

Northern Territories Federation of Labour

NWT Election – All Candidates Questionnaire

Candidates were asked for 30-word responses.

The first 30 words were published.

Full responses, including late responses, are included here.

Question 1

1. Recruitment and retention of qualified professionals, such as teachers, doctors and nurses is an ongoing issue. Given the incredible turnover rate here, as well as shortage of qualified professionals across Canada, how do you think the Government of the Northwest Territories can attract and retain professionals in the NWT?

Question 2

2. The current minimum wage for all NWT communities is \$8.25 an hour, which is far less than required to live on. What do you think minimum wage should be, should it be the same in all communities, and should there be a mechanism to regularly increase minimum wage based on the cost of living?

Question 3

3. Anti-scab legislation—to prohibit employers from using replacement workers—came very close to passing in the House of Commons last year. If a similar anti-scab bill was brought forth in the NWT, how would you vote?

DEH CHO			
MICHAEL MCLEOD	no response		
FRAME LAKE			
WENDY BISARO	Recruitment and retention of professionals is vital to the advancement of the NWT. Monetary recruitment and retention incentives can be used, but they only provide a short term solution. The GNWT must ensure access to adequate, affordable housing in all communities, and there must be continued but stronger support for the training of northerners as qualified professionals.	The minimum wage for any community or area should allow for a quality of life above the poverty line. The concept of regional minimum wage rates should be investigated, and there must be a regular review of any minimum wage.	I do not support giving employers the right to import replacement workers during a strike. I do, however, have empathy for those workers who, for economic reasons, feel they must return to work during a strike situation. Ideally, I believe that any labour dispute should be resolved before it reaches a strike or lockout situation.
JEFF GROENEWEGEN	no response		
CHRIS JOHNSTON	We need to put a lot more effort into educating and training Northerners. Put more money into College facilities and programs where the population is... Yellowknife. Recruit foreign doctors and nurses. Create more employee recognition programs for service.	The minimum wage is too low. Employers realize this, that's why they pay more. If cost of living is different in the communities why wouldn't the minimum wage be different. Sure, lets create a formula to keep the minimum wage adjustable based on cost of living.	I am prepared to look very carefully at any related legislation and I will decide at that time as to how I will vote. To do otherwise would be irresponsible. Certainly I will not endorse any legislation that unfairly upsets the balance of labour – management negotiations one way or the other.
GREAT SLAVE			
GLEN ABERNETHY	This is a multifaceted issue that can't be addressed with one simple solution. Our first priority should be to train and support the development of northerners for northern jobs. The GNWT provides solid Student Financial Assistance as well as Return of Service Bursaries for a number of professions such as nursing, medicine, social work, teachers and allied health professionals. Additional bursaries for other professions such as trades is required in order to encourage northern youth to pursue those careers as well.	I agree with a living wage. One that is fair and allows workers to make a good living. A minimum wage that is regulated by the Territorial Government should be consistent and regularly reviewed based on cost of living increases and labour market trends.	I would support replacement worker legislation that applies to non-essential workers. At the same time, my bottom line dictates that the best interests of NWT residents are served by the continued provision of essential services like healthcare, emergency services and security services. I would not support replacement worker legislation that threatens these essential services.
MARK BOGAN	no response		
CHRISTOPHER HUNT	no response		
BEATON MCKENZIE	I would provide businesses and professional organizations sponsorship and other funding programs to increase wages and benefits. Also provide post secondary sponsorship and	Minimum wage should be \$10.00/hr and able to sustain basic needs. I would support an automatic c.o.l. increase and development of a simple equitable formula for	Yes, I'm in full support of Anti-scab legislation. I've lost friends from the Giant Mine disaster and seen many families torn apart. This legislation would provide a positive labour environment.

