



**Federal Election  
2006  
January 23rd**

**Think, Ask,  
Vote!**

# Every election is an opportunity.

This non partisan campaign aims at providing some independent analysis, from the point of view of workers, on issues that are important to our members.

PSAC members make up a large percentage of the population in the Yukon. We can have a significant influence at the polls if we think about the issues, ask questions of the candidates running for each party and more importantly, exercise your right to vote!



# Getting Started!

Please use the handout provided (or see link). As party's positions are highlighted throughout this document, select the position you think best reflects your voice for the House of Commons and circle the corresponding letter on the handout. When complete, see the answer sheet.



# Key Issues

These Key Issues were identified by working PSAC members as important to this election:

- Health Care
- Child Care
- Anti-scab Legislation
- Whistleblower Legislation
- Human Rights
- Pensions
- Poverty
- Pay Equity
- Quality Public Services



# Health Care

We need to stop privatization of our health care system. It's happening now.

Your tax dollars shouldn't be going to private care in for-profit clinics that charge high fees and take doctors out of the public system – that will only make wait lists longer for our public hospitals.

Prescription drug costs are out of reach for too many people – particularly seniors – because drug patents and profits for multinational drug companies are put ahead of affordable health care for you and your family.



# Health Care – Party's Positions

- A. Prohibit or limit direct and indirect public subsidies of private corporation ventures related to healthcare payment and delivery. Provide funding to reduce wait times. Work to provide a new drug coverage plan.
- B. Will not close private health clinics. Examine a care guarantee that will ensure treatment within clinically acceptable maximum wait times. Support a commitment to provide all Canadians with reasonable access to catastrophic drug coverage by the end of 2005-2006. Transfer power to provinces to provide maximum flexibility as they see fit – opening the door to privatization and business-driven delivery of health care.
- C. Recognize publicly financed and delivered healthcare as a fundamental right of Canadian citizenship, prohibit public money from going to private-for-profit clinics, make diagnostics such as MRI's medically necessary services. Phase in a pharmacare program, starting with low-income Canadians and those facing massive drug costs. Prohibit subsidies to private for-profit healthcare and to doctors working inside and outside of Medicare.



# Child Care

PSAC was very enthusiastic about the 2004 federal election commitment to create a national early learning and child care program based on the QUAD principles.

QUAD stands for:

- Quality
- Universally inclusive
- Accessible, and
- Developmental

The best way to attain QUAD is a plan that moves to public and/or not-for-profit delivery of child care services.



# Child Care

There is overwhelming evidence to show that public and not-for-profit delivery is much more likely to:

- deliver high quality programs that support the “early learning”;
- make sure that children with special needs are included;
- make sure services are accountable and stable;
- reduce the risk of trade challenges; and
- make sure that limited public resources go towards quality child care and not profit for private providers.



# Child Care – Party's Positions

- A. Give all parents \$100 per month per child under age 6 to spend on child care needs as they choose – whether that means formal day care, a babysitter, neighbourhood child care, or helping one parent stay at home.
- B. Develop a national early learning and child care initiative, a nation-wide system that embraces the shared principles of quality care, universal inclusiveness, accessibility and an emphasis on development and learning. \$5 billion over five years to help fund this effort. Progressively increase the personal tax exemption from 8,000 to 10,000.
- C. Create a Child Care Act to ensure that federal funding for child care is targeted at licensed, high-quality, non-profit child care, with \$1.8 billion invested in child care next year, with annual increases of \$250 million for the next three years to create 200,000 additional spaces in the first year, with another 25,000 spaces annually after that. An increase in the federal child tax credit of \$1,000 phased in over four years in order to help lower-income families cover child care costs and meet other essential expenses.



# Anti-Scab Legislation

Bargaining in good faith is the underlying principle of all labour legislation in this country. This means that in all labour disputes, parties must try to genuinely resolve their differences. The use of strike breakers runs completely contrary to this principle by allowing employers to circumvent the process and ignore their obligations to try to reach a solution. When this happens, workers are frustrated. Their sense of powerlessness and desperation sometimes leads them to act in ways they would never otherwise consider. Tragedies can and have occurred.

In the two jurisdictions that have legislation that prohibits the use of strike breakers – Quebec and British Columbia – strikes have been fewer and shorter than before the legislation was adopted. Their economies have not suffered. Violent events related to strikes have virtually disappeared.

