



Status of Women Council NWT Five Questions to Federal Candidates

**Joe Handley
Liberal**

**Dennis Bevington
New Democratic Party**

**Sandy Lee
Conservative**

**Eli Purchase
Green Party**

**Bonnie Dawson
Animal Alliance Environment
Voters Party**

1. What will your party do to improve childcare in the north? Please address the gaps in services and spaces for children in the NWT.



In 2005, the Liberal Party negotiated an early learning and childcare plan, but this was unfortunately cancelled by the Conservatives when they took office in 2006. Since that time, there hasn't been any growth in the number of childcare spaces in Canada, and it is something that is felt by families in the North. The Liberal Party is committed to addressing this in a substantial way, by introducing an Early Learning and Childcare fund that will begin immediately. This fund will promote a cost sharing measure with the provinces and territories to create new childcare spaces. A Liberal government will work with Territorial and First Nations partners towards the long-term goal of providing a high-quality, affordable child care space for every NWT family that wants one.

A New Democrat government will work with the provinces and territories to establish and fund a Canada-wide childcare and early learning program, enshrined in law, with the following goals:

- The creation of 25,000 new child care spaces per year for the next four years;
- Improvements to community infrastructure to support the growth of child care spaces; and
- The creation of integrated, community-based, child-centred early learning and education centres that provide parents with a "one-stop shop" for family services.

Did not respond to questions

The Green Party has a whole subsection of Vision Green devoted to childcare. We believe in a universal child care option with a specific emphasis on workplace childcare. Studies show that workplace childcare increases worker's productivity and reduces the number of sick days taken by employees. We will also work to give recognition for those parents who decide to remain at home with their children through supporting income splitting, not only for households where only one parent works, but also for single parent households with dependant children.

Did not respond to question

2. What will your party do to address poverty in the north? If elected, how will you propose to decrease the gap between rich and poor?



In terms of GDP, the Northwest Territories is the richest Territory per capita in Canada; however, poverty is still rampant in the cities and communities here. A single income is seldom enough for a family to get by, as the costs of housing, goods, and services continue to rise out of proportion with the wages of many workers. More needs to be done in the North to prevent this from occurring. As mentioned in the above question, the Liberal Party is committed to improving the state of childcare throughout Canada. In addition, the Liberal Party would introduce a six month family care EI benefit for those caring for a family member who is gravely ill, to prevent them from having to quit their jobs in order to do so. Further, the Party would provide more funding for post-secondary education.

If elected I would work with governmental and non-governmental partners in the Northwest Territories to develop a multi-level poverty reduction strategy for the Territory.

An NDP government will table legislation that will set goals and targets for poverty reduction in consultation with the provincial, territorial, municipal and Aboriginal governments and with non-governmental organizations.

As a practical first step to eliminate child poverty, a New Democrat government will combine existing supports like the Child Tax Benefit to create a non-taxable Child Benefit and increase the support steadily by up to \$700 per child over the next four years. This will be in addition to the current Universal Child Care Benefit.

As well, in its first budget an NDP government will increase the annual Guaranteed Income Supplement to a sufficient level to lift every senior in Canada out of poverty immediately.

Did not respond to questions

I am going to lead by example on this question. The starting salary for an MP is \$157000 per year, whereas the average northerner makes more like \$45000. When elected, I promise that half of every paycheque after taxes and half of every income tax refund I receive will go to registered charities and community organizations in the NWT. This will help me stay in touch with northerners who are struggling to get by on far less than \$157000 per year. It will also help to publicize the disparity between wages for average people and the people elected to represent them. The Green Party also has a great idea to eliminate poverty called the Guaranteed Livable Income. Basically the federal government gives everyone a basic amount above the poverty level, but at a subsistence amount to encourage people to make more money. This amount is regionally adjusted and not taxed. For higher income Canadians, this amount is taxed back. Basically everyone is assured enough money to get by on, and if you are well off and don't need it, you pay back that amount in your taxes.

Did not respond to question

For more information please contact the Status of Women Council of the NWT 1.888.234.4485 or see our website at www.statusofwomen.nt.ca

More questions on the other side!