	mentoring programs to students in/out of school. Once they are recruited, our communities and work environments will need to be set up for success and professionals will want to stay. The nursing program at Aurora College is one example of successful post secondary programs in the north. The GNWT can encourage and educate northerners about these and other existing programs. If the professionals are who we need in the north, we may even move to sponsorship of other students who are not from the north in school programs.	communities of higher c.o.l. I also recognize the need to keep the categories of different communities of higher cost of living (c.o.l.) to a minimum.	
DOUG RITCHIE	Increased efforts to retain professionals needed, e.g., good working conditions, training opportunities, diverse work opportunities, no excessive overtime. Recruitment: ensure available housing; ensuring family opportunities (e.g. children's services, schools).	Minimum wage should vary by community, since cost of living varies greatly. Comparison of Canada's nutritious food basket costs and factoring in housing costs should be part of review mechanism. Higher than the national campaign (\$10) likely needed, except possibly youth workers.	Giant Mine experience would indicate it is needed. BC and Quebec have similar legislation, with severity and length of strikes diminished, so adapting similar model to our circumstances could work.
HAY RIVER NORTH			
PAUL DELOREY	no response		
VINCE MCKAY	There has to be an incentive to work in the North; housing allowances, vacation travel, etc.... You can't expect someone to move here and work for the same amount of money that they may make living in a city with a lower cost of living.	Yes, the current minimum wage should be based on location and isolation. Employees should be able to afford the basic comforts of life, with the wage increasing as the cost of living increases.	I would vote in favor of an anti-scab legislation. I feel it is important to protect the employees' right to strike.
HAY RIVER SOUTH			
JANE GROENEWEGEN	We can do it by making this a number one priority. This issue has been on top of my list and will stay there. Nothing is more important than our health and education. We need to put an attractive package together that shows workers what the NWT has to offer and find professionals who want to make this their home.	Ideally the minimum wage would pay people enough to make a living. The cost of living is higher in remote communities. But it would be hard to regulate different wage levels across one jurisdiction. As our economy grows, workers, business, leaders at all levels and communities must collaborate to make living in the north affordable for all residents.	I would consider such legislation. But before deciding how to vote, I would carefully analyze the content and implications of the bill. I would also consult with my constituents before making a final decision.
GREG MCMEEKIN	no response		
MARC MILTENBERGER	no response		
INUVIK BOOT LAKE			
FLOYD ROLAND	no response		
INUVIK TWIN LAKES			
DENISE KURSZEWSKI	no response		
ROBERT C. MCLEOD	no response		
KAM LAKE			
BRAD ENGE	Recruitment and Retention of professionals. You provided 3 examples of professionals whereby you suggest that there is a high turn over rate, namely teachers, doctors and nurses. Each profession will require creative and innovative methodologies to address the issues	An across the board flat rate of \$8.25/hour throughout the entire NWT jurisdiction does not seem fair or reasonable to me since the cost of living region by region is different. As the government who sets the rate we need as legislators take the cost of	I am not aware of any initiative by the GNWT to bring in Anti-Scab Legislation. This issue is still very 'raw' in the minds of Yellowknifers given the strike that took place at Giant Mine that resulted in numerous needless deaths of replacement workers that was

