



**FEDERAL  
ELECTION  
DOCUMENT**

2019

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## PREFACE

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This document is non-partisan and does not support any particular political group. This document is meant to be a tool to discuss important issues with your local member of parliament (MP) so that you can become an informed voter.

Being an informed voter means you are knowledgeable about current issues and political positions prior to voting. Informed voters think critically and are not easily swayed by campaign messages that are meant to persuade those who are less aware of political platforms and ideas.

While this provides information on some important topics that can be addressed, readers are encouraged to talk to their MP about subject and ideas that are important to them.



## CONVERSION THERAPY

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Conversion therapy, sometimes referred to as reparative therapy, describes the array of interventions that aim to alter same-sex attractions with the goal of promoting heterosexuality.<sup>1,2</sup> As per the fifth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (2013), same-sex attraction and behaviour are not pathological disorders and therefore do not require treatment. Conversion therapy is a problematic and biased practice, as it does not treat a disorder and is known for being harmful on both an individual and community level.<sup>3,4</sup> Conversion therapy has many negative outcomes for those who receive treatment including: increased self-hatred, decreased self-esteem, difficulty sustaining relationships, sexual dysfunction, isolation, dehumanization, depression, anxiety, self-harm, suicidal ideation, and suicide.<sup>2,5,6</sup>

The Federal Government has stated that, while conversion therapy is harmful and does not reflect Canadian values, it is up to individual provinces to enforce their own legislation on the practice. This has led to Manitoba, Vancouver, and Nova Scotia banning aspects of the conversion therapy and Ontario banning the practice altogether. The practice of conversion therapy remains unregulated in all other Canadian provinces and territories and, due to the inconsistent legislation, it is difficult to track where in Canada the practice occurs.<sup>7</sup> It is important that the Federal Government continues to urge provinces to ban conversion therapy.

***Since there is no medical need for conversion therapy, no scientific evidence to support the efficacy of the practice, and countless studies and testimonies that find the practice of conversion therapy harmful to both individuals and communities, how does your party intend to address the issue of banning the practice across Canada?***

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<sup>1</sup> George, M.-A. (2017). Expressive ends: Understanding conversion therapy bans. *Alabama Law Review*(3), 879-853.

<sup>2</sup> Bright, C. (2004). Deconstructing reparative therapy: An examination of the processes involved when attempting to change sexual orientation. *Clinical Social Work Journal*(32), 471-481.

<sup>3</sup> Christianson, A. (2005). A re-emergence of reparative therapy. *Contemporary Sexuality*(10), 9-17.

<sup>4</sup> Behrmann, J. & Ravitsky, V. (2014). Turning queer villages into ghost towns: A community perspective on conversion therapies. *AJOB Neuroscience*(5), 14-16.

<sup>5</sup> Shidlo, A. & Schroeder, M. (2002). Changing sexual orientation: A consumers' report. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*(3), 249-259. doi: 10.1037//07357028.33.3.249

<sup>6</sup> Haldeman, D. (2001). Therapeutic antidotes: Helping gay and bisexual men recover from conversion therapies. *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Psychotherapy*(3), 117-130. doi: 10/1300/J236v05n03\_08

<sup>7</sup> Stroh, P. (2019, March 23). Ottawa rejects plea for nationwide conversion therapy ban. CBC News Retrieved from <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/the-national-conversion-therapy-federal-petition-1.5066899>



## HEALTH TRANSFERS

While health care remains a provincial responsibility, provinces receive annual Canada Health Transfers, money that the Federal Government sends to help provinces and territories pay for healthcare. Currently, the Canada Health Transfers is divided on a per-capita basis.<sup>8</sup> This way of division does not take into consideration the unique population demographics and needs of Canadian provinces.



While New Brunswick is among the smallest provinces in Canada<sup>9</sup>, it is both the oldest and most rapidly aging Canadian province. As of 2017, seniors represented 19.5% of New Brunswick's population and by 2038 seniors are expected to make up 31.3% of the population.<sup>10</sup> There are unique costs associated with an aging population, and this needs to be reflected in policies and fund transfers. Having the Health Transfer be divided on a per-capita basis leaves older and more rural provinces like New Brunswick at a disadvantage, as this method allots more money to younger, faster growing

provinces who are more likely to be able to afford to pay their health professionals more.<sup>11</sup> The Canada Health Transfer needs to move away from the per-capita fund division model to one that better reflects the healthcare costs associated with having an older or healthier population.

