCU includes almost 20,000 members in affiliated unions across the country in both the public and private sectors, and represents the values of hundreds of thousands of workers throughout Manitoba.

Like previous federal and provincial elections, the Confederation of Canadian Unions has once again established a political education campaign, named "Raise Your Voice, Cast Your Vote," to help its membership make informed voting choices for the Manitoba Election on September 10, 2019. The following questions have been sent to all four major parties in Manitoba, including the Progressive Conservative Party, the Liberal Party, the New Democratic Party and the Green Party.

The answers from each party will be posted on the CCU website (www.ccu-csc.ca). We ask that answers to each of the questions range from 150 to 250 words, and returned in Word format to Sean Cain at media@ccu-csc.ca by August 23, 2019 so we can prepare our membership for the vote on September 10.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me by phone or email. And thank you for participating.

Sincerely,

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QUESTIONS

The Economy

1. No one should work full-time and live in poverty. Yet according to Manitoba Labour and Regulatory Services, 48% of minimum wage workers in the province are over the age of 24, and the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives determined that a living wage within the province is \$15 an hour, even though the current minimum wage is set at only \$11.35. Will your party commit to making the minimum wage in Manitoba a living wage of \$15 an hour and indexing it to the rate of inflation?

Manitoba Liberals are committed to raising the minimum wage in Manitoba to \$15 an hour within two years of being elected.

2. Research illustrates that the privatization of public services in areas like health care, public auto insurance, railways, water and hydro can lead to increased costs, poorer delivery of services, job losses, and less accountability to the public. Will your party commit to keeping crown corporations like Manitoba Hydro, Manitoba Public Insurance, Manitoba Liquor and Lotteries under public ownership and democratic control?

Manitoba Liberal Government will have a policy of no privatizations, in order to protect and preserve public services. Manitoba Liberals will focus on policies that encourage new growth instead.

3. Fair, progressive taxation doesn't only reduce levels of inequality, it provides governments with the revenue necessary to pay for vitally important social programs without going into debt. What will your party do to create a more progressive taxation system in Manitoba based on the ability to pay?

A Manitoba Liberal Government will create an independent commission to review Manitoba's tax system. Manitoba Liberals want to ensure we have a province with fair taxation, where everyone pays their fair share.

4. Fewer than 40% of Canadians have access to a workplace pension plan. What will your party do to protect pensions in both the private and public sectors in Manitoba and ensure that retirees can enjoy their golden years in dignity.

A Manitoba Liberal government will ensure that every public servant who has dedicated their career in service of Manitobans will receive the full value of their pension at retirement, while looking into ways to ensure sustainability of public pension plans for the future.

Labour

5. The Public Services Sustainability Act (Bill 28) undermines the democratic right to collective bargaining and violates International Labour Organization Convention 98, of which Canada is a signatory. It will also freeze wages and reduce living standards for over 120,000 public sector

workers in the province. What is your party's view of the Act, and what will you do to restore free collective bargaining in the province?

Manitoba Liberal Government will rescind the PCs Public Services Sustainability Act and wage freeze, and commit to ensuring timely labour negotiations so that workers don't spend months or years working without a contract.

"The right to negotiate the value of your work, how much you will be paid, the hours you will work and the benefits you receive are among the most important decisions you can make in your life," said Lamont. "Manitoba Liberals want to ensure that people are paid fair wages, that we settle negotiations on time, and that people make it home from work safe."

6. Research from Statistics Canada shows that workers in labour unions in Canada receive 23% more pay than those who aren't, and they enjoy superior health benefits and pensions, better health and safety standards, more training and education, and work in places that are more equitable. What are your views on labour unions, and will you make it easier for workers to join unions in Manitoba?

Manitoba Liberals are supporters of labour unions. Manitoba Liberals stand shoulder to shoulder with labour to ensure that workers' rights are always respected in Manitoba.

7. Each year, thousands of Manitobans are injured on the job or develop illness from dangerous conditions are work. What will your party do to improve health and safety conditions and help protect workers in the province?

