

Agenda for Canada

The Power of Free Enterprise and Common Sense



Most Canadians don't belong to a political party. Most Canadians don't belong to a union. But we are all affected by the decisions made by big governments and by large unions.

The National Citizens Coalition is not necessarily against big government or big labour. We just believe they have lost touch with the average Canadian, and have forgotten the job they were supposed to be doing.

Instead of ensuring an economic future dependent on the concepts of work, opportunity and challenge our federal government and large labour unions have created a welfare state where desire, imagination and incentive are stifled.

Governments and unions represent us, the ordinary citizens, and it is their job to demonstrate a greater responsiveness to the needs and desires of Canadians.

We need to join together and present our federal leaders with a new plan for Canada. A plan that focuses on financial accountability; representative accountability; and individual rights and freedoms. A plan promising not bigger but better government.

Better government means a government that restricts its size, its influence and its cost of governing. A better government is one that will find an efficient balance between what it does for the people and what the people do for themselves.

In this document we present such a plan - a plan we call the Agenda for Canada.

Look it over. If you agree with this Agenda, pass it along to your friends. Send it to your MP. Let the politicians from all parties know you support this agenda.

Help us make the Agenda for Canada part of the national debate. Politicians and union bosses can ignore us individually, but cannot ignore our collective voice. That is why we need you to make our voice stronger.

Support this campaign by donating online at www.nationalcitizens.ca, and by passing on the message. We would be happy to supply you with copies of this document to give to your friends, family and business associates.

Financial Accountability

1. In the past 16 years, government spending has soared out of control. Federal program spending 2007-2008 is expected to reach \$199.6 billion or about \$6,000 per person and that doesn't include payments on the debt. How can we cut spending? Why not reduce enormously costly and wasteful universal social spending programs; eliminate grants to businesses; eliminate regional subsidies; stop handing over money to special interest groups; find and eliminate waste. Canada needs to stop out of control government programs while ensuring spending goes to those who need it. [Say no to any unnecessary government programs.](#)
2. Canada only produces 2% of the world's green house gas emissions, yet we signed a climate control treaty that would have burdened our economy, destroyed thousands of jobs and made our industries uncompetitive. Before Canada gets involved in any more unattainable climate control measures we need to invest in some legitimate and unbiased scientific research on the subject. Only then can Canada take an effective approach to climate control. [Canada needs a climate plan that makes sense for the environment and makes sense for our economy.](#)
3. Canada's annual healthcare spending will cost taxpayers \$160 billion in 2007. That is an increase of 6.6% from 2006 yet we still lack a significant number of MRI machines, we still face long waiting lists for surgery and other procedures, and we still have a shortage of doctors and nurses. In short, we still have a healthcare system that isn't working. The problem with Canada's healthcare system can't be solved simply by spending more and more money. We need to remove the political lens from the healthcare debate and have a national discussion on reforming our system. We need to address the root of the problem: the government's monopoly on healthcare services. Permit innovative and common sense reforms that will make access to healthcare better. [Canada must get a better return on investment from its healthcare dollars.](#)
4. Taxes in this country are simply too high. A recent report indicated that take home pay for the average Canadian has stagnated for the past 15 years. The reason: high taxes. While the rate of tax Canadians pay is seeing some improvement, more could be done to increase meaningful, broad based tax cuts instead of implementing boutique cuts. When governments run massive surpluses there is no excuse for not giving some of that money back to the taxpayer. [Canadians should be allowed to keep more of their hard earned money.](#)

