

2019 Federal Election

Electoral Tool Kit



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Message from the President



September marks the beginning of the Federal election campaign. It will wrap up with a vote on October 21, 2019, that will determine the Canadian Parliament's 43rd legislature.

Did you say federal elections? What does the federal government have to do with my working conditions? Isn't it the provincial government that takes care of that? How do the values debated in Ottawa impact my patient ratio or the mandatory overtime I did two days ago?

Here are some questions that might have popped into your mind after you received this document. While it's true that the health sector falls under provincial jurisdiction, the political decisions made in Ottawa still have an impact on the Quebec health sector. From a budgetary perspective, the federal government already plays a critical role in defining the Quebec Health Minister's range of possibilities and latitude. In 2019-2020, the federal government will transfer over 9 billion dollars to the provincial government for the health sector! In exchange for this transfer, Quebec and the other provinces agree to comply with the conditions set out in the *Canada Health Act*, in particular as regards free and accessible health care and services. The federal government's role involves safekeeping health care, ensuring it remains public and free. It's a political role that evolves based on the party in power. Former Health Minister Gaétan Barrette saw this firsthand when in 2016 the federal health minister threatened to reduce the federal transfers if Mr. Barrette didn't prohibit Quebec doctors from billing patients for accessory costs. The decisions made on Parliament Hill in the next few years will definitely have an impact on your personal and professional life.

That's why, just as for the provincial election last year and, as widely requested by the FIQ and FIQP members, we prepared this Electoral Tool Kit to give our members a practical document that highlights the values and issues that are important to our organization, as well as the parties' promises and engagements that deal with these same issues. This kit also provides sample questions that members can ask candidates who are trying to win their vote. For the healthcare professionals that we proudly represent, issues that deal with the economy, health, the environment and gender equality are a source of natural concern, which is why this document spends extra time addressing them.

The FIQ team and I hope that this Electoral Tool Kit will help you make sense of the main parties' proposals in the midst of all of the political sparring. We encourage you to read the news during the campaign, to visit the parties' websites and, of course, to vote on October 21.

We wish everyone a great return to school and work and election campaign!

Nancy Bédard
President

01. Economy



As healthcare professionals we see firsthand how the economy affects our patients' health. As we deal with a growing demand for health care and increasingly complex patient conditions, more often than not, the only instructions our elected officials have for our managers is to do more with less, at the expense of our own health.

However, once it's time to assess public health determinants, social and economic environment are by far the most important factors. The consensus in the scientific literature is that a government that truly wishes to improve the population's health must make it a priority to increase income, improve working and employment conditions and decrease socio-economic inequality!

As a progressive labour organization, every day we fight, not only to improve the working conditions and lives of FIQ and FIQP members, but for the public. Consequently, we are very concerned about the increasing socioeconomic inequality and that the richest 1% are gaining increasing ownership of the collective wealth. The FIQ and FIQP believe that the next federal government must:

Adopt measures aimed at decreasing socioeconomic inequality and sharing wealth more equitably, especially by increasing income for the majority of the population and improving working conditions;

Adopt measures aimed at preventing the use of tax havens;

Not ratify free-trade agreements that decrease governments' ability to take action to more equitably distribute wealth.



Content Note

The summary of each party's promises was written based on information from the political parties' websites as of August 16. We also consulted the Liberal Party of Canada's and Conservative Party of Canada's 2018 statement positions. This electoral tool kit was produced by the FIQ and FIQP for their members.

Economy

Liberal

- The Liberal Party is promoting the Canada Child Benefit as part of its efforts to reduce inequality
- Implementation of a Guaranteed Minimum Income Model

CONSERVATIVE

- Continue to eliminate loopholes, like the use of tax havens, which undermine the Canadian tax base and allow companies to avoid paying taxes in Canada
- As regards international agreements, to vigorously defend the reduction of international trade barriers and tariffs and to seek to eliminate export subsidies that disrupt the market

NDP

- Instate a federal minimum wage
- Improve the transparency of negotiations of potential trade agreements while ensuring they are equitable, respect human rights, protect the environment and protect the interests of workers and Canadian communities
- Strengthen the integrity of taxation and fight tax evasion by eliminating loopholes
- Cease tax reductions for businesses and re-establish them at the 2010 level
- Introduce a new tax for the wealthiest 1%, for those with fortunes of 20 million dollars or more

BLOC Québécois

- Require a review of all fiscal agreements concluded by Canada with tax havens, a review of the resources the Canada Revenue Agency has to investigate tax havens, and a review of the legislative means that can be used to oblige big businesses operating in Canada to pay their fair share of taxes
- Stand in favour of free-trade as long as the agreements signed by Canada support Quebec's economic interests and do not limit governments' ability to legislate for the common good

green PARTY OF CANADA

- Implement an official minimum wage
- Abolish tax havens
- Opposed to the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) because it grants inflated rights to businesses, especially as regards the protection of investments, patents and the progressive privatization of public services



Sample questions to ask candidates in your electoral district



- What are you proposing to do to reduce the ever-growing economic inequality?
- We regularly hear elected officials say “as a society, we don't have the resources to pay for such and such a service.” How does your party plan to tackle the use of tax havens, which deprives the government of significant resources?