	<p>of recruitment and retention. For example, I am personally aware that there is a surplus of teachers in southern Canada. Where there is a surplus in a profession recruitment will require a different approach in order to attract teachers. On the other hand, there is a shortage of doctor's across Canada. i am not aware of any doctors, however, belonging to a labour union. Recruitment and retention of doctors will require a different approach, As for nurses, the GNWT needs to create a separate pay grid and pay our nurses salaries and benefits (such as travel) that is commensurate with their qualifications and bestow upon them the respect that they rightly deserve.</p>	<p>living into consideration and make an adjustment to reflect this fact. Since many jobs where the minimum wage is used often involves casual labour opportunities that are seasonal in nature or short term projects I would personally like to see as a \$10.00/hr base rate plus a regional variation to reflect the fact that the cost of living outside of Yellowknife is factored into the equation.</p>	<p>caused by a rogue union worker, Roger Warren on September 18, 1992. My personal stand about this type of legislation if it ever were considered by the GNWT Legislature will involve a thorough analysis and debate of the reasons for it. Moreover, I would like an all inclusive consultation process to hear from all stakeholders especially Labour Unions concerning the merits of such legislation. After a thorough public debate this type of legislation might be defeated just like the SCAN bill was in the last week of the 15th Legislative Assembly.</p>
DAVE RAMSAY	no response		
MACKENZIE DELTA			
MARY JOANNE CLARK	no response		
DAVID M. KRUTKO	no response		
DONALD ROBERT	<p>I believe that we can take a lesson from what Alberta is doing and offering a bonus if they sign up for 2 years or more to assist with their cost of moving north and look as some sort of housing allowance rather than to continue to use agency nurses which is costing a lot of money to the government.</p>	<p>If you look at the cost of living in certain areas where a 12 pack of pop can cost up to \$18.00 each we need to ensure that our people can live on what they are working for. I believe that it needs to be increased throughout the NWT.</p>	<p>I would vote in favour of the legislation as we need to protect our people in their jobs in the NWT.</p>
MONFWI			
JACKSON LAFFERTY	no response		
HENRY ZOE	no response		
NAHENDEH			
BOB HANNA	no response		
ARNOLD HOPE	no response		
KEVIN MENICOCHÉ			
KEYNA NORWEGIAN	no response		
NUNAKPUT			
EDDIE T. DILLON	no response		
JACKIE JACOBSON	no response		
CALVIN PATRICK POKIAK	no response		
VINCE J. TEDDY	no response		
RANGE LAKE			
ASHLEY A. GERAGHTY	<p>Become an "Employer of Choice" by offering: free childcare as part of the employment package; tele-working; an employee-centered culture that values internal customers as much as external; non-authoritarian enlightened leadership; opportunity for growth and development – education, mentorship, cross-training and cross</p>	<p>The Federation of Labor in BC is asking for \$10 per hour. This should be the very minimum that our wages are set at. Minimum wage should annually increase based on the year's average of the "Northern" Consumer Price Index.</p>	<p>I would vote for anti-scab legislation.</p>

	experience; competitive compensation – including increased financial support for cost of living; highly flexible work schedules (non-shift workers); “portable benefits” based on the individual needs of the worker; and wellness and work-life programs – such as free yoga classes, gym memberships, pottery classes etc.		
SANDY LEE	First we should further explore in detail the option of establishing a separate bargaining unit for the eligible health care professionals in the NWT to see if this could make it easier for us to better address the unique needs of this pool of human resources in the North. Multi-pronged approach to improve our recruitment packages has been and will continue to be crucial. As well, there is a lot more room for improvement in retaining the health care professionals we already have. My experience in working with various files that have come before me as MLA is that we have not done very well in this area and we can and should do much better. From small issues to larger ones, I have been working to solve many layers of issues that seem to encourage or force these professionals to not take the employment opportunities in the North in the first place or leave for other jurisdictions. This is a highly competitive field in a highly volatile world wide market and it will not change for better in the near future, we need to do everything we can to recruit and retain these valuable human resources that are so essential to the quality of living and delivering necessary health and social services. This is a difficult issue and an on-going issue.	This is a required minimum wage but not market wage or practical level of wage. With the exception of the very few first time youth labour who might be getting paid at this level of wage in the NWT, no employer can expect to recruit or retain employees at the minimum wage anywhere in the North. Wages paid depend on the market forces and I believe that is the healthy way to address this issue. During the August Session in 2007, the Legislature passed the new Employment Standards Act with a provision that would allow the minimum wage to be changed by regulation rather than through legislation as was previously the case. The new Act also requires that any changes to the minimum wage to be set by the Minister under the regulation include a consultation with stakeholders. I supported this provision in the legislation and I believe it is a step in the right direction that would enable us to deal more quickly with the changing market situations when it comes to setting the minimum wage rate.	The NWT does not have jurisdiction labour and I believe it should be one of the items included in any final agreement on devolution. Given that the NWT Legislature has no power or jurisdiction to consider such legislation, this question is mute. Having said that I do not support use of replacement workers in labour dispute situation as it inevitably leads to deteriorating environment and works against resolution by negotiation and settlement.
SAHTU			
NORMAN YAKELEYA	no response		
THEBACHA			
JEANNIE MARIE-JEWELL	no response		
PETER MARTSELOS	no response		
J. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER	The GNWT has to continue to invest in training and educating northerners in programs like teaching and nursing. The GNWT also has to work with other jurisdictions to ensure that our pay and benefits remain competitive and reflect our higher costs in the NWT.	A recent survey by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business indicates that labour shortages are forcing employers to increase pay and benefits in order to be able to get staff and remain in business. This often exceeds the minimum wage. I am prepared to discuss the issue of regional minimum wages, which I agree should be reviewed regularly and possibly tied to the cost of living.	I support the concept, however I would first like to see the detail of the proposed bill before I talk about how I would vote on a bill I have yet to see.
TU NEDEH			
TOM BEAULIEU	no response		
ANDREW BUTLER	Recruitment and retention of professionals in the Northwest Territories will have to be looked at long term and short term. In the long term, we have to encourage	Although only the other two territories have a higher minimum wage, there are other factors that have to be taken into consideration. There are other	The right of unions to negotiate on behalf of its members is one that I support and would vote in favour of anti-scab legislation.

