



ELECTION 2015

Federal Party Leaders Reply To Our Questions

AUGUST 2015



ACER-CART

The Canadian Association of Retired Teachers
Association canadienne des enseignantes et des enseignants retraités

Representing 128,000 Retired Teachers Across Canada

www.acer-cart.org



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Conservative Party of Canada (*The Conservative Party did not answer our questionnaire.*)

Federal Party Leaders: *Our Questions. Their Replies.*

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A MESSAGE FROM ACER-CART

September 8, 2015

Every year representatives of ACER-CART's 128,000 retired teachers in Canada's ten provinces and Yukon Territory meet to explore issues that concern retired educators, and by extension, the welfare of all seniors in Canada. The concerns express the beliefs and aspirations of ACER-CART members and emerge as policies that direct the Association's action.

Anticipating the federal election, last year the Political Advocacy and other committees of ACER-CART reviewed our policies and from the review emerged "A Vision of Canada," a statement that illuminates four issues recognized by ACER-CART as fundamental to the needs of all Canadians and to the ideal we hold for our nation. These issues are social issues: health care, a national seniors care plan, a universal pharmaceutical plan, and secure pension and retirement income.

ACER-CART is committed to providing support to its members as they engage in communications with political parties and their candidates. Accordingly, in preparation for the October 2015 federal election, ACER-CART asked federal leaders to respond to a series of questions based directly on the issues identified by the committees in "A Vision for Canada".

The replies are presented in this publication exactly as they have been submitted by the political parties. They are also posted for comparison on the ACER-CART website at www.acer-cart.org. The responses provide the opportunity for you to make comparisons between party policies and attitudes. They may serve also as a basis for questions you may wish to pose to candidates in your federal riding.

We invite you to share the replies of the political parties with your family and friends, and to encourage them to consider voting for candidates who will be responsive to the issues identified as relevant and significant by the retired teachers of Canada.

QUESTIONNAIRE

(SENT TO FEDERAL PARTIES ON JULY 15, 2015)

HEALTH CARE IN CANADA

ACER-CART believes that health care for Canadians should be publicly administered, publicly funded and publicly delivered, nationally universal in coverage and accessibility, comprehensive, and portable.

ACER-CART urges that the Parliament assembled after the next federal election initiate a new era of negotiated agreement, through a health accord endorsed by the federal, provincial and territorial governments that would protect, transform and strengthen Medicare, and thereby provide stability and cohesiveness to the Canadian health care system.

Q **Question:** How would your party work to ensure that a new health accord is negotiated between federal, provincial and territorial partners to provide funding that strengthens the principles of universality, accessibility, comprehensiveness and portability in our national public health care system?

A NATIONAL SENIORS CARE PLAN

ACER-CART believes that Canadians deserve the security of a continuum of community-based integrated services that includes a universal system of home care, home support, long-term care services, and hospice and palliative care; and that this continuum of services should be an integral part of a Canadian comprehensive health care system.

ACER-CART urges that the newly elected federal government collaborate with the provinces and territories to facilitate the establishment of national seniors care plan that coordinates care for seniors.

Q **Question:** What does your Party propose as a national seniors strategy with specific reference to

- ensuring that a continuum of community-based integrated services is available to all aging Canadians, a continuum that includes home care, home support, long-term care and end-of-life services;
- ensuring dignity and adequacy of care for Canadians with dementia and other cognitive problems;
- ensuring that all Canadians have access to appropriate palliative care services;
- ensuring secure, affordable, accessible and adequate housing for Canadian seniors; and
- increasing the number of geriatricians in Canada?

QUESTIONNAIRE CONTINUED

(SENT TO FEDERAL PARTIES ON JULY 15, 2015)

A UNIVERSAL PHARMACARE PROGRAMME

ACER-CART believes that access to adequate medication is an essential component of a national health care programme.

ACER-CART urges that the next federal government convene a meeting of the Ministers of Health to gain support for the Federal Government to have the authority to establish a regulatory drug agency which can stabilize the cost of generic drugs. The goal is to achieve substantial savings to provincial and territorial governments and to patients.



