

Briefing Note

The Liberal Party of Canada 2019 electoral platform

October 2nd, 2019

SUBJECT:

The Liberal Party of Canada revealed its platform for the 2019 federal election. This briefing note highlights some of the critical points of direct relevance to the ACCH membership.

Link to the Liberal Party of Canada website: <https://2019.liberal.ca/>

Link to their platform (PDF format): <https://2019.liberal.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/292/2019/09/Forward-A-real-plan-for-the-middle-class.pdf>

BACKGROUND:

A general federal election is taking place in Canada on October 21st, 2019. ACCH is seeking to keep its members informed of the various parties' positions on topics of relevance.

SUMMARY:

The Liberal Platform uses its recent record as a launching point, promising to continue moving in a similar direction as the one taken in the last four years. However, the platform also puts forward many new platform points. This briefing note focuses on those of relevance to the ACC membership.

Health Care:

- make sure that every Canadian has access to a family doctor or primary health care team, improving the quality of care for the nearly five million Canadians who today lack access
- set clear national standards for access to mental health services so Canadians can get the support they need when they need it most
- continue to make home care and palliative care more available across the country;
- take the critical next steps to implement national universal pharmacare so that all Canadians have the drug coverage they need at an affordable price.
- an additional commitment of \$6billion over the next four years, tied to outcomes and negotiated with the provinces and territories.

Justice:

- provide free legal aid to survivors of sexual assault and intimate partner violence, to make sure that they have access to quality, affordable legal representation
- establish an independent Criminal Case Review Commission, to make it easier and faster for potentially wrongfully convicted people to have their applications reviewed
- require all judges in Canada to undertake mandatory training on sexual assault law, including myths and stereotypes about victims and the effects of trauma on victims' memory (the "Ambrose bill")
- provide additional support to the provinces and territories, to enable them to hire as many as 425 new Crown prosecutors, and 225 new judges, to help reduce delays.

Drug use and addiction:

- move forward with new investments that help provinces and territories expand community-based services, build more in-patient rehab beds, and scale up the most effective programs – such as extending hours for InSite and other safe consumption sites.
- make drug treatment court the default option for first-time non-violent offenders charged exclusively with simple possession, to help drug users get quick access to treatment, and to prevent more serious crimes.

Equality and Diversity:

- renew the commitment to a Federal Plan for Gender Equality, including a coordinated strategy built on the Gender Results Framework, and other international agreements
- apply a rigorous GBA+ to all policy proposals.
- build on the foundation laid with the Gender-Based Violence Strategy and move forward with an additional \$30 million investment to develop a National Action Plan. Ensure anyone facing gender-based violence has reliable and timely access to protection and services, no matter who they are or where they live.
- move forward and work with provinces and territories to make sure that sexual and cover reproductive health medications under national pharmacare.
- work with the Canadian Institutes of Health Research to integrate sex and gender-based analyses, as well as diversity analyses, to ensure research takes diversity factors into account to improve women's health care;
- create a National Institute for Women's Health Research, the first of its kind in Canada. The Institute would bring together experts in women's health from across the country to tackle persistent gaps in research and caretaking an intersectional approach that includes race, ability, indigeneity and more.

- additional investments to help more LGBTQ2 organizations hire staff, expand services and reach a higher number of people. Supported by an investment of \$10 million a year, over three years.
 - additional investment of \$2 million a year to continue this work, including support lines that provide sexual education.
- work with provinces and territories to end conversion therapy in Canada, including making amendments to the Criminal Code that will prohibit this harmful and scientifically disproven practice, especially against minors.
- Fight racism through
 - strengthening the Anti-Racism Strategy and double its funding;
 - boosting funding for community-led initiatives to promote inclusion and combat racism; and
 - improving the quality and amount of data collection Statistics Canada does regarding hate crimes in Canada, to help create effective and evidence-based policies to counteract these crimes.
- mandatory training on unconscious bias and cultural competency for all judges in Canada.
- work with the provinces and territories to establish a Community Justice Centres program, which puts courts alongside other critical social services.

Indigenous People:

- eliminate all long-term drinking water advisories on reserve by 2021, and continue to take steps to ensure water stays safe to drink.
- co-develop distinctions-based Indigenous Health legislation – backed with the investments needed to deliver this care – and will continue to work with Indigenous communities to ensure Indigenous control over the development and delivery of services.
- co-develop and invest in distinctions-based community infrastructure plans, and will move forward with addressing critical infrastructure needs – such as housing, all-weather roads, high-speed internet, health facilities, treatment centres, and schools– in First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities by 2030.
- co-develop a legislative framework for First Nations policing, which recognizes First Nations policing as an essential service. Work with interested First Nations communities to expand the number of communities served by First Nations policing.

- take action to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in the first year of a new mandate.
- live up to the spirit and intent of Treaties, agreements, and other constructive arrangements.
- Support First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Nation priorities

ANALYSIS:

- The Liberal Party is relying on its recent record and suggests moving further in the same directions it promoted over the last four years.
- The Liberal Party remains in support of harm reduction and supervised consumption sites.
- The platform does not explicitly mention strategies relating to HIV or STBBIs.
- The Liberal Party does promote national pharmacare for access to medication across Canada.
- The platform does also identifies structural racism as an obstacle to be overcome, and suggests a few actions in that sense.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The ACCH should remain non-partisan within the election campaign to promote good working relationships with any future government.
- The ACCH and its members should remain aware of the political parties' policies on topics that relate to their activities.
- Members should have discussions on topics of interest with their local candidates, where policies might impact their programming.
- ACCH will strive to remain informed of further details of each party's commitments as they are made available.