

Liberal Party of Canada
81 Metcalfe Street, Suite 400
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 6M8

September 16, 2008

G. Dennis Jackson
National Association of Federal Retirees
1052 St. Laurent Blvd.
Ottawa, ON K1K 3B4

Dear Mr. Jackson,

Enclosed, please find the Liberal Party response to your questionnaire.

For more information on the Liberal Party of Canada's vision for Canada, please take a moment to review our platform online at www.liberal.ca. This document provides details on Liberal goals and priorities.

On behalf of our Leader, Stéphane Dion, and the entire Liberal team, thank you for writing to identify the major concerns of your membership. We appreciate your interest in the Liberal Party's policies as they relate to the issues which affect you.

Sincerely,

Doug Ferguson, President
Liberal Party of Canada



A Liberal Response to the National Association of Federal Retirees

1. Poverty among Canadian seniors

The Liberal Party of Canada is the only party with a realistic plan to reduce poverty for the most vulnerable members of our society.

In November 2007, Liberal Leader Stéphane Dion unveiled the Liberal 30-50 Plan to Reduce Poverty; a plan to reduce the number Canadians living below the poverty line by 30 per cent, and cut in half the number of children living in poverty in five years.

The plan includes:

- a Making Work Pay Benefit to lower the welfare wall to encourage and reward work and give Canadians a spring board to success, dignity and independence;
- support for working families:
 - by expanding the Canada Child Tax Benefit and,
 - by making the Child Tax Credit refundable, so that those who do not pay taxes also receive the benefit;
- help to lift vulnerable seniors out of poverty:
 - by increasing the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) payments for the lowest income seniors,
 - ensuring that the loss of a partner does not drive the surviving spouse below the low-income threshold, and
 - rewarding seniors who choose to participate in the workforce.

The Liberal Party will work with you in the fight against poverty and to achieve real improvements in affordable housing, universal child care, public transit, and labour market training.

Stéphane Dion's vision of a fairer Canada is guided by the principle that our country will be made stronger if all Canadians are able to fully participate in our society.

2. Marriage date-related restriction under federal superannuation plans

In an era where family relationships are ever changing, and the traditional nuclear family is in the minority, we acknowledge that an arbitrary decision to limit the benefits of survivors of federal pensioners based on the date of marriage is an anachronism. However, the federal government has a real and genuine interest in preventing fraud associated with the pension plan. A Liberal government will work with all stakeholders to develop solutions to this complex situation.

3. National Pharmaceuticals Strategy

The Liberal Party of Canada remains committed to ensuring that Canadians have access to high quality, safe, and reasonably priced pharmaceutical drugs. No Canadian should suffer undue financial hardship for needed drug therapies.

The previous Liberal government was committed to implementing the National Pharmaceutical Strategy (NPS). In fact, in 2005 all Health Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to the NPS, a major step toward more equitable access to safe and effective drug therapies for all Canadians.

Unfortunately, the Conservative government did not honour this commitment and the NPS has since been abandoned.

4. Comprehensive Home Care Program

The Liberal Party of Canada recognizes the value of home care as a cost-effective means of delivering healthcare services.

Under the previous Liberal government all levels of government were working towards meeting the December 2006 target for implementation of home care services identified in the *Ten-Year Plan*.

Under discussion were the following:

- short-term acute home care for two week provision of case management, intravenous medications related to discharge diagnosis, nursing and personal care;
- short-term acute community mental health home care for two-week provision of case management, and crisis response services; and,
- end-of-life care for case management, nursing, personal care, and palliative-specific pharmaceuticals.

A new Liberal government would be open to discussions and consultations with the provinces, territories and all other key stakeholders to explore options concerning a national home care program.