



# WAB KINEW

## RESPONSE TO CONFEDERATION OF CANADIAN UNIONS QUESTIONS

### The Economy

**1. No one should work full-time and live in poverty. Yet according to Manitoba Labour and Regulatory Services, 48% of minimum wage workers in the province are over the age of 24, and the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives determined that a living wage within the province is \$15 an hour, even though the current minimum wage is set at only \$11.35. Will your party commit to making the minimum wage in Manitoba a living wage of \$15 an hour and indexing it to the rate of inflation?**

Yes. No one in Manitoba should have to try and get by on poverty-level wages. The Manitoba NDP will increase the minimum wage to \$15/hr. When Pallister came into power, Manitoba was tied for the fourth highest minimum wage in the country. Since then, Manitoba has fallen to ninth place, and the second lowest in all of western Canada. Many of the people working minimum wage jobs are women with children, and many of them are working multiple jobs to make ends meet – the Manitoba NDP is committed to supporting them by taking steps to raise the minimum wage to \$15/hour.

**2. Research illustrates that the privatization of public services in areas like health care, public auto insurance, railways, water and hydro can lead to increased costs, poorer delivery of services, job losses, and less accountability to the public. Will your party commit to keeping crown corporations like Manitoba Hydro, Manitoba Public Insurance, Manitoba Liquor and Lotteries under public ownership and democratic control?**

Yes. Our crown corporations belong to all Manitobans. The Manitoba NDP is committed to keeping our crown corporations public. Unlike Pallister who is interfering with MPI while laying the groundwork for the privatization of Hydro, we will support our crowns to work in the best interests of all of us. We also know that public ownership of liquor and lotteries means safer communities and investments in public infrastructure- we're committed to keeping it that way.

**3. Fair, progressive taxation doesn't only reduce levels of inequality, it provides governments with the revenue necessary to pay for vitally important social programs without going into debt. What will your party do to create a more progressive taxation system in Manitoba based on the ability to pay?**

The Manitoba NDP strongly supports a more progressive taxation system. A Manitoba NDP government will ask the top 1% of income earners – individuals earning over \$250,000 – to contribute a bit more through their taxes to fund services for all of us, at the same time as we make sure life is more affordable for regular families by investing in health care, education and services we all rely on. And we commit to never imposing a health care tax on Manitobans.

**4. Fewer than 40% of Canadians have access to a workplace pension plan. What will your party do to protect pensions in both the private and public sectors in Manitoba and ensure that retirees can enjoy their golden years in dignity.**

The Manitoba NDP will strengthen rules around pension plans, commit to properly funding them and to finding ways to encourage the use of good quality pension plans for all workers across the private and public sectors. We will not go the route that is being considered by Pallister who refused to show Manitobans what his pension legislation was before he called the election. It appears that Pallister is considering very worrisome provisions, including the introduction of Target Benefit Pension Plans, weakening unlocking provisions and potentially ending the principle of universal participation. We've seen what can happen when pensions aren't protected so we will fight for good pensions for all workers so they can retire with dignity.

## Labour

**5. The Public Services Sustainability Act (Bill 28) undermines the democratic right to collective bargaining and violates International Labour Organization Convention 98, of which Canada is a signatory. It will also freeze wages and reduce living standards for over 120,000 public sector workers in the province. What is your party's view of the Act, and what will you do to restore free collective bargaining in the province?**

The Manitoba NDP strongly opposes Bill 28. We would immediately repeal the Act – which has never been proclaimed - and return to the bargaining table. Our party believes in collective bargaining and in respecting the constitutional rights of workers.

**6. Research from Statistics Canada shows that workers in labour unions in Canada receive 23% more pay than those who aren't, and they enjoy superior health benefits and pensions, better health and safety standards, more training and education, and work in places that are more equitable. What are your views on labour unions, and will you make it easier for workers to join unions in Manitoba?**

As New Democrats, we are proud of our historic partnership with labour and we believe every worker should have the right to join and participate in a union. That's why a Manitoba NDP government would work to remove impediments that can prevent workers from joining a union. One of the first steps we would take would be to reinstate certification through card check – which Brian Pallister repealed, making it more difficult to for workers to form a union.

**7. Each year, thousands of Manitobans are injured on the job or develop illness from dangerous conditions are work. What will your party do to improve health and safety conditions and help protect workers in the province?**

Every worker should come home safe at the end of their day. The Manitoba NDP will make workplaces safer by restoring and improving workplace health and safety standards. We will rehire health and safety officer positions that Pallister has left empty, while he lowered standards and made deep cuts to enforcement. Pallister has ignored the advice of labour and business alike and set the minimum working age at 13 years old, meaning children can get permits to work in Manitoba a full year younger than children in Ontario and Saskatchewan. Pallister has also considered watering down Manitoba's standards for protecting workers from harmful chemicals. We will stop these dangerous changes that put workers' health and safety at risk – and restore and improve standards so that every worker is safe on the job.