Question: If elected, how will your party work with the provinces and territories to integrate into Medicare a national pharmacare programme to ensure that needed medications are affordable and available to all Canadians?

PENSION AND RETIREMENT INCOME

ACER-CART believes that all employed persons have a right to contribute to a defined benefit pension plan and that the payments be fully adjusted in accordance with the Consumer Price Index. ACER-CART believes that all working Canadians deserve secure and reliable federal pension and retirement income programmes. These pensions are crucial also to the well being of all provincial, territorial and federal economies.

ACER-CART urges the next Parliament and Government to work with the provinces and territories to exercise leadership, commitment and cooperation to strengthen the economic future of all retired persons, taxpayers and citizens of Canada by ensuring comprehensive and coordinated pension and retirement income programmes.

ACER-CART urges that the focus be on the enhancement of the Canada Pension Plan (CPP), a defined benefit plan providing Canadians with the greatest pension income security in retirement.



Question: What will your Party do to ensure that Canadians can look forward to the retirement financial security that is accorded to them through a universal and portable defined benefit pension plan?



Canada's New Democrats
Nouveau Parti démocratique du Canada

ndp.ca // npd.ca

NDP response to the Canadian Association of Retired Teachers

Note: The full NDP platform has not been released yet

Health Care in Canada

Question: How would your party work to ensure that a new health accord is negotiated between federal, provincial and territorial partners to provide funding that strengthens the principles of universality, accessibility, comprehensiveness and portability in our national public health care system?

NDP Response: New Democrats are strong defenders of our cherished public healthcare system, which was created by a New Democrat, Tommy Douglas.

But we know that our public healthcare system is under attack, between neglect and reckless cuts from the Conservatives and from those that want to privatize it. We will restore the federal leadership role that has been lacking under the Conservatives. New Democrats have committed to reverse the Conservatives' reckless, unilateral cuts to healthcare funding and work collaboratively with the provinces and territories on developing a new set of healthcare agreements.

We also believe the federal government has an important role to play in upholding the Canada Health Act and its core principles and in working with the provinces and territories to adapt Medicare to the challenges of the 21st century.

A National Seniors Care Plan

Question: What does your Party propose as a national seniors strategy with specific reference to

- *ensuring that a continuum of community-based integrated services is available to all aging Canadians, a continuum that includes home care, home support, long-term care and end-of-life services;*
- *ensuring dignity and adequacy of care for Canadians with dementia and other cognitive problems;*
- *ensuring that all Canadians have access to appropriate palliative care services;*
- *ensuring secure, affordable, accessible and adequate housing for Canadian seniors; and*
- *increasing the number of geriatricians in Canada?*



Canada's New Democrats
Nouveau Parti démocratique du Canada
ndp.ca // npd.ca

NDP Response: The NDP is proud to be the only party proposing a National Strategy on Aging. Our strategy includes coordinated policies that address:

- Income security for seniors – including raising the level of CPP, and restoring the age of eligibility for OAS to 65.
- Healthcare – including investments in long-term care, continuing care, and palliative care.
- Housing – including investments in affordable housing of more than \$2 billion over 4 years.
- Dementia Strategy, to deal with Alzheimer's and other dementia-related diseases, one that that gives families much-needed support.

A Universal Pharmacare Programme

Question: If elected, how will your party work with the provinces and territories to integrate into Medicare a national pharmacare programme to ensure that needed medications are affordable and available to all Canadians?

NDP Response: Canadians are paying more for prescription drugs than other OECD countries. This is why New Democrats have said for years that universal drug coverage is in the best interest of Canadians.

Yet the Conservatives have failed to take any action on the recommendation of the Romanow Commission to create a national Pharmacare program.

Conservatives have done nothing to improve health care for Canadians, refusing to sit down with provinces and plan for a new round of Health Accords, and have sat and watched as out of pocket spending on health care spirals out of control.

More than ever, we need a renewed commitment to public, universal health care, ensuring all Canadians have access to affordable medications.