Representative Accountability

1. Canadians are fed up with politicians and bureaucrats using the public treasury as a slush fund. They don't want another federal scandal that sees millions of their hard earned dollars end up in the coffers of our federal parties and the pockets of politicians or their friends. Government must be made more accountable, must act responsibly and must perform its job ethically. Give more power to the Auditor General to investigate activities and give access to the books of all Crown Corporations. [It's time for honest government.](#)
2. In other countries with federal systems, such as the United States and Australia, members of the upper legislative branch are elected. In Canada they are appointed. Is this the way it should work in a democracy? Canada should reform the Senate so that it is an elected body with fixed terms. [Push for Senate reform that will make the upper branch more democratic.](#)
3. Politicians work for us, so we should have some say in MP compensation. That means putting a stop to MPs voting themselves fat pay increases. It means more reliance on "independent" commissions. Reform the system to give taxpayers a real voice. [Give taxpayers a say in the pay of their MPs.](#)
3. Not since 1952 has Canada's defence spending been so high. For years governments ignored our Military until it had deteriorated into one of the most outdated and inefficient in the world. We need to ensure that our Military remains strong if Canada is to play a significant role on the world stage and deal in future with failed states similar to Afghanistan. If we are going to be a reliable ally, if we are going to be a meaningful force in the war on terror, we need to continue to rebuild our military. [Canada needs to maintain a Military we can be proud of.](#)

4. Our former government changed the Canada Elections Act so that taxpayers are now forced to subsidize political parties. Under this new law the Conservative Party will get an annual allowance of over \$9 million; the Liberal Party will receive \$8.5 million; the NDP will scoop up \$4.6 million; the Bloc Quebecois nearly \$3 million; and the Green Party will receive just under \$2 million. In total this subsidy will cost taxpayers \$26 million a year. Nobody should be forced to support a political party against their will, yet this is exactly what is happening in Canada. Political parties should rely on voluntary donations, not taxpayer funded handouts. [End welfare for political parties.](#)
5. Direct democracy – referendums, recalls, initiatives – empowers voters and helps make governments more accountable and representative. Why not give Canadians the power to initiate laws or pass judgment on laws already enacted? [Direct democracy works in other countries and it can work here too.](#)
6. The Supreme Court of Canada has the power to overturn laws. Yet who judges the judges? Right now Supreme Court Justices are political appointments. We need a better way. [We need a more democratic method to select those who sit on the Supreme Court bench.](#)
7. The CBC costs taxpayers about \$1 billion a year, yet its audience share continues to dwindle. Are taxpayers getting their money's worth? In this age of the Internet and cable TV do we really need a government run network? The answer to both questions is no. Maybe the government should get out of the broadcast business. Sell the CBC to the public and its employees. [Privatize the CBC.](#)

Individual Freedoms & Rights

1. The right to own private property is the corner-stone of any truly free society. Indeed, it's the foundation of the free-enterprise system. Yet this crucially important right was not included among the democratic freedoms entrenched in our Charter of Rights and Freedoms. [Enshrine property rights in the Constitution.](#)
2. In 2004 the Supreme Court of Canada ruled the Liberal election gag law to be constitutional, a serious setback for Canadian democracy. Gag laws stifle free speech and give politicians a monopoly on election debate. Take a stand for democratic rights and free speech. [Repeal the gag law.](#)
3. The Canadian Wheat Board has held a monopoly over Western grain farmers for far too long. However, this fight is not about grain but the rights of all Canadians to protect their private property. Farmers in Eastern Canada are not subject to jail time if they sell their own crops to customers of their choice. Why is it a crime in Western Canada? In a true democracy farmers should have the right to freely sell their property to whomever they want. [Give all farmers the right to sell their own crops.](#)
4. Canada's unions need a dose of democracy. It's wrong, for instance, that union bosses can take dues – which workers are forced to pay regardless of their personal political views – and use them to finance the union bosses' pet political causes. Somebody needs to step up and protect the individual freedoms of Canada's workers. [Restore rights to union workers.](#)
5. The CRTC is supposed to safeguard the public, but denying freedom of speech is not in the public interest. Why should a group of bureaucrats have the power to determine what Canadians can or cannot watch on TV or listen to on the radio? The CRTC should not have the power to censor Canadian airwaves. [End CRTC censorship.](#)

If you would like to receive copies of this brochure to hand out to friends and colleagues, please contact the NCC office with the number of additional copies you require.



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