***In recognizing that Canadian provinces have unique demographics and health needs, does your party support changing the current per-capita division of the Canada Health Transfer to a more equitable model that recognizes demographics, health statuses, and reflects actual healthcare costs? If so, how does your party intend to do this?***

<sup>8</sup> Grant, K. (2018, May 17). What you need to know about the Canada Health Transfer. Globe and Mail. Retrieved from <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/what-you-need-to-know-about-the-canada-health-transfer/article33360624/>

<sup>9</sup> Statistics Canada (2018). Population. Canada at a glance 2018. Retrieved from <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/12-581-x/2018000/pop-eng.htm>

<sup>10</sup> Province of New Brunswick (2017). We are all in this together: An aging strategy for New Brunswick. 1-76. Retrieved from <https://www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Departments/sd-ds/pdf/Seniors/AnAgingStrategyForNB.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> Huras, A. (2019, June 19). Federal health-care deal with province crucial, economist warns. Daily Gleaner.

## SOCIAL TRANSFERS

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Each year the Federal Government sends money to provinces to support post-secondary education, social assistance, social services, and early childhood development through Federal Social Transfers.<sup>12</sup> This crucial funding is divided on a per-capita basis and is available to all provinces that have no minimum residency period before people can receive social assistance.<sup>13</sup> While this funding is necessary to the delivery of social services, there is currently no mechanism in place to track where the funding goes or to determine whether funding amounts meet provincial needs and ensure good quality services. It is recommended that the Federal Government implement a method of analyzing Federal Social Transfers and linking it to provincial statistics and demographics, with the purpose of determining whether or not the fund amounts and method of division are providing Canadians with good quality services across all provinces.

***Before major changes and improvements can be made to existing systems, facts must be gathered and analyzed. In recognizing this, does your party intend to develop a method of analyzing Federal Social Transfers and comparing it with provincial data to ensure that all Canadians receive quality services?***

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<sup>12</sup> Government of Canada (2011). Canada Social Transfer. Department of Finance Canada. Retrieved from <https://www.fin.gc.ca/fedprov/cst-eng.asp>

<sup>13</sup> Canadian Association of Social Workers (2013). The Canada social transfer and the social determinants of health. 1-4. Retrieved from [https://www.casw-acts.ca/sites/default/files/executive\\_summary\\_-\\_the\\_canada\\_social\\_transfer\\_and\\_the\\_social\\_determinants\\_c\\_2013\\_1.pdf](https://www.casw-acts.ca/sites/default/files/executive_summary_-_the_canada_social_transfer_and_the_social_determinants_c_2013_1.pdf)

## MISSING AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS WOMEN

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The levels of violence that Indigenous women experience is a stark reminder of Canada's history of oppression and colonization of Indigenous people. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission identified the link between the large number of missing and murdered Aboriginal women and the complex interplay of factors that largely stem from residential schools and increase their risk of experiencing violence or being missing or murdered.<sup>14</sup> Steps must be taken to dismantle oppressive structures and make Canada a safe country for Indigenous people, with special focus on the safety of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA people.

While Indigenous women make up 2% of Canada's population<sup>15</sup>, they are grossly overrepresented as victims of sexual and physical violence, as well as homicide. Indigenous women and girls are 12 times more likely to be murdered and missing or experience violence<sup>16</sup>, and five times more likely to experience a violent death than non-Indigenous Canadian women.<sup>1</sup> "The common thread weaving these statistics together is the fact that violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA people is not an individual problem, or an issue only for certain communities. This violence is rooted in systemic factors, like economic, social and political marginalization, as well as racism, discrimination, and misogyny, woven into the fabric of Canadian society".<sup>17</sup>

The barriers Indigenous people face are pervasive, structural, long-lasting, and insidious. The Canadian Government has a responsibility to strengthen and uphold the rights of Indigenous people. This includes providing adequate funding and support for services, such as child welfare services, as identified in the Calls for Justice identified by the National Inquiry for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. The Calls for Justice are based in existing law and are not optional recommendations, but rather legal imperatives that should already be in effect.<sup>18</sup>

***What steps does your party plan to take regarding the missing and murdered Indigenous women in Canada? Does your party promise to act on the Calls for Justice outlined in the final report of the National Inquiry Into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls? How?***

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<sup>14</sup> Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015). Honouring the truth, reconciling for the future. 1-535. Retrieved from [http://nctr.ca/assets/reports/Final%20Reports/Executive\\_Summary\\_English\\_Web.pdf](http://nctr.ca/assets/reports/Final%20Reports/Executive_Summary_English_Web.pdf)

<sup>15</sup> Gilchrist, K. (2010). "Newsworthy" victims?. *Feminist Media Studies*(4), 373-390. doi: 10.1080/14680777.2010.514110

<sup>16</sup> National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (2019). Reclaiming power and place: The final report of the national inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women and girls. Volume 1a1-728. Retrieved from [https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Final\\_Report\\_Vol\\_1a.pdf](https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Final_Report_Vol_1a.pdf)

<sup>17</sup> Quoted from page 56 of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (2019).