02. Health

As healthcare professionals, we see firsthand what's going on in the public health system. Every day we have to hold together an under-funded health network that's poorly organized and managed based on criteria that prioritizes profitability at the expense of staff and patients' wellbeing. For those of us who work in health care, political promises that we "will get more for our money" mean that we will end up with work overloads, exhaustion and distress, resulting in care provision that doesn't meet our standards.

Meanwhile, the people we elect to represent us have all of the tools they need to improve the care and services to which the public is entitled without necessarily increasing the health bill. For example, capping the skyrocketing hike in prescription drug costs should be a priority for a government looking to cut costs because it becomes one of the biggest budgetary items once it's time to explain the increase in health spending. Also, what is our elected officials' excuse for turning a blind eye to the slow but steady privatization of our public health system? Why not stop turning to the private health sector altogether? It has been widely documented that the more a health system leans on the private sector, the more expensive it gets.

While health care falls to the provinces, the federal government has always played an important role in the implementation and sustainability of the provinces' public health systems, especially through its spending power and the *Canada Health Act*.

Consequently, the federal government can do much more and the FIQ expects the next government to agree to:

- Significantly increase federal health transfers;
- Take pointed action to decrease prescription drug costs;
- Take aggressive measures to cease turning to the private health care sector.



Health

Liberal

- Implement a universal public pharmacare plan with the purchasing power necessary to obtain the best prices, starting with a list of essential drugs
- Include mental health services in the public health insurance plan and the *Canada Health Act*
- Resolve the opioid crisis using a public health approach

CONSERVATIVE

- Stable and predictable financing for health care and social programs
- Increase the Canada Health Transfer and the Canada Social Transfer
- Pharmacare: rejects the principle of a universal program and prefers specific funding for very expensive drugs

NDP

- Wants to include universal pharmacare in the Canadian health system: work with the provinces to implement this program by the end of 2020, while having the federal government inject 10 billion dollars every year
- Increase health care funding, which is currently threatened by cuts and privatization

BLOC Québécois

- Demand a 6% annual increase for health transfers so that they cover at least 25% of Quebec spending in this area. Take the ageing population into account for calculating the health transfers
- Pharmacare: financial compensation for the Quebec government and direct payments for the current program
- Find a way to ensure the pricing for brand-name drugs is analyzed and changed in order to reduce costs (expand the comparison method and compare prices in 13 countries instead of the current 7)

green PARTY OF CANADA

- Implement pharmacare and set up a government business to purchase prescription drugs in bulk and distribute them
- Include basic dental care in national coverage
- Treat substance addiction as a public health issue: fund community support, implement a national strategy to reduce drug abuse, set up safe injection sites and regulate the distribution of prescribed products



Sample questions to ask candidates in your electoral district...



- What will your party do to improve overall access to health care?
- How do you propose to decrease prescription drug costs? How exactly would you do that?
- What is your party committed to doing to protect the public health system?

03.

Status of Women



We remain concerned about women's living conditions and societal inequalities. As women and healthcare professionals, we see that several issues, including violence in the workplace and abortion, are still being debated.

In Canada, the free choice to have an abortion is still at risk despite decriminalization in 1988. In fact, this issue recently became the subject of heated, public debate once again, in large part due to the increasing limitations imposed by American states. We are also worried about the multiplication of fake abortion clinics in Canada. The fake clinics deceive women about their rights, the procedures they offer and how they affect their health.

The FIQ and FIQP are also concerned about the violence women face in their workplaces, especially healthcare professionals. According to a poll conducted by the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions (CFNU) in 2017, 61% of Canadian nurses had had a serious run in with violence in the last 12 months. Canada has a lot to do to eliminate violence for Canadian workers. The ratification of the Convention Concerning the Elimination of Violence and Harassment in the World of Work, adopted in 2019 by the International Labour Organization (ILO), is a step in the right direction. The Convention takes into account the particular nature of violence against women in the workplace.