Manitoba Liberal Government will increase enforcement of workplace health and safety issues, rescind the PCs Public Services Sustainability Act and wage freeze, and commit to ensuring timely labour negotiations so that workers don't spend months or years working without a contract. Manitoba Liberals want to ensure that people are paid fair wages, that we settle negotiations on time, and that people make it home from work safe.

Social Programs

8. Research from the University of Quebec (economist Pierre Fortin) shows that a provincial childcare program wouldn't only give tens of thousands of children a better start in life, it would allow more parents to work, or work more hours. Will your party commit to a universal, affordable childcare program throughout the province and invest in the training of Early Childhood Educators?

A Manitoba Liberal Government will create 18,000 child care spaces to eliminate the waitlist for childcare spaces in Manitoba and ensure there are more spaces as demand grows. A Manitoba Liberal Government will ensure there are quality and affordable child care spaces across Manitoba, especially for the families who need it most.

The Manitoba Liberal Plan is designed to be flexible and ensure that spaces are created where they are most needed — whether it is in not-for-profit centres or in schools with K-12. Manitoba Liberals will move Early Childhood Education from under the Department of Families to Education to ensure a continuous educational experience for all Manitoba children.

Manitoba Liberals will increase the annual budget by \$33 million for child care and early childhood education, build and support new spaces, decrease the number of unfunded spaces by half, increase wages to recruit and retain Early Childhood Educators, and increase support for low income families.

Manitoba Liberals will set a goal of having 55,000 total child care spaces by September 2027, creating 2,250 spaces per year, or 18,000 new spaces. If a federal government were to increase funding, the spaces could be created more quickly.

In our current system, we have parents trapped in poverty and unable to work because they are trying to care for their children. Early childhood education under a Manitoba Liberal Government will give greater support and freedom to families and children alike.

9. Our publicly administered, universal health care system is cherished throughout Manitoba. Yet more of our health services are being de-funded and privatized. What policies will your party implement to ensure that health care in the province remains under public control and is accessible to everyone?

A Liberal Government in Manitoba would fight for a National Pharmacare program and partner with any government that introduces one. Manitoba Liberals believe strongly that no Manitoban should ever be forced to choose between life-saving medication and paying their bills. If elected, our life-saving drugs program would cover the deductibles on medications needed for cystic fibrosis, cancer, diabetes and HIV. Having introduced petitions to the Manitoba Legislature calling on the province to support a National Pharmacare program, a Manitoba Liberal Government will continue to support a National Pharmacare program.

A Manitoba Liberal Government will end decades of over-centralized power in the hands of RHAs by merging them back with Manitoba Health and return greater control and decision-making to the local level across the province — community hospitals, clinics and personal care homes.

Manitoba Liberals have already committed to lifting the Pallister freeze on health spending, which has been in place since 2016, and ending the hiring freeze to allow staffing levels to stabilize

Manitoba Liberals will reverse the Pallister government's spending cuts and reopen ERs at Concordia and Victoria. The plan to close Seven Oaks ER would also be halted to ensure all Manitobans can get better care close to home.

A Manitoba Liberal Government will immediately start to reverse the damage inflicted by the Pallister government by lifting the three-year Pallister funding freeze in health care and move aggressively to fill vacancies created by the PCs cuts

10. Canada remains the only country in the world with a universal health care system that doesn't include prescription medication. Drug prices continue to skyrocket for Manitobans and more people have to choose between getting the medications they need and paying for necessities like food or rent. Will your party commit to creating a universal, comprehensive, publicly-administered and sustainable Pharmacare program that is accessible to all Manitobans?

A Liberal Government in Manitoba would fight for a National Pharmacare program and partner with any government that introduces one. Manitoba Liberals believe strongly that no Manitoban should ever be forced to choose between life-saving medication and paying their bills. If elected, our life-saving drugs program would cover the deductibles on medications needed for cystic fibrosis, cancer, diabetes and HIV. Having introduced petitions to the Manitoba Legislature calling on the province to support a National Pharmacare program, a Manitoba Liberal Government will continue to support a National Pharmacare program.