<sup>18</sup> National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (2019). Calls for justice. 1-48. Retrieved from <https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/final-report/>

## NEW LEGISLATION FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

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Canada has a deep history of colonization, oppression, and genocide of Indigenous people. Legislation such as the Indian Act (1876) allows government to control most aspects of Indigenous life, including status, resources, land, education, band administration, and so on. Although several changes have been



made to the Indian Act over the years, it is still considered problematic and remains the guiding piece of legislation for Indigenous people to this day. The Indian Act has been labelled “discriminatory” and “patriarchal”.<sup>4</sup> It has been stated that the legislation “has severed Indigenous women from their power, their traditional roles, and their communities and lands, thereby increasing their vulnerability to make and state violence”.<sup>19</sup>

The final report of the National Inquiry Into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls identifies the Indian Act’s discriminatory legislation with colonial policies that target the family unit and continue to traumatize Indigenous people.<sup>20</sup> New legislation for Indigenous people must be developed for and with the people it affects so that it accurately reflect their needs and values and serves to empower Indigenous people, rather than oppress them.

***In recognizing truth and reconciliation, Canada must embrace the rights of Indigenous people through legislation that is developed for and in collaboration with Indigenous people. Does your party have interest in repealing the Indian Act and developing new legislation that serves to empower and protect Indigenous people?***

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<sup>19</sup> Quoted from page 2 of Razack, S. (2016). Sexualized violence and colonialism: Reflections on the inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women. Canadian Journal of Women & the Law, 28(2), 1-38. doi: 10.3138/cjwl.28.2.v

<sup>20</sup> National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (2019a). Reclaiming power and place: The final report of the national inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women and girls. Volume 1a1-728. Retrieved from [https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Final\\_Report\\_Vol\\_1a.pdf](https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Final_Report_Vol_1a.pdf)

## CO-ORDINATED CRISIS STRATEGY

As climate change continues, Canada is seeing an increase in the frequency and severity of natural disasters, something that is expected to worsen in coming years. Floods, drought, wildfires, storms, coastal erosion, and so on, cause damage to not only the environment and infrastructure, but to communities and individual well-being.<sup>21</sup>

The Federal Government needs to develop pro-active response measures to address the impact these disasters have on the mental health and wellbeing of Canadians. It is critical that response measures involve social workers and address the human impact these disasters have in a timely manner. Social workers are knowledgeable in areas of mental health and trauma and are uniquely qualified to assist people who have experienced trauma or displacement caused by natural disasters.



Photo of a flooded Fredericton in spring 2018.<sup>22</sup>

***Since social workers play an important role in understanding trauma and mental health, does your party recognize the need for response measures that include mobilizing professionals, such as social workers, to address the mental health needs of those impacted by disasters?***

<sup>21</sup> Public Safety Canada (2019). Emergency management strategy for Canada. Toward a Resilient 2030. Retrieved from <https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/pblctns/mrgncy-mngmnt-strtg/mrgncy-mngmnt-strtg-en.pdf>

<sup>22</sup> Bissett, K. (2018). Flooded-out rivers continue to threaten New Brunswick. City News. Retrieved from <https://toronto.citynews.ca/2018/04/29/flooded-out-rivers-continue-to-threaten-new-brunswick/>



## CARE FOR VETERANS

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Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a psychological response to having experienced intensely traumatic events. PTSD can be characterized by intrusive memories, gaps in memory, feelings of detachment, sleep disturbances, anger and irritability, difficulty concentrating, and so on. In Canada, it is found that 10% of veterans who have served in a warzone will experience PTSD<sup>23</sup>, demonstrating that mental health challenges are prevalent among our veterans. While those still serving have relatively quick coverage for therapeutic services to aid with PTSD and other mental illnesses, veterans are required to apply for treatment coverage and often must wait long periods of time before their applications are accepted. This results in veterans paying out-of-pocket for services or delaying services pending the processing of their application. This delay should be addressed, or at the very least clearly communicated with those applying for coverage, as delaying treatment for medical conditions can be harmful and lead to conditions worsening.<sup>24</sup>

