



This federal election,

VOTE for public services!



Public Service Alliance of Canada
Alliance de la Fonction publique du Canada
www.psaac-afpc.com

Whose priorities will count with our next federal government?

Since he was first elected in 2006, Stephen Harper has pursued an ideology that believes less government is better and little or no government is best of all. The Conservative government has been conducting an ongoing program of cuts to federal public services by stealth to avoid public, media and opposition party scrutiny.

These cumulative cuts ultimately lead to an erosion of public services and harm Canadians and their families who depend on them.

As a member of the PSAC, whether you work for the federal, territorial or municipal government, in a hospital, transition shelter or at a university, you understand that drastic cuts lead to poor quality services.

Harper's priorities are not in line with what Canadians want when he spends money on self-promotion, super-jails and corporate tax cuts, ignoring serious issues like stable jobs, poverty, child care and retirement security.

In addition to whittling away at public services, the Conservatives have managed to turn governing into a one-man, top-down operation that punishes anyone with an opposing view. Our democracy is under threat.

The lack of respect for the people we elect, and the complete disregard this government has shown for our democratic traditions cannot be ignored.

Ask your candidates some hard questions. Find out what their priorities are and if they deserve your vote.

We've had five years of misplaced priorities under the Harper Conservatives.

When you visit the ballot box, vote for candidates who believe in public services and an accountable government.

Protect public services

Canadians rely on public services, especially during difficult economic times.

- Public services build communities and contribute to household stability.
- Middle-income Canadian families enjoy public services worth about \$41,000 – or 63% of their income.
- Cutting taxes erodes public services and actually takes money out of people's pockets.

In their latest budget the Conservatives announced yet another program review, this time government-wide with a goal of cutting \$4 billion, the results of which could only be severe cuts to services and jobs.

What the government should really be cutting is the "shadow public service." Despite the capping of departmental budgets, personnel outsourcing costs have remained above \$1 billion a year.

A handful of outsourcing firms have become parallel HR departments for particular federal government departments. There is a double

standard at play – a hiring freeze for permanent employees as contracting costs continue to skyrocket.

If the federal government wants to rein in spending, it should reduce its reliance on expensive temporary help services and invest in public services instead.

Ask candidates: What will you do to protect and promote public services?





A national child care system wouldn't just affect children – it would go a long way in ensuring women's equality and the well-being of families. In addition, it would create thousands of good jobs and boost the economy.

Establish a universal child care program

Two thirds of all women with children under five years old work outside the home. Child care affects all women, regardless of their socio-economic status, racial background, sexual orientation or ability.

Outside of Quebec, less than 20 per cent of children have access to regulated child care spaces. The widening gap between the real need for child care spaces and the lack of available services is due to the federal government's failure to invest in a national child care strategy.

In 2006, the Conservatives destroyed the beginnings of a national child care program and replaced it with a small monthly taxable payment. It doesn't come close to covering the real cost of child care, barely covering the cost of two days' worth of child care in a big city.



When you fund child care, you support the entire community. A national child care system wouldn't just affect children – it would go a long way in ensuring women's equality and the well-being of families. In addition, it would create thousands of good jobs and boost the economy.

Ask candidates: Will you commit to building a national, universal non-profit child care system?

Guarantee pension and retirement security

Elderly people shouldn't have to live in poverty after a lifetime of hard work. But if employers have their way, retirees will continue to face an uncertain future and young people will enter a workforce with little or no guarantee of a livable income when they get older.

Only one in four Canadians is fully confident that they will be able to save enough to live comfortably in retirement.

The 2008 recession took a toll on some employee pension plans, sparking a national discussion over the future of retirement. Employers have been lobbying hard to reduce their obligations. Instead we need to focus on providing everyone with a secure and decent retirement income.

The answer is not to undermine good pension coverage but to expand it. The instability of the stock market should be evidence enough that even if they could afford to, workers can't rely on individual investments to provide for themselves later in life.

Only one in four Canadians is fully confident that they will be able to save enough to live comfortably in retirement.

The Canada Pension Plan and Quebec Pension Plan, together with the federal Old Age Security and Guaranteed Income Supplement plans, have been successful in reducing senior poverty rates.

According to recent polls, increasing CPP and QPP pension benefits is the option favoured by more than three quarters of Canadians to ensure retirement security for all.

Ask candidates: Will you and your party commit to protecting workers' pension plans and improving public pension coverage and benefits for all?



Promote public safety and proper regulations

Thousands of Canadians work in the federal public service as border service officers, accident inspectors, food inspectors, chemical decontamination technologists, grain-handling regulators, ship and train safety inspectors, counter-terrorism specialists, fishery officers, nutritional researchers and ammunition technicians, to name only a few.

These services will be jeopardized if the government continues to cut millions of dollars from federal departments in an effort to reduce so-called "red tape." The 2008 listeria food poisoning outbreak is just one example of the impact deregulation has had on Canadian lives.

The Harper government has said that it wants fewer inspections and fewer regulations. But nine out of 10 Canadians say their government should do more to protect the environment and people's safety. Eighty-three per cent believe that regulations should be enforced by government workers, not the industries themselves.

Ask candidates: Will you invest in stronger protection by government to keep our communities safe?



Stop the corporate cash grab

Harper's gifts to corporations have cost Canadian tax payers over \$20 billion. This is at a time of record deficits. Canadians should not be made to pay for welfare for profitable corporations.

Public spending on infrastructure has the most impact in creating jobs while handing money to corporations is the least effective option. While corporate tax rates have fallen 10% in ten years, business investment has stayed the same.



Canadian corporations are sitting on a pile of cash: over \$500 billion. Instead of handing them gifts in the form of corporate tax cuts, the government should make long term investments in Canada's aging infrastructure and over-stretched public services.

Financing the bloated bank accounts of the corporate sector is just the wrong priority.

Ask candidates: Will you say no to corporate tax cuts?



Beware of the big chill on democracy: use your political rights!

Thinking about getting involved in the election? Yes, you can – even if you work for the federal government. Here are a few examples of ways to get involved, **outside of your workplace and on your own time**:

- Wear a candidate button in public
- Place an election sign on your property
- Work as a canvasser
- Volunteer in a campaign office
- Take part in election day activities
- Attend peaceful demonstrations on political topics
- Solicit funds from the public for a candidate
- Write a letter to the editor endorsing a candidate or party

Some restrictions may apply to some PSAC members, especially if you are covered by the *Public Service Employment Act*. Keep these in mind:

- Don't identify yourself as a federal public sector worker when canvassing, making phone calls, soliciting donations, or engaging in other public campaign activities.
- Don't wear your uniform or your government identification at public events.
- Don't drive a government identified vehicle when participating in election activities.

If you feel your rights are being restricted or if you're disciplined in any way for your political activity, contact PSAC right away.