11. Grade schools, high schools, colleges and universities in Manitoba depend on government funding to maintain a high-quality, comprehensive education system. What are your plans for education funding in the province, and can you promise voters you will not cut funding to education while in office?

Our Manitoba Liberal goal is access to education for all, with zero barriers. Manitoba Liberals will increase funding to the Access Program by \$5 million dollars, or 50%, in the first year. This will help ensure every student seeking access to education is able to get it. A Liberal Government will also broaden the eligibility requirements for mature and part-time students, as well as those who do not have full-time status employment, so that more people in varied situations have equal access to financial aid to attend post-secondary education.

A Liberal Manitoba Government will restore the \$12 million dollars in cuts to Universities and Colleges while ensuring that increases to annual support match inflation rates. This will ensure our educational institutions have the confidence to plan for the future. With this long-term investment, we can give students the certainty of a tuition freeze at inflation without cuts to programs and services.

The Zero Barrier Plan also includes:

- Overhauling the eligibility requirements for Manitoba Student Aid and remove difficult barriers to accessing financial aid by removing restrictions for students
- Working with trade institutions to broaden access and promotion of entering the trades with additional programming to recruit women into trade programs
- Increasing access and recruitment of women into STEM fields
- The Liberal "improved access to psychological therapies (IAPT)" will train councillors to provide psychological services to students increasing access and affordability to institutions and services to students

12. According to the government of Manitoba Population Report (2016), during the next fifteen years, over 100,000 Manitobans will reach the age where they may require long-term care services. How will your party guarantee adequate home care funding that will grow with the province's aging population?

Manitoba Liberals will increase funding to Home Care by 10% in the first year, or \$38-million, in order to improve Home Care services for all Manitobans — ensuring greater flexibility within the home care program to adapt to the specific needs of individuals.

Manitoba Liberals will also:

- Build 1200 additional community-based seniors housing units across Manitoba by 2024 at a cost of \$160-million. This will be matched by the federal government's National Housing Strategy that the province refused to sign for almost a year.
- Invest an additional \$5 million annually to enhance and restore seniors programming while eliminating fees. Studies show that such programs can reduce incidence of disability by 20%.
- Manitoba Liberals will also create an Independent Seniors' Advocate who will report and make recommendations on services to seniors — including transportation, health care, home care, and housing.
- A minimum guaranteed income based on the tax system to ensure no seniors are living in poverty
- Empowering personal care homes

13. Research indicates addictions are often caused by lack of access to necessary social and living supports, which is often a result of poverty or inadequate financial supports. Addictions are on the rise in Manitoba as evidenced by increased use of methamphetamine. What will your party do to confront the meth crisis in the province, and will that include funding for long-term treatment and transitional housing?

A Manitoba Liberal Government would move immediately to create a 24/7 Virtual Addictions Coordination Centre so that families and people with addictions can get faster access to addictions treatment. Manitoba Liberal Government would set up a province-wide 24/7 addictions hotline for individuals to call when they need to get into treatment. It will also include a website for individuals to log on and chat with a professional. The number and site allows for greater privacy and individuals would be able to self-refer for help without going through a physician.

Manitoba Liberals are committed to adding drug stabilization units, medically supervised detox, expanding the number of addictions treatment beds, and ensuring there is a smooth, seamless transition from rehab to recovery.

A Manitoba Liberal Government will use a portion of the revenue from legal cannabis to implement the following:

Prevention and Intervention

- Create a province-wide public awareness campaign against meth — including print, web and traditional media
- Fund anti-gang and intervention programs so that young people can choose positive options before they are drawn into crime and drugs

Better Treatment

- Create a system that provides seamless service and a continuum of care so that people seeking treatment can get it
- Create "drug stabilization units" where people in meth withdrawal can be safely held and so they can't hurt themselves or others

- Extend recovery times in public treatment beds so that substance users can take the time that they need to recover
- Fund transitional housing with mental health supports and provide further housing for people so they can recover
- Expand harm reduction to reduce deaths and critical health incidents associated with injection drug use