Currently, access to veteran’s treatment benefits are unequal. For example, disability entitlement under the Pension Act back-dates payments for three months prior to applications, while applications for benefits under the Veterans Welfare Act are eligible for benefits beginning the day of application.<sup>7</sup> Legislation must be updated to ensure veterans are entitled for equal benefits across the board. It has also been recommended by the Department of National Defense and Veterans Affairs Canada that all members with a diagnosed mental health condition who are to be medically released have their mental health care in place, prior to being released. This care should be in close proximity to where they will reside following their release.<sup>25 26</sup>

***In addition to ensuring that all veterans with a diagnosed mental health condition have mental health care in place prior to medical release, how does your party intend to update veteran’s legislation to ensure equal access to benefits and commit to ensuring that all applications are screened and processed in a timely manner?***

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<sup>23</sup> Veterans Affairs Canada (2019). Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and war-related stress. Retrieved from <https://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/health-support/mental-health-and-wellness/understanding-mental-health/ptsd-warstress>

<sup>24</sup> Government of Canada (2018a). Meeting expectations: timely and transparent decisions for Canada’s ill and injured veterans. Veterans Ombudsman. Retrieved from <https://www.ombudsman-veterans.gc.ca/pdfs/reports/tat-e.pdf>

<sup>25</sup> Ellis, N. (2017). Mental health of Canadian veterans: A family purpose. House of Commons Canada. Retrieved from <https://www.ourcommons.ca/Content/Committee/421/ACVA/Reports/RP9055177/acvarp06/acvarp06-e.pdf>

<sup>26</sup> This report was submitted to the House of Commons by the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs, a multidisciplinary committee chaired by Neil Ellis, in June 2017 at the 1<sup>st</sup> session of the 42<sup>nd</sup> parliament sitting.

## FEDERAL PHARMACEUTICAL PLAN

While Canada is known for its comprehensive publicly funded medical system, there remains a major need for Canada-wide pharmaceutical coverage. Canada is the only country with universal health care but no universal drug coverage.<sup>27</sup> While some Canadians rely on public and private insurance providers to cover some of the costs associated with dental care, vision care, and prescription drugs, many Canadians pay out of pocket for such necessities.

Having to pay out-of-pocket for prescription drugs is a major barrier for many Canadians, as many cannot afford the cost. This financial barrier often results in skipping or reducing dosages, delaying prescription refills, and not filling prescriptions at all.<sup>28</sup> One study found that nearly 10% of people did not comply with



doctors' orders regarding prescriptions, due to out-of-pocket expenses.<sup>29</sup> This is problematic, as there are many health consequences that result from not taking prescription drugs as prescribed, some of which include additional physician or emergency room visits and hospital stays.<sup>11</sup> Not only would a federal pharmaceutical plan improve health outcomes for Canadians but, as a preventative health measure, it would reduce the need for medical interventions and provide long-term cost saving opportunities.

***As the Advisory Council on the Implementation of National Pharmacare states, “the issue is not whether Canada needs national pharmacare, it’s how Canada should move forward to create it”<sup>30</sup>. How and when does your party plan to introduce a universal pharmacare plan for Canadians?***

<sup>27</sup> Quoted from page 28 of the Government of Canada (2019c). A prescription for Canada: Achieving pharmacare for all. Final Report of the Advisory Council on the Implementation of National Pharmacare. Retrieved from <https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/hc-sc/images/corporate/about-health-canada/public-engagement/external-advisory-bodies/implementation-national-pharmacare/final-report/final-report.pdf>

<sup>28</sup> Law, M., Cheng, L., Kolhatkar, A., Goldsmith, L., Morgan, S., Holbrook, A. & Dhalla, I. (2018). The consequences of patient charges for prescription drugs in Canada: A cross-sectional survey. *CMAJ Open Research* (1), 63-70.

<sup>29</sup> Law, M., Cheng, L., Dhalla, I., Heard, D. & Morgan, S. (2012). The effect of cost on adherence to prescription medications in Canada. *CMAJ*. 184(4), 297-302.

<sup>30</sup> Quoted on page 28 of Government of Canada (2019c).