## Social Programs

8. Research from the University of Quebec (economist Pierre Fortin) shows that a provincial childcare program wouldn't only give tens of thousands of children a better start in life, it would allow more parents to work, or work more hours. Will your party commit to a universal, affordable childcare program throughout the province and invest in the training of Early Childhood Educators?

The Manitoba NDP is committed to the goal of affordable, high-quality, accessible childcare for all families. As we work towards that goal, we'll start by building hundreds more childcare spaces for young families, beyond what Pallister committed to in his most recent budget. We will also invest money to ensure the existing unfunded spaces are funded and will work with the Federal Government to fund all unfunded spaces over the course of our mandate. We will not raise parent fees and will continue to work with childcare centers to lower them in the future. We will also work to increase public awareness about available childcare subsidies to make sure more Manitoban families have access to affordable childcare while making it easier for more Manitobans to qualify.

The Pallister PCs cuts and freezes have had a real and negative impact on the childcare sector, Early Childhood Educators and workers in our province. The Manitoba NDP, however, understand the value of early childhood education and believe we need to support Early Childhood Educators and childcare workers. That's why we will take the step of incorporating the childcare system under the Department of Education because we believe in and support the educational impact provided by Early Childhood Educators and child care workers.

We will implement a workforce strategy that supports Early Childhood Educators by keeping tuition rates low for university and colleges and providing bursaries that will help ensure all Manitobans, regardless of income or background, are able to get the education and training they need and desire. We will also take the pressure off of licensed childcare centres by ending Pallister's operating grant freeze. With sustainable and predictable funding for centers we believe we can ensure ECEs are able to be compensated at levels that reflect their education and years of service.

**9. Our publicly administered, universal health care system is cherished throughout Manitoba. Yet more of our health services are being de-funded and privatized. What policies will your party implement to ensure that health care in the province remains under public control and is accessible to everyone?**

Manitoba's NDP will always stand up for a strong, public health care system that is always accessible when you need it. Brian Pallister has closed 3 ERs, fired 500 nurses and cut 128 acute-care beds – plunging our health care system into chaos. And now he's filling in the gaps caused by his cuts with expensive contracts for private companies. This year Pallister is on track to spend millions on private home care. We will stop firing nurses and start hiring them to restore the public health care and home care we all count on. We will redirect the savings into improving home and health care for all Manitobans.

**10. Canada remains the only country in the world with a universal health care system that doesn't include prescription medication. Drug prices continue to skyrocket for Manitobans and more people have to choose between getting the medications they need and paying for necessities like food or rent. Will your party commit to creating a universal, comprehensive, publicly-administered and sustainable Pharmacare program that is accessible to all Manitobans?**

A commitment to universal PharmaCare is every New Democrat's goal. A Manitoba NDP government will make Manitoba a leading voice for universal national Pharmacare and work with the Federal government to lower drug costs for Manitoba families. We will make use of every avenue and pathway to advocate for this program and will work with other provinces on bulkbuying and cooperation to share best practices and reduce drug prices. We will also revive the Special Drugs Program in an enhanced Pharmacare program covering more than 1000 Manitobans who need life saving drugs.

**11. Grade schools, high schools, colleges and universities in Manitoba depend on government funding to maintain a high-quality, comprehensive education system. What are your plans for education funding in the province, and can you promise voters you will not cut funding to education while in office?**

Every student deserves a quality education experience. Brian Pallister's cuts to education and training have made life harder for students across Manitoba. Manitoba's NDP is committed to real supports and real investments in education.

In the K-12 system, Pallister's review of public education is laying the groundwork for further cuts to our schools. We are determined to stop him before he can do anymore damage. We will invest to restore the class size cap Pallister removed, put more Educational Assistants in the classroom, and invest in better supports in schools – including healthy food and better mental health services to help kids overcome barriers and succeed.

In the post-secondary system, our focus is on removing barriers to training and education for students. Pallister has hiked the cost of tuition by up to \$500 a year and cut the ACCESS bursary that many low-income students depend on. We will make university and college more affordable by freezing tuition growth to inflation and keeping student loans interest-free, and help rural, northern and Indigenous students by restoring the ACCESS bursary. We will also support co-op job placements and paid internships to help thousands of post-secondary students pay for their schooling while learning valuable job skills.