Pension and Retirement Income

Question: What will your Party do to ensure that Canadians can look forward to the retirement financial security that is accorded to them through a universal and portable defined benefit pension plan?

NDP Response: The NDP has long advocated for boosting CPP benefits so that all Canadians can retire in dignity.

We will work with the provinces on a plan to gradually increase contribution rates so that Canadians can count on a secure and adequate source of income in their retirement. The Conservatives have blocked all progress in spite of support from the Provinces to move forward. The NDP would also reverse the Conservative cuts to OAS and restore the age of eligibility for OAS/GIS to 65.



Justin P.J. Trudeau

Leader of the Liberal Party of Canada
Chef du Parti libéral du Canada

July 30th, 2015

JoAnn Lauber
Canadian Association of Retired Teachers

Dear Ms. Lauber,

Thank you for taking the time to write to me with the Canadian Association of Retired Teachers' questions regarding health care, seniors, and pensions.

The Liberal Party of Canada believes that every Canadian must have equal access to quality, publically funded, universal health care, regardless of their age, background, physical needs, geographical location, or income. Unfortunately, high costs and inadequate drug coverage for millions of Canadians prevent equal access to care in this country and violate this basic principle of our health care system.

The goal of our health care system has been, and always should be, to improve the efficiency of health care, while maintaining its universality and affordability, especially for our seniors. While the delivery of health care is constitutionally mandated under the purview of the provincial governments, the federal government must take a leadership role and work together with the provinces and territories to adequately care for our aging population and tackle critical needs which might arise in the healthcare system. At the forefront, must be investments in community-based care, seniors' care, and mental health; ensuring that all Canadians from coast-to-coast-to-coast have the support necessary to cover the catastrophic costs associated with major diseases.

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Justin P.J. Trudeau

Leader of the Liberal Party of Canada
Chef du Parti libéral du Canada

I, and the entire Liberal Caucus, value the experience and contributions made by seniors to the economy, and believe that all Canadians should be able to enjoy a dignified retirement when they leave the workforce. That is why we have not only committed to restoring the age of eligibility for Old Age Security to 65, but also to working together with the provinces to enhance the Canada Pension Plan. By expanding the CPP and reinstating the age of OAS eligibility, we can reduce reliance on private savings for seniors, which are subject to greater market risk, and ensure that employers keep their commitments to retirees, especially as they relate to defined benefit plans. Should the Liberal Party form the next government, we will also work to ensure that seniors have access to affordable housing and reliable transit options, as well as the needed support that will allow them to maintain an active and valued role in their communities.

Thank you once again for taking the time to write to me with the Canadian Association of Retired Teachers' questions regarding these important issues.

Sincerely,

Justin P.J. Trudeau
Member of Parliament for Papineau
Leader of the Liberal Party of Canada

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**GREEN
PARTY**
(REPLY RECEIVED
AUGUST 12, 2015)

Health Care in Canada

ACER-CART believes that health care for Canadians should be publicly administered, publicly funded and publicly delivered, nationally universal in coverage and accessibility, comprehensive, and portable.

ACER-CART urges that the Parliament assembled after the next federal election initiate a new era of negotiated agreement, through a health accord endorsed by the federal, provincial and territorial governments that would protect, transform and strengthen Medicare, and thereby provide stability and cohesiveness to the Canadian health care system.

Question: How would your party work to ensure that a new health accord is negotiated between federal, provincial and territorial partners to provide funding that strengthens the principles of universality, accessibility, comprehensiveness and portability in our national public health care system?

The Green Party is strongly committed to a universal, publicly funded healthcare system. We oppose privatized, for-profit healthcare at every level. Canada's health-care system, though still a source of pride, has been slipping into a multi-tiered system for decades. Already, approximately 30% of the \$192 billion spent annually on health care in Canada is derived from private sources.

The federal government's decision to change the federal funding formula for health care to a yearly lump sum equal-per-capita cash transfer to provinces was much more than a simple financial adjustment. By turning health care into a mere accounting entry in the national budget, the federal government made it clear that Ottawa will no longer engage with the provinces in reforming and improving our health care system must be underwritten not just with federal cash, but with a substantial dose of federal government leadership.