Long-promised updates to anti-scab legislation have never materialized,



# Anti-Scab Legislation – Party's Positions

- A. Condemns the use of replacement workers during legal strike/supports anti-scab legislation. Supports over 90 amendments to the Public Service Modernization Act that were based on submissions by affected unions. 100% of members supported anti-scab bill.
- B. Supports Public Service Modernization Act, which shifts the balance of power more towards the employer. Did not support any of the 90 amendments proposed by affected unions. 61% of members opposed anti-scab bill.
- C. Supported the use of scabs during 1991 PSAC strike and 1987 postal strikes. 84% of members opposed anti-scab bill.



# Whistleblower Legislation

Public sector workers need whistleblower legislation that protects workers who report wrongdoing in their workplace that includes:

- The right to disclose to an impartial and independent 3<sup>rd</sup> party
- Real protection for those who do disclose wrongdoing



# Whistleblower Legislation – Party's Positions

- A. During Parliamentary discussions on the Public Services Modernization Act, introduced language on whistleblower protection, mandating the employer to develop policies and directives.
- B. Introduced private member's bill in 2003 to provide whistleblower protection. Supported amendment tabled by Bloc Québécois to provide protection during Parliamentary discussions on the Public Services Modernization Act.
- C. During Parliamentary discussions on Public Services Modernization Act, rejected attempts to include protection. Supports legislation that would have whistleblower report to their supervisors. Reports are forwarded to ministers, not directly to Parliament.



# Human Rights: Aboriginal

The UN Report on *the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people* (December 2004) states that:

**Poverty, infant mortality, unemployment, morbidity, suicide, criminal detention, children on welfare, women victims of abuse, child prostitution, are all much higher among Aboriginal people than in any other sector of Canadian society, whereas educational attainment, health standards, housing conditions, family income, access to economic opportunity and to social services are generally lower.**

Governments must work to close the social and economic gap between Aboriginal Peoples and other people in Canada



# Human Rights: Aboriginal – Party's Positions

- A. \$1.6 billion was promised for affordable housing construction, with a dedicated fund for Aboriginal housing construction through a budget amendment. Would Train 10,000 aboriginals in health, education and social services. Invest in new funding, staff and facilities for First Nations with regard to health care. Make clean water for aboriginal communities a top priority. Recognize aboriginal self-governance as a fundamental component of a modern federal state. Convene a First Ministers' conference to discuss the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples.
- B. Develop legislation to govern delivery of federal governmental programs to Aboriginals. Offer choice in schooling for First Nations. Create matrimonial property code, in conjunction with First Nations, to protect spouses and children in cases of marriage breakdown. Create a First Nations Land Ownership Act, which would transfer Reserve land title from Crown to willing First Nations.
- C. Promises \$5.1 billion over five years to address poverty and quality of life for Aboriginal Canadians. Will focus efforts on health and education. Work to improve the quality of water and wastewater treatment in First Nations communities. Establish quality-of-life targets that will gauge the ongoing success of new initiatives, including a target for aboriginal communities to have clean water and adequate housing by 2008



# Human Rights: Same Sex Marriage

In 1994, the PSAC became one of the first unions to recognize links between the struggle for worker's rights and GLBT rights with the adoption of PSAC Policy 31 on sexual orientation.

The PSAC has fought for the extension of benefits to same-sex couples where they are not recognized, broadening the definition of "spouse" through bargaining.

Recently passed same-sex marriage legislation must be protected.



# Human Rights: Same Sex Marriage – Party's Positions

- A. Will table motion to change the definition of marriage to reflect the traditional definition of marriage. If the motion is defeated, would consider the matter closed. If passed, would restore the definition of marriage being between one man and one woman. Would allow existing same-sex marriages to continue.
- B. Supported enshrining same-sex marriage in law after courts in several provinces ruled that gay couples had a right to marry. Will develop strategies to educate the Canadian public as to the issue of basic human rights with regard to same sex marriage
- C. Supported legislation for same-sex marriage, while respecting the rights of each religion to determine its own definition of marriage. Would abandon appeal of the court decision extending retroactive CPP survivor benefits to same-sex couples



# Pensions

You work hard all your life. Your retirement shouldn't be put at risk.