## SOCIAL WORK INCLUSION IN LOAN FORGIVENESS PROGRAM

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It is difficult to recruit and retain professionals in rural and remote parts of Canada, particularly in northern regions of the country. In order to address this issue and retain health professionals for these areas, the Government of Canada has implemented a loan forgiveness program for doctors and nurses. The loan forgiveness program gives Canadian nurses and doctors, who have been employed and providing in-person services for a full year in under-served rural or remote communities, \$20,000-\$40,000 in loan forgiveness over a period of five years, with the exact amount dependent on their profession.<sup>31 32</sup>

Social workers are highly trained individuals who offer many essential services in rural communities. As the Canadian Association of Social Workers states, “in a community whose size can support only one mental health position, a social worker often provides greater value than other professionals as they can provide more numerous types of care, such as case work, assessment, therapeutic counselling, and referrals to other community supports”.<sup>33</sup> Social workers play an important role in healthcare teams and this should be recognized through the profession’s inclusion in federal loan forgiveness programs. The importance of social work was recognized by the Standing Committee on Finance when they recommended in the House of Commons that social workers be added to the list of rural professions eligible for federal loan forgiveness.<sup>34 35</sup>

***In recognizing that social workers are highly trained professionals that offer an array of necessary services to communities, what is your parties’ position on including social workers to the list of professionals in rural and remote communities who are eligible for Canada Student Loan forgiveness, as recommended by the Report of the Standing Committee on Finance?***

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<sup>31</sup> Government of Canada (2019a). Canada student loan forgiveness for family doctors and nurses – Eligibility. Retrieved from <https://www.canada.ca/en/services/benefits/education/student-aid/grants-loans/repay/assistance/doctors-nurses/eligibility.html>

<sup>32</sup> Government of Canada (2019b). Canada student loan forgiveness for family doctors and nurses – How much you could receive. Retrieved from <https://www.canada.ca/en/services/benefits/education/student-aid/grants-loans/repay/assistance/doctors-nurses/amount.html>

<sup>33</sup> Canadian Association of Social Workers (2017). January 6, 2017 – Advocating for social work inclusion in loan forgiveness program. Retrieved from <https://www.casw-acts.ca/en/january-6-2017-advocating-social-work-inclusion-loan-forgiveness-program>

<sup>34</sup> Easter, W. (2018). Cultivating competitiveness: Helping Canadians succeed. House of Commons Canada 2017. Retrieved from <https://www.ourcommons.ca/Content/Committee/421/FINA/Reports/RP10260416/finarp27/finarp27-e.pdf>

<sup>35</sup> This report was submitted to the House of Commons by the Report of the Standing Committee on Finance, a committee chaired by Wayne Easter, in December 2018 at the 1<sup>st</sup> session of the 42<sup>nd</sup> parliament sitting.

## INVESTMENT IN LANGUAGE TRAINING

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Canada is a bilingual country in which French and English are the two official languages. As the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Mélanie Joly, has stated “today, our two official languages, English and French, are both an asset and a source of pride”.<sup>36</sup> The Government of Canada has recognized that it needs to do more to support Canadians in learning and becoming fluent in both official languages as there is noted concern over the slow growth of bilingualism throughout Canada. In 2011 Canada’s national bilingualism rate was 17.5%, a figure projected to increase to only 18.5% by the year 2036.<sup>31</sup> Increases in the rate of bilingualism across Canada can be done through wide-spread investments in second-language training. This includes creating more daycare spaces for language minorities, recruiting and retaining competent teachers, and developing free, accessible and effective language training programs. The Government of Canada has committed to investing \$16.5 million into developing a free online language tool so that Canadians have the ability to learn and improve their English and French.<sup>37</sup>

While Canada is a bilingual country, New Brunswick is Canada’s first and only bilingual province. Linguistic duality enriches New Brunswick and demonstrates its rich Acadian history. While official bilingualism is an asset for this vibrant province, it is often difficult to attain and retain full bilingual capabilities in both languages when not consistently immersed in the two. The Federal Government should prioritize allocation of funds to New Brunswick for the province to develop language programs tailored to its unique demographic. Bilingualism is a major personal and professional asset, providing more opportunity for New Brunswick residents including increased employability.

***Does your party recognize the importance of accessible and effective language training in Canada and commit to investing in the language capabilities of New Brunswickers?***

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<sup>36</sup> Quoted from page 7 of Government of Canada (2018b). Investing in our future 2018-2023 action plan for official languages. 1-53. Retrieved from <https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/pch/documents/services/official-languages-bilingualism/official-languages-action-plan/action-plan.pdf>

<sup>37</sup> Government of Canada (2018b). Investing in our future 2018-2023 action plan for official languages. 1-53. Retrieved from <https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/pch/documents/services/official-languages-bilingualism/official-languages-action-plan/action-plan.pdf>



## CONCLUSION

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Please note that this document provides a short recap of some issues that should be addressed at the federal level. As it is recognized that there are countless other important issues that exist, everyone is encouraged to speak to their local MP's about any issues that they are concerned and passionate about. This document provides readers with a guide of some important subjects that may go overlooked by government if not pushed by the citizens of Canada.