The federal government must reassert its mandate to protect the Canada Health Act. The Green Party proposes to measure and identify the extent of the multi-tiered system in Canada with an eye to completely eliminating all the current scheme's inequalities. Universal health care is fundamental to Canadian citizenship - it's an expression of the values that draw us together. Only a single-payer system can provide Canadians with the quality healthcare that we need.

We believe Ottawa must provide adequate funding and firm national leadership to strengthen our healthcare system. To facilitate this leadership, the Green Party would establish an intergovernmental body that is clearly and permanently mandated to facilitate consensus across the provinces and territories. This body would also advise both the federal and provincial governments on national standards for health care services, including the regulation of the mix of private and public care. The Health Council of Canada could also be given greater powers, or a Council of Canadian Governments could create a standing council on health care, as has been done in Australia.

A National Seniors Care Plan

ACER-CART believes that Canadians deserve the security of a continuum of community-based integrated services that includes a universal system of home care, home support, long-term care services, and hospice and palliative care; and that this continuum of services should be an integral part of a Canadian comprehensive health care system.

ACER-CART urges that the newly elected federal government collaborate with the provinces and territories to facilitate the establishment of national seniors care plan that coordinates care for seniors.

Question:

What does your Party propose as a national seniors strategy with specific reference to:

- **ensuring that a continuum of community-based integrated services is available to all aging Canadians, a continuum that includes home care, home support, long-term care and end-of-life services;**
- **ensuring dignity and adequacy of care for Canadians with dementia and other cognitive problems;**
- **ensuring that all Canadians have access to appropriate palliative care services;**
- **ensuring secure, affordable, accessible and adequate housing for Canadian seniors; and**
- **increasing the number of geriatricians in Canada?**

The Green Party supports developing a National Seniors Continuing Healthcare Plan. As Canada's population ages, we are faced with the challenge and opportunity to provide seniors with independence and dignity in their healthcare. The Green Party recognizes the need for improved mental health, long-term, and palliative care. Seniors should be able to choose the care model that best fits their needs, whether that be residential or home care. Green MPs will advocate for a National Home Care Policy that improves upon existing eldercare policies and establishes guidelines for the care of seniors who have special needs and require care by geriatric specialists. While we applaud the provinces for taking the lead on continuing care, we are in desperate need of federal leadership to harmonize the provincial plans and give the kind of nation-wide support that only the federal government can provide.

The Green Party of Canada is committed to treating those with dementia, alzheimer's and other cognitive problems with dignity through the implementation of senior specific health and wellness programs. We support integrating extensive mental-health services including expanded psychotherapy and clinical counselling into the health care system, as recommended by the Mental Health Commission of Canada, as well as implementing a national dementia strategy.

To ensure all Canadians have access to palliative care, the Green Party will transfer funds to provinces to build and open more long-term care beds, increase funding for palliative care hospices in hospitals and our communities, establish and fund a special program to provide grants to non-profit societies setting up palliative care hospices and help develop national guidelines for care of the frail elderly who have special needs and require care by geriatric specialists.

The Green Party believes it is the right of every Canadian to have affordable, safe, and secure housing. To ensure secure, affordable, accessible and adequate housing for Canadian seniors,

the Green Party will advocate the inclusion of a clause in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms that specifically states that everyone living in Canada is entitled to safe shelter or affordable housing, and provide credit and loan guarantees to non-profit housing organizations and cooperatives for the building and restoration of quality, energy-efficient housing for seniors, people with special needs, and low-income families.

Green MP Bruce Hyer also recently introduced a private member's bill (C-685), the Respecting Canada's Seniors Act, in Parliament. It will establish an annual comprehensive review of seniors' standard of living and quality of life, including income security, pension stability, access to affordable housing, and health care.

A Universal Pharmacare Programme

ACER-CART believes that access to adequate medication is an essential component of a national health care programme.