**12. According to the government of Manitoba Population Report (2016), during the next fifteen years, over 100,000 Manitobans will reach the age where they may require long-term care services. How will your party guarantee adequate home care funding that will grow with the province's aging population?**

Pallister's plans to privatize home care are more expensive – leaving less resources to provide services to Manitoba's aging population. To ensure adequate home care funding, a Manitoba NDP government will cancel Pallister's more expensive plans to privatize home care and redirect the savings into improving home care and ensuring services for Manitobans. As part of our commitment to restoring home care, we believe the length of home care visits should reflect the care offered so that every person receives the time and support they need. What's more, Pallister has failed to build one new PCH bed since coming to office in 2016 – a NDP government would immediately move to start building PCH beds our seniors need, in the communities where they live.

**13. Research indicates addictions are often caused by lack of access to necessary social and living supports, which is often a result of poverty or inadequate financial supports. Addictions are on the rise**

**in Manitoba as evidenced by increased use of methamphetamine. What will your party do to confront the meth crisis in the province, and will that include funding for long-term treatment and transitional housing?**

A Manitoba NDP government will appoint a Minister Responsible for Mental Health and Addictions to lead the implementation of the Main Street Project's plan to build detox, treatment and transitional housing beds for Manitobans struggling with addictions:

1. Repurposing MSP's existing Protective Care beds to accommodate clients who are detained while high on meth. This would reduce pressure on emergency rooms and facilitate a client's move to treatment.
2. Building meth-specific beds within MSP's Detoxification and Stabilization Units. Clients would stay in detox for at least ten days.
3. Building long term meth treatment beds within MSP's Mainstay Residence. Clients would stay in treatment between 90-365 days. Clients would have access to a nurse practitioner, psychologists and cognitive behavioural therapy.
4. Working with community supports to transition clients from long term treatment to transitional housing. Clients would be paired with services to aid accessing housing, education, work and family supports.

MSP's proposal requires \$1.5 million in capital funding from the provincial government. Our commitment is to meet the project's capital needs and commit \$2 million annually in operating funding.

As New Democrats we are also committed to addressing the social determinants of health to support our efforts to tackle the meth crisis. We will improve Rent Assist and reverse cuts made by Pallister; improve EIA rates; restore the Getting Started benefit; begin to transform EIA into basic income by eliminating the 'welfare wall' as a disincentive to work; and strike a task force on basic income and a dignified income for people with severe and prolonged disabilities.

## The Environment

### **14. What policies will your party implement to reduce climate change and protect the environment?**

A Manitoba NDP government will commit to meeting the targets outlined in the Paris Accord with science and evidence-based policies. To start, we will end oil and gas subsidies and ban oil and gas fracking in Manitoba. We will also help families make greener choices and keep life affordable, while working with the Federal government as they put a price on pollution and make big polluters pay.

Manitoba Hydro also has a critical role to play in addressing climate change. We will take it back from Brian Pallister and return it to Manitobans – use it to generate more green jobs with expanded broadband, install geothermal and solar using Hydro expertise and begin to transition Hydro into a renewable energy company. An NDP government will also work with the City of Winnipeg and other municipalities to protect our waterways and improve surface-water protections. With these and other actions we will bring Lake Winnipeg back to health and protect it for future generations.

### **15. What plans does your party have with regards to incorporating and strengthening economic and labour market growth with environmental protection within our province?**

The Manitoba NDP is the only party who can work to solve the climate crisis while creating good, green jobs for people in Manitoba. Climate change is the challenge of our time, but with Manitoba being rich in hydroelectric power, there are also many opportunities for good jobs for Manitobans while we take serious action on climate change. We will generate more green jobs through Manitoba Hydro with expanded broadband and installing geothermal and solar using Hydro expertise. Only the Manitoba NDP can be trusted to take advantage of this opportunity to create new careers in a clearer, healthier province, by keeping Manitoba Hydro strong, growing, and publicly owned.

### **16. One of the best ways to reduce our carbon footprint on the environment is public transportation. What will you do to make public transportation throughout the province more affordable and accessible to Manitobans?**

Public transportation is critical both to our efforts to solve the climate crisis, and to providing accessible and affordable transportation for Manitobans. Brian Pallister cut funding for transit when we should be expanding it. The Manitoba NDP will improve transit by reinstating the 50-50 operating grant for municipal transit agencies that Pallister cut. Restoring the operating grant will support municipalities to expand service and provide affordable fares for Manitobans.

**17. Will your party commit to restoring the 50/50 funding agreement between the province and the City of Winnipeg for upgrades to the city's transit system?**

Yes. Our platform states that the Manitoba NDP will improve transit for Manitobans by reinstating the 50/50 operating grant for municipal transit agencies in Manitoba that Pallister cut.