For the FIQ and FIQP, which have a 90% female membership, violence against Indigenous women is an important feminist issue. For example, even though Indigenous women only make up 4.3% of Canadian women, they represent 16% of all female homicide victims in Canada. In 2019, the report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls was released with a bundle of recommendations.

Moreover, the current Employment Insurance program puts women at a disadvantage as compared to men. Only 35.2% of unemployed women qualify to receive benefits compared to 52.5% of unemployed men. Given that more women work part-time, it's much harder for them to accumulate the hours required to qualify for Employment Insurance.

It is important to FIQ and FIQP members that the next federal government make firm promises to advance the status of women:

- To protect women's right to make decisions for their own bodies, including to intentionally terminate a pregnancy;

- To ratify the Convention Concerning the Elimination of Violence and Harassment in the World of Work, granting Canadian women workers additional options when faced with violence in the workplace;

- To ensure that the report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls is not shelved;

- To update the Employment Insurance program and make sure it uses gender-based analysis.

Status of Women



- Oversee the protection of women's right to freely choose to have an abortion. Remember that the party already refused to accept candidates who openly express a pro-life stance.
- Desire to take the measures necessary to ensure violence and harassment-free workplaces.
- In 2015, launched a national inquiry into missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls.



- In its politics from August 25, 2018, the Conservative Party mentioned that it would in no way support the legalization of abortion. Moreover, Conservative members of Parliament recently refused to second a motion concerning abortion submitted by the Bloc Québécois.



- Ensure that abortion services are accessible in all regions in Canada.
- Work with Indigenous women and communities to implement the Calls for Justice of the National Commission of Inquiry.
- Develop a comprehensive plan to fight violence against women, girls, LGBTQI2-S people, and Indigenous peoples.



- It's undeniable that women have the right to make a free choice when it comes to abortion. In May 2019, this party submitted a motion reiterating the right to have an abortion.
- Prohibit all forms of violence, including psychological harassment.
- Demand a complete inquiry on missing and murdered Indigenous women.



- The right to make a free choice when it comes to abortion.
- Strengthen the rights and protection of workers in all workplaces regulated by the federal government.
- Launch a complete inquiry on missing and murdered Indigenous women.
- Replace social programs like employment insurance by a guaranteed livable income (GLI).



Sample questions to ask candidates in your electoral district...



- What will your party do to protect women's right to choose in Canada, considering that some states in the U.S. are adopting restrictive laws?
- Are you concerned about the increasing number of fake abortion clinics in Canada? What actions do you propose to stop them?
- In general, how do you propose to permanently put an end to violence against Indigenous women and girls?
- How will your party eliminate violence against healthcare professionals?
- How do you propose to establish equity between men and women in the Employment Insurance program?

04.

Environment

Since climate change has a direct impact on public health, how can we live healthily in a sick environment? Healthcare professionals see firsthand how natural disasters, more frequent heatwaves, and air pollution in our cities affect the health network and see the connection between the environment and public health.

The World Health Organization (WHO) reported that reducing greenhouse gas emissions and meeting the Paris Agreement targets could save about a million lives a year by 2050. The significant savings for the world's health systems would far outweigh the costs of fighting global climate change. Moreover, the WHO says that an estimated 24% of global diseases today can be attributed to environmental factors. And an unhealthy environment is considered to be one of the main risk factors attributable to diseases suffered by children age 5 and under.

Faced with these harsh findings, the FIQ and FIQP also jumped into action. At the intersection of social, economic and environmental spheres, they are currently drawing up a sustainable development policy that will serve as a guide for their own operations. While it's true that every little bit helps, some have more influence than others, i.e., the ability to force major polluters to reduce their impact and adopt models that take into account ecosystems' assimilative capacity. Last April, the FIQ joined a coalition of healthcare professionals that urge governments to ramp up their fight against climate change. The transition to a healthy environment is absolutely crucial to protecting the population's health. The federal government needs to take the situation seriously and to:

- Take immediate action to meet the goals of the Paris Agreement, which Canada signed;

- Break our dependence on fossil fuels by 2050 and massively invest in active, public and electric transportation;

- Integrate environmental objectives and protect governments' right to act in all free trade agreements.