	more students to get into those fields and support them while they are at school. In the short term, we have to provide better incentives such as professional development opportunities to assist in recruiting and retention.	support measures such as low income housing that assist low income earners. The minimum wage should be reviewed annually in the context of other support measures to ensure a adequate living wage.	
STEVE ELLIS	no response		
JAMES (JIM) W. MCPHERSON	Pay them more money; provide them with decent housing, good benefit packages and any other incentive required. Housing corporation can provide people with houses for \$32.00 a month. Do the same for professional people. Many people move north to work in the mines in unskilled or semi-skilled jobs at high wages. We must do the same to attract and retain professional people.	\$8.25 an hour is an insult, this may have been an appropriate wage back in 1955 but is hardly relevant these days where you cannot even get a decent meal for \$8.25. Whether you are skilled or not, the price of a pound of meat does not change. If you are doing work for minimum wages, you pay the same prices for services and commodities as does the lawyer getting \$150.00 an hour. I would like to see the minimum wage go to at least \$12.00 an hour. And yes, there should be a mechanism in place to adjust the minimum wage to reflect rising prices.	I would back this legislation 100%.
RAYMOND SIMON	no response		
BOBBY J. VILLENEUVE	no response		
WELEDEH			
BOB BROMLEY	Consider a student loan remission program. Implement thorough orientation, including on-the-land component. Reduce overtime to improve work conditions. Facilitate governments taking responsibility to provide adequate, affordable housing.	Adopt the \$10 an hour minimum wage called for by National Anti-Poverty Organization; adjust for different northern communities. Increase minimum wage based on increases in the cost of living.	I support workers rights and a speedy, fair conclusion of labour disputes. I would vote yes, unless the specifics of the bill did not protect essential services.
CAROL MORIN	Ofentimes, retention is not successful because of a lack of affordable housing. Working in partnership with the City of Yellowknife to demolish derelict buildings will free up some space within city limits. Although the legal status of some of these buildings is unknown to me at this point in time. Another alternative is to provide a more satisfying lease option, in conjunction with negotiations with the Akaitcho Dene, for lands outside of city limits. The retention of teachers is an issue most prominent in the communities. It seems reasonable to believe that encouraging more Aboriginal people into the teaching profession might work towards a solution. As for medical professionals, here in Yellowknife the complaint most often heard is that they are overworked. Most often cited is an over-burdened Emergency Ward. I believe a walk-in medical clinic for the City of Yellowknife is long overdue. The money is already being spent, at Emergency. As for other professionals, attracting and retaining them, I think there are enough Northerners who wish to remain here even though they may have to go South for their education. Within our education system we	I pay my babysitter more than \$8.25 an hour. I have heard quotes of increasing the minimum wage to ten dollars an hour and I don't see this as a burden. If local business wishes to attract employees, the wage has to reflect the reality of a higher cost of living in the North. However, business owners would have to be consulted, to find out how an across the board increase to ten dollars might affect them.	This is a theoretical question. If such a bill came forth in the future I would have to carefully consider all details before commenting further.