- Half of all company pensions are in a funding deficit with an insecure future.
- Workers' pension benefits are left far behind banks and other wealthy creditors if a company goes bankrupt.

With current laws, corporations may get out of their pension obligations by claiming bankruptcy or by selling off the company and its assets.



# Pensions – Party's Positions

- A. Introduced Bill C-281 which will put paying employees at the front of the line when a company goes bankrupt. Under present laws, employees are the last to receive money - after other creditors and suppliers are paid there's often not enough money left.
- B. During Second Reading debate, MPs opposed the Bill for going too far in offering protection to worker's wages and pension benefits in the event of a bankruptcy. Would double the amount of money that could be sheltered from income tax.
- C. During Second Reading debate, MPs opposed the Bill for going too far in offering protection to worker's wages and pension benefits in the event of a bankruptcy. Would increase to \$22,000 the annual RRSP contribution limits and eliminate the Foreign Content Rule which limits foreign pension investments to 30 percent.



# Poverty EI

Unemployment insurance is Canada's most important income support program for workers. The EI program has been repeatedly cut since its highpoint in the mid-1970s. Only 4 of every 10 unemployed workers now qualify. Only 1 of every 3 unemployed women qualify.



## Poverty EI – Party's positions

- A. Rejected the key reforms proposed by labour and supported by the House of Commons Standing Committee on Human Resources. Instead, further cut EI premiums.
- B. Has put forward the key proposals before Parliament as private members' bills.
- C. Have not spoken out against the government over their failure to implement the Committee report.



# Poverty: Education

Educational attainment is directly related to the wages and standard of living workers can achieve.

The outcomes of funding cuts to post secondary education over the past ten years are fewer quality programs, weakened infrastructure, and increasing tuition fees. In 1991 the Conservatives froze federal cash transfers for health and post-secondary education. In 1996, the Liberals drastically reduced transfers for health, education, and other public programs.



# Poverty: Education – Party's Positions

- A. Allocated modest funding over more than three years for a Workplace Skills Strategy (\$125 million), and for the National Literacy Secretariat (an extra \$30 million), and increased funding for settlement and integration program for new immigrants.
- B. Secured an extra \$1.5 billion for access to postsecondary education and training with amendments to the budget. The November 2005 Economic Statement contained a promise to expand this to \$3.5 billion for spending on literacy and workplace skills development programs as well as apprenticeship over the next five years.
- C. Have called for tax breaks to boost apprenticeships.



# Poverty: Children

On November 24, 1989, Canada's House of Commons unanimously passed a resolution stating that: "This House seeks to achieve the goal of eliminating poverty among Canadian children by the year 2000."

Currently, 1 in 6 Canadian children is poor.

Every month, 770,000 people in Canada use food banks. 40% of those relying on food banks are children.

Poverty among Aboriginal groups remains appallingly high both on and off reserve. In fact, if the statistics for Canadian Aboriginal people were viewed separately from those of the rest of the country, Canada's Aboriginal people would slip to 78th on the UN Human Development Index – the ranking currently held by Kazakhstan. (National Anti-Poverty Organization)



## Poverty: Children – Party's positions

- A. Is committed to reaching the target Child Tax Benefits of \$4,900 by 2007 and to putting an end to provincial claw backs for those families on social assistance.
- B. Does not commit to maintaining the Child Tax Benefit. Would introduce a \$2,000 child tax deduction, which does not benefit poor people who do not pay taxes. Have not addressed the issue of clawbacks.
- C. Supports an increase in Child Tax Benefits to \$3,240 by the year 2007. Would examine provincial clawbacks.



# Pay Equity

Women's economic equality has worsened, despite government lip service to pay equity. Today, women with university degrees earn only 69.8 % of what men do – that's 5% less than a decade ago.

Women under 30 earn less today than they did two decades ago.

Pay equity is a Human Rights issue.



# Pay Equity – Party's Positions

- A. Has committed to implementing the recommendations of the federal Pay Equity Task Force Report issues 1.5 years ago. Promises draft legislative proposals will be tabled in March 2006 but will be subject to further discussion before any implementation would take place. Provincial counterparts have denied pay equity and/or repealed Pay Equity laws.
- B. Ensured all party support at committee for pay equity legislation. However, no MPs spoke in favour of implementing proactive pay equity legislation. The leader is on record stating that the federal government *“should scrap its ridiculous pay equity law”* and that *“pay equity has everything to do with pay and nothing to do with equity.”*
- C. Has consistently pushed the government to introduce legislation based on the Task Force report at the earliest date. Continues to advocate for pay equity within all sectors. Has policies that support the rights of women and other equality-seeking groups. Believes women need jobs that provide decent pay and benefits, job security, flexibility and access to training.