3. What will your party do to address the economic inequality of women in Canada?



A 2004 Liberal government Task Force called for a new, specially trained federal body to provide oversight on Pay Equity in Canada. The Leader of the Liberal Party, Mr. Ignatieff, proposed in 2009 a Private Member's Bill to repeal recent Conservative changes and to implement the key recommendations of the 2004 Task Force, namely to create a proper and proactive federal regime that ensures that pay equity remains a human right. While Mr. Ignatieff's bill had the support of the other opposition parties and numerous stakeholder groups, the Conservatives prevented it from proceeding to a final vote in the House of Commons. The Liberal Party believes that pay equity is a fundamental human right and that every working Canadian woman should be compensated in an equitable manner. A Liberal government would introduce a new pay equity regime that is truly proactive, and that prioritizes pay equity as a human right.

New Democrats will reverse Stephen Harper's attacks on pay equity and immediately implement the recommendations of the 2004 Pay Equity Task Force to establish a pro-active pay equity regime enshrined in law. We will improve Employment Insurance qualification criteria to ensure that those receiving parental leave benefits see no change in their eligibility for Employment Insurance benefits.

Did not respond to questions

This is an issue that I personally can not believe we still have to deal with in this day and age. Women should be receiving the exact same rights as men, no ifs ands or buts. The Green Party supports pay equality legislation as recommended by the Pay Equity Task Force, supports reestablishing funding for the Status of Women Council and supports the establishment of specific job-reentry programs for women with children who want to reenter the workforce.

Did not respond to question

4. If elected, what is your plan to address the growing disparity between funding for programs dealing with violence against women on and off reserve, so that all women in the north receive adequate funding and assistance?



Violence against women continues to be a serious problem in the North, one that is not a question of ethnicity. We need to ensure that shelters for abused women operating in the Northwest Territories are available, providing valuable programs to rebuild their lives after living under years of abuse. In addition, more needs to be done to prevent family violence, and we need to foster education of our children, to teach them about healthy relationships in the home.

If elected, I would work to ensure that the funding for these programs was effective, adequate, and sustainable.

A New Democrat government will work with provinces and territories to expand access to shelter and transition houses to support women fleeing violence. Further, we will support a coordinated federal response to violence against Aboriginal women, led by Aboriginal communities, and including the ongoing funding of Aboriginal women's organizations. The response would recognize that northern aboriginal women largely do not live on reserves.

Did not respond to questions

I will support initiatives to increase funding for these types of programs throughout the north and Canada. This is an example of an issue that is faced by many other northern and rural ridings. I will set up meetings with other northern and rural MPs and identify common issues, like the inadequacy of funding for programs dealing with violence against women, that we can come together on to lobby the Government of Canada to address.

Did not respond to question

5. If elected, would your party support the current long gun registry legislation?



The Liberal Party believes in effective gun control in Canada and supports maintaining the integrity of the long-gun registry. The Party has proposed sensible amendments in our platform to the long-gun registry to address long-standing irritants with the program. The primary change is working with provinces to make first-time offences ticketing offences. Neither I, nor the Liberal Party think it is in the interest of public safety to scrap a tool used 11,000 times a day by our police forces, and that costs the RCMP only \$4.1 M/year to operate.

While the NDP fully supports efforts to reduce gun violence it is our position to allow our caucus members to represent the views of their constituents when it comes to the current long gun registry. Dennis Bevington would work with other NDP MPs to develop a better solution to this issue.

Did not respond to questions

This is an issue where there is not a black and white answer and my beliefs line up pretty succinctly with the Green Party stance on the issue. Police Chiefs say the gun registry helps them keep law and order and save lives. On the other hand many rural and aboriginal Canadians find the registry onerous and discriminatory. There has to be a way to find a balance between the two without this constant pitting of urban Canadians against rural Canadians. We will streamline the gun registry in consultation with First Nations, and with gun sports and hunter organizations. We support the elimination of registration fees for hunting rifles and will ensure that law-abiding citizens do not have their firearms confiscated. In short, the Green Party will keep the registry, but reduce the paperwork and bureaucracy for rural use and for hunters and marksmen with no criminal history.

With regard to the gun registry: we do support the gun registry as a means to control lethal weapons in this country. Just a your own personal vehicle (which in the wrong hands is a lethal weapon) must be licensed and registered, so should all weapons that pose a threat to public safety.