- Comply with the Paris Agreement's objectives
- Invest in green infrastructures and public transportation
- Carbon pricing
- Invest additional tax revenue from the Trans Mountain pipeline into creating funds that will finance energy transition measures in the country
- Ban all single-use plastics by 2021
- Adopt a Canadian charter of environmental rights to provide access to relevant information on the environment, ensure environmental justice and introduce mechanisms of participation in environmental decision-making



- Eliminate the carbon tax
- Comply with the Paris Agreement's objectives
- Provide incentive measures for individuals and small businesses and oblige the most polluting businesses to compensate with green investments
- Create funds for innovation and green technologies from venture capital managed by the private sector, independent of the government



- Declare a climate emergency and implement greenhouse gas emission reduction targets to limit the global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius
- Expand public transportation systems, electrify public transportation and municipal vehicle fleets by 2030 and help provinces and municipalities that make it a priority to implement a free public transportation system
- Power Canada with net carbon-free electricity by 2030 and move to 100% non-emitting electricity by 2050
- Enshrine the right to a healthy environment in the law and protect 30% of land, freshwater and oceans by 2030

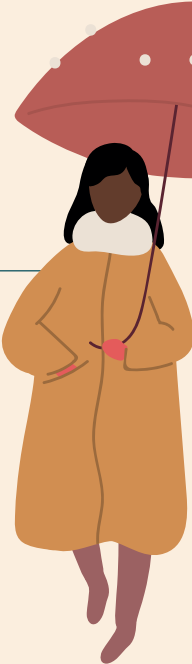
Environment



- Broad review of all policies and taxation and propose a plan to support a transition to a green economy
- End direct and indirect subsidies to hydrocarbon industries; promote clean energy available in Quebec internationally
- Require that funds be created for green energy research and innovation
- Request a federal infrastructure program with 10 billion dollars a year focused on public transportation and electrifying transportation
- Propose a bill affirming Quebec's primacy in environmental matters on its territory, with the right to veto any project to transport oil by pipeline or train



- Invest in national infrastructure for renewable and efficient energy production, digital upgrades, clean-tech manufacturing and ecotourism
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 60% by 2030 and to zero by 2050
- Invest in a Canadian strategy for an electric network that produces 100% renewable electricity across Canada and put an end to fossil fuel investments starting at the federal level
- Create a national transportation plan: invest in public transportation, in the train network, buy electric buses
- Protect and conserve freshwater



Sample questions to ask candidates in your electoral district...



- Does your party think that the climate situation is critical?
- Does your party feel that Canada has an important role to play on a planetary scale?
- How is your party approaching the effects of climate change on public health and on the health system?
- What will you do to make public transportation accessible to the majority of the population?

Background of main political parties

The Federal Parliament has 338 members, 78 of which are in Quebec.



Liberal Party of Canada

The Liberal Party of Canada formed the government at the end of parliamentary work, with 177 members. They say their vision is one of a “prosperous, socially just, united and environmentally healthy Canada for all Canadians.” Justin Trudeau is the leader of the Liberal Party of Canada.



Conservative Party of Canada

The Conservative Party of Canada was started in December 2003 and emerged from a fusion of the Canadian Alliance and the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada. It formed the government from 2006 to 2015 with Stephen Harper as its leader. Since May 2017, Andrew Scheer has been its leader. The Conservative Party of Canada is the official opposition and describes itself as the party that makes Canada stronger, safer and better.



New Democratic Party

The New Democratic Party was formed in 1961 by the Social Democratic Party and the Canadian Labour Congress. It was the official opposition from 2011 to 2015. The NDP has 40 members in parliament and its leader is Jagmeet Singh. The New Democrats say they believe that they are progressives who believe we can build a better, more prosperous and sustainable Canada where no one is left behind.

People's Party of Canada

The People's Party of Canada had a representative in the House of Commons: elected under a conservative banner, Maxime Bernier left to start his own party. The People's Party is in favour of reducing the size of the government and defends individual freedom and responsibility.



Green Party of Canada

The Green Party had two members. In addition to its leader, Elizabeth May, the Green Party elected a second member last May at the last partial election before the general election in October. The party is based on the following principles: non-violence, sustainable development, social justice, ecological wisdom, participatory democracy and respect for diversity.



Bloc Québécois

The Bloc Québécois was founded in 1991. It is based in Quebec and aims to set up the conditions necessary to achieve sovereignty in Quebec. It aims to defend the interests of Quebecers in the federal government while promoting independence. The Bloc Québécois had ten seats in Ottawa. Yves François Blanchet is the leader of the Bloc Québécois.

Other

As for the rest of the pre-election composition of the House of Commons, we must mention a member of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (in Saskatchewan) and 8 independent members who were all elected under the banner of a party. Two electoral districts were vacant.



Overall, 15 parties are running in the October 2019 federal elections.