# Quality Public Services

The government says the goal of Service Canada is to provide better, one-stop service to more Canadians in more communities, delivered with the right service attitude. The PSAC is concerned about how this new initiative will affect the quality of service to the public and to our members who provide those services.

The employer insists that Service Canada will improve front-line service to the public. But...

- many members are telling us that their managers have instructed them to direct more citizens to computers and that the quality of person-to-person service is being undermined;
- managers have told some of our members that jobs in the new agency will be generic and demand less specialized knowledge, raising concerns that de-skilled front-line jobs may be reduced to that of a “Wal-Mart greeter”;
- unrealistic time limits are placed on workers who serve clients, mostly at call centres, affecting our members’ workload and the depth and quality of service to the public.



# Quality Public Services

The employer claims that front-line jobs at Service Canada will be interesting and rewarding. But...

- we've heard workers are being asked to serve the public supported only with one page reference sheets provided by departments and agencies;
- we've heard reports that in some cases as little as two hours of training is being provided.

The employer has said that they will not privatize. But...

- members are concerned about privatization and that more of their work will be transferred to private sector employers like Quantum, a private company that currently operates 1-800-O-Canada.
- the employer has said that many points of service will be operated by third party service providers who won't have the same level of accountability to the public as federal public service providers. This is privatization.
- Members of Parliament are eager to have Service Canada locations in their ridings. If they think they will be able to refer all the enquiries they receive from their constituents to Service Canada, they'd better think again.



# Quality Public Services – Party's Positions

- A. In favour of privatizing services. In the last Parliament, advocated the privatization of the Wheat Board and the transportation of grain and introduced a Private Member's Bill to privatize Via Rail.
- B. Supports strong public services and has come out in favour of a wide variety of publicly delivered services including universal child care, universal pharmacare and universal Health care, as well as increased funding for public education. Supports replacing deals like NAFTA and the WTO with agreements based on the principles of fair and equitable trade, which respect fair wages and working conditions, human rights, the environment and communities' right to develop in accordance with their values.
- C. Supports privatization and P3s. Sponsored a P3 conference and then created a committee to promote P3s. Now, Industry Canada has a Public-Private Partnership Office, complete with its own how-to guide for P3s.



## Which Party Reflects Your Views?

Check your handout against the **Answer Key** (if online, see link).

When your candidate comes to your door, ask about his or her party's positions on issues important to you.

Remember to “Think, Ask, Vote”



# Why Vote?

- Each vote counts! Ridings have been won and lost by fewer than 10 votes.
- Apathy has never achieved anything.
- If you don't vote, someone else will. Then it's their decision, not yours.
- Do you see yourself in the House of Commons? If not, vote for a candidate who represents you.
- The government elected will be there for four years affecting all aspects of our lives.
- If you don't vote, you can't complain about the state of Canada – health care, foreign policy, human rights, taxes and how they are spent.
- The federal government has an impact on **all** workers in both the public and private sectors.
- 62% turned to out vote in Yukon's last election. 10% more could have made a difference.



# How did Our MP Vote?

- Anti-Scab Legislation:
  - Yes (after much lobbying by labour when he previously voting no)
- Same Sex Marriage
  - Yes
- Floor Crossing Prohibition
  - No (introduced by NDP, requiring MPs who cross to sit as independents, then run for another party in the next election)
- Pregnant & Nursing Employees
  - No (an amendment to the Canada Labour Code that would protect the health of pregnant and nursing employees)
- Employment Insurance
  - No (Bill C280 and C278 would have made improvements on EI for working people)



See more at “[www.howdtheyvote.ca](http://www.howdtheyvote.ca)”

# Links

- [www.psacnorth.com](http://www.psacnorth.com)
- [www.betterchoice.ca](http://www.betterchoice.ca)
- [www.howdtheyvote.ca](http://www.howdtheyvote.ca)
- [www.votebyissue.org/cbc](http://www.votebyissue.org/cbc)
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