The Environment

14. What policies will your party implement to reduce climate change and protect the environment?

Manitoba Liberals have a “Manitoba Liberal Plan for Green Growth and Renewal” that will put the province at the forefront of fighting climate change. Our plan will make our province carbon neutral by 2030. It can be found on our website at manitobaliberals.ca

Below is a summary of our plan:

Step 1: Taking Back Control & Negotiating a New Green Deal for Manitoba

- Renegotiate the climate deal that Pallister abandoned, and set out a plan and timelines for measures that will have a real impact on climate change.
- Create a Green Manitoba Fund and the Green Innovation Fund to drive research & development and commercialization of new environmental and climate change technologies, including alternative energy and GhG storage
- Create a “Green Lens” for Government Policy that considers and sets out the environmental impact of policies

Step 2: Making Manitoba a Leader in Clean Energy

- Use Hydro’s renewable power, combined with more wind and solar to make Manitoba a leader in clean energy and alternative low-carbon and carbon neutral fuel production
- Invest in projects and technology to generate clean energy, reduce emissions, and encourage carbon storage.
- Harvesting carbon from the atmosphere for storage and use
- Exporting excess Hydroelectricity to our neighbouring provinces to reduce their carbon footprints • Refinancing Hydro to ensure Manitoba’s hydro rates stay affordable

Step 3: Working with Nature to Reverse Pollution

- Natural Renewal: we will encourage and invest in wilderness renewal. New forests and new grasslands, which can act to draw down carbon from the air and store it in the soil while providing more habitat for animals
- Encouraging restoration and expansion of wetlands
- Improved care and management of the boreal forest to encourage new growth and carbon storage, while reducing the risk of fires and insect infestations
- Providing incentives for “carbon farming” - innovative agricultural techniques for producers to store carbon in the soil.
- Working together with municipalities and communities to enhance and create new urban green spaces

Step 4: Making it Easier for Manitobans to Go Green

- Implementation of compost programs for all Manitobans to divert 100% organic waste from landfills
- Reducing energy waste for all Manitobans by providing incentives for green retrofits to reduce the carbon footprint of every Manitoban and save them money.
- Create charging infrastructure and incentives for electric vehicles
- Supporting the shift of heavy duty trucks from gas to electric
- Supporting improved and efficient public and active transportation and studying rail relocation.
- Help at home for Manitobans to reduce waste

15. What plans does your party have with regards to incorporating and strengthening economic and labour market growth with environmental protection within our province?

A “Manitoba Liberal Plan for Green Growth and Renewal” will create good jobs by using technology and nature to bring Manitoba’s emissions into balance by 2030. This plan will create hundreds of new jobs for Manitobans in clean energy.

Manitoba Liberals will invest in projects and technology to generate clean energy, reduce emissions, and encourage carbon storage.

A Manitoba Liberal Government will immediately begin working to make Manitoba the clean energy capital of Canada. We will create an Office of Green Growth and Renewal. This will be a partnership between the renamed Department of Environment and Climate Change and the Department of Innovation, Growth, and Labour.

This office will be charged with implementing and investing in Manitoba projects. The purpose will be to fund and support promising projects and technology to generate clean energy, reduce emissions, and encourage carbon storage.

16. One of the best ways to reduce our carbon footprint on the environment is public transportation. What will you do to make public transportation throughout the province more affordable and accessible to Manitobans?

A Manitoba Liberal Government will restore the 50/50 funding agreement and tap into more than \$500-million in dedicated federal funding to improve transit systems that the Pallister Government has left on the table.

Manitoba Liberals will:

- Restore 50/50 provincial funding for transit to ensure fares remain affordable
- Ensure the province always “doubles its money” by making sure all federal funding dollars get matched
- Assist municipalities with the electrification of bus fleets, capitalizing on Manitoba manufacturers like New Flyer

17. Will your party commit to restoring the 50/50 funding agreement between the province and the City of Winnipeg for upgrades to the city’s transit system?

A Manitoba Liberal Government will restore the 50/50 funding agreement and tap into more than \$500-million in dedicated federal funding to improve transit systems that the Pallister Government has left on the table.