	<p>have to find better solutions to keeping kids in school to graduation and encouraging them to enter a professional, such as engineering or architecture, as examples. Making education more relevant to youth is not so much a challenge as some might have you believe. I believe that enhanced programs, such as fine arts and expanded sports programs, in schools would provide a purpose for young people to remain in school and strive to be successful, therein.</p>		
JONAS SANGRIS	<p>The GNWT must do more to motivate, train, recruit and hire young people from the NWT for professional positions. This could be done through “Stay in School” programs, increasing benefits under Student Financial Assistance, including scholarships and bursaries for students in professional fields. Provide more funding for housing, and making wage and benefits to professionals more attractive.</p>	<p>Most employers in the NWT are paying more than the current minimum wage. However, we need a realistic and fair minimum wage to protect those workers who are hard to employ, such as people with disabilities.</p>	<p>I would support legislation that would prohibit the use of replacement workers in the case of a lock-out or strike. Striking should be used as a last resort. I would encourage employers and unions to negotiate their differences.</p>
ANDY WONG	<p>The NWT should consider a multifaceted approach: Developing our own professionals and Building Partnerships with southern educational institutions. We have to maintain high standards in our educational system to enable our students can compete for placements in Universities across Canada. Our health bursaries and scholarships have been helpful in getting northern medical students to return to the NWT. We must broaden training opportunities by certified training for various paraprofessional occupations in various health and education fields as we have in nurse practitioners’ and in Ophthalmic technicians and teachers. We must also provide opportunities for paraprofessionals to further their education to become certified doctors and teachers. We need to continue to build partnerships with southern Universities and offer research grants to have southern trained doctors conduct research into diseases common in the NWT - diabetes, fetal alcohol disorders, etc. We also need to promote the NWT as a place to live and work. We must address problems associated with housing for teachers and nurses living in the communities.</p>	<p>The NWT’s minimum wage is the 2nd highest in Canada. As the minimum wage is a useful tool used to combat poverty among low income earners, I would generally support a higher minimum wage. It would not be practical to vary the minimum wage based on the communities’ cost of living. I support a mechanism to regularly review the minimum wage level in relations to the cost of living.</p>	<p>As the Government of the NWT currently has limited jurisdiction in respect to labour disputes, I would support devolution of authority for resolving labour disputes to the Government of the NWT. If we were successful, as a first step, I would support holding hearings for all affected stakeholders on the subject of replacement workers prior to bringing such a bill to the NWT.</p>
	no other respondents		
YELLOWKNIFE CENTRE			
SUE GLOWACH	no response		
ROBERT HAWKINS	<p>Recruitment plans should be tailored to specific occupations. Collective bargaining processes should have recruitment and retention in mind. Professionals need to know that the opportunities to get meaningful experience in a short period of time are available in the NWT. This is an especially tough time to retain professionals in the NWT. There are “boom times” in western Canada and professionals are being courted in so many southern communities. The GNWT</p>	<p>\$8.25/hr in the NWT does not buy a lot of things. That being said, most employers are paying much more than that. I think that the minimum wage can be reviewed, but changes should be gradual. For those employers paying out minimum wage salaries, graduated increases mitigate the effects on payroll costs and as well allow for employers to plan, hopefully without layoffs.</p>	<p>I would consider the issue on a sector-by-sector basis and on which sectors are considered as “essential services”, but ill thought out general anti-replacement worker legislation could cripple small businesses. The smaller and more isolated communities in the NWT, who depend on a smooth flow of goods and services, could be crippled by strikes that shut off that vital flow.</p>