ACER-CART urges that the next federal government convene a meeting of the Ministers of Health to gain support for the Federal Government to have the authority to establish a regulatory drug agency which can stabilize the cost of generic drugs. The goal is to achieve substantial savings to provincial and territorial governments and to patients.

Question: If elected, how will your party work with the provinces and territories to integrate into Medicare a national pharmacare programme to ensure that needed medications are affordable and available to all Canadians?

Green MPs will call for a universal pharmacare program that ensures all Canadians can access the medication they need. Canada is the only industrialized country with a universal healthcare system that does not provide for universal coverage of prescription drugs. Without private insurance, medication and treatment are far too often prohibitively expensive. While, the largest single driver for increased healthcare costs is pharmaceuticals, there has been no federal leadership on the issue. A national pharmacare program would enable Canada to negotiate purchases in bulk and combine administration costs, saving billions.

The Green Party will establish a new crown corporation to bulk purchase and dispense prescription drugs, based on a rigorous evidence-based model, and to study the feasibility of establishing a national pharmacare program that ensures that effective pharmaceuticals are available to all Canadians who need them. This program should adopt the four key recommendations of the Pharmacare 2020 Report, published on July 15, 2015: universal access to necessary medicines, fair distribution of prescription drug costs, safe and appropriate prescribing, and maximum health benefits per dollar spent.

Pension and Retirement Income

ACER-CART believes that all employed persons have a right to contribute to a defined benefit pension plan and that the payments be fully adjusted in accordance with the Consumer Price Index. ACER-CART believes

that all working Canadians deserve secure and reliable federal pension and retirement income programmes. These pensions are crucial also to the well being of all provincial, territorial and federal economies.

ACER-CART urges the next Parliament and Government to work with the provinces and territories to exercise leadership, commitment and cooperation to strengthen the economic future of all retired persons, taxpayers and citizens of Canada by ensuring comprehensive and coordinated pension and retirement income programmes.

ACER-CART urges that the focus be on the enhancement of the Canada Pension Plan (CPP), a defined benefit plan providing Canadians with the greatest pension income security in retirement.

Question: What will your Party do to ensure that Canadians can look forward to the retirement financial security that is accorded to them through a universal and portable defined benefit pension plan?

Retirees are a diverse, vital and growing population within Canada. The Green Party fundamentally believes in providing our retirees with the independence, well-being, and dignity they deserve. Far too often, in times of economic downturn, retirees are the first to feel the crunch. This is unacceptable.

The Green Party will enhance and protect the Canada Pension Plan (CPP) and introduce pension reform to keep the elderly out of poverty. The Canada Pension Plan is one of Canada's greatest public policy successes. It remains in sound financial health and with effective and responsible management will remain sound for at least the next 70 years. Yet there are key areas where the CPP could be improved to offer greater value to Canadians.

Green Party MPs would work towards implementing reforms to the CPP that would allow for an increase in the the Year's Maximum Pensionable Earnings (YMPE) to reflect the increased needs of senior citizens. Approximately 35% of the elderly in this country depend on the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) to remain above the poverty line. This is a reflection of an inadequate CPP objective - replacing only 25% of the average industrial wage. A 50% replacement regime would better meet senior citizens evolving needs and greatly reduce the need for the Guaranteed Income Supplement. Phasing in a doubled target income replacement rate and doubling the YMPE over the next 47 years would efficiently ensure that retirees are treated with the dignity they deserve - without resorting to unfair intergenerational subsidies.

The Green Party of Canada is a strong supporter of defined benefit retirement plans. They are much more efficient than defined contribution plans because they produce significantly higher pensions for the same contributions, yet they both receive the same tax support. Green MPs would seek opportunities to resist the shift to inefficient voluntary defined contribution plans and require that all corporate pension plans be audited to ensure adequate funding and proper management. Pension plans are far too important a social good to leave entirely to the free market.

Further, the Green Party supports a comprehensive review of existing federal and provincial laws to ensure sustainable, fair and honest pension plans are available to all Canadians. Green MPs would work to enact legislation to protect pension benefits and require businesses to act responsibly when administering their pension funds.

ACER-CART