	has had a number of different strategies with varying degrees of success. We have to concentrate on “raised in the NWT” professionals – those youth who are getting ready to be in the professions need to be courted to come back North. The GNWT hopes to enjoy success with its summer employment and bursary programs, where young people training in professions are encouraged to spend their summers North and to come home after they are finished their education.		
BEN MACDONALD	Strengthen northern education programs in nursing, teacher education and social work. Improve ‘grant for work’ programs for southern students. Provide better continuing education and require less overtime.	National anti-poverty campaign supports \$10 per hour but must adjust for northern realities. Link minimum wage to cost of living by community and to cost of living increases.	In favour (assuming law protects essential services). Such legislation limits intensity and length of labour disputes because both sides face economic hardship. Laws have worked well elsewhere.
BRYAN SUTHERLAND	Cleaning up our Capital City’s downtown, improved child care, more recreational infrastructure, and a territorial ombudsman; would provide some incentive and hope for a future in the NWT and decrease out-migration. Lessening expenditures on administration and getting the money directly to educational institutions would allow for more, and better qualified skilled workers to be produced from local sources.	Prices in Yellowknife have adjusted with demand and where demand is highest there is higher pay.	Provided the Legislation did not limit the right of an existing employee, (a person employed by the company prior to a strike,) to make up their own mind; I would support legislation that restricted imported labour intended to replace striking workers.
	no other respondents		
YELLOWKNIFE SOUTH			
GARRETT COCHRANE	no response		
AMY HACALA	We need to: get creative; realize that what we’re doing isn’t working well; train more Northerners as teachers, doctors, nurses etc.; reduce obstacles to international hires.	Yes, there should be a mechanism to increase minimum wage as cost of living increases; it only makes sense. Minimum wage should vary by community to reflect cost of living.	Use of replacement workers can lead to long, bitter strikes. I support fair laws that govern the employer/worker relationship and improvements to the current legislation intended to address this issue.
BOB MCLEOD	The GNWT must compete with remote regions in the Provinces and the other northern Territories for professionals. I do not believe there is one easy solution. I support a multifaceted strategy that involves: Developing our own – We need to maintain high standards in our schools so that our students can compete for placements in Universities across Canada. Health bursaries and scholarships, internships and summer student employment have been helpful in getting northern medical students to return to the NWT. We must broaden training opportunities by certifying training for paraprofessional occupations in various health and education fields as we have done for nurse practitioners, ophthalmic technicians and teachers. We need to provide pathways for paraprofessionals to further their education to become certified doctors and teachers. This year two guaranteed seats have been obtained at Alberta Medical schools which should be a beginning to developing our own Doctors. Building alliances with southern Universities and providing research grants to	Except for Nunavut (\$8.50), the NWT has the highest minimum wage in Canada. The minimum wage is only one tool being used in combating poverty among the working poor. While I would support a higher minimum wage, I believe we need to examine the issue of the working poor on a broader basis by focusing on issues related to the cost of living, housing, daycare, early school education. I do not believe it would be practical to tie the minimum wage to a community’s cost of living	The authority to outlaw the use of replacement workers is described in section 123 of the Canada Labour Code. Only BC and Quebec have adopted similar legislation. At the present time the NWT has limited jurisdiction in respect to labour disputes. I would support a move aimed at delegating or devolving legislative authority in respect to resolving labour disputes to the Government of the NWT. If we were successful I would support a motion to have the NWT legislature hold hearings of all affected stakeholders on the subject of replacement workers prior to bringing the bill to the NWT.

have southern trained doctors conduct research into diseases that are common in the NWT - these could include diabetes, cancer, fetal alcohol spectrum disorders and retinitis pigmentosa. Promoting the unique qualities of the NWT as a place to live and work. This must be done in conjunction with:
a)Addressing housing for teachers and nurses living in the Northern communities, and b)Supporting programs focused on helping to reduce the cost of living in the NWT.