

Conservative Party of Canada

POLICY DECLARATION



**As amended by the delegates to
the National Convention
on November 2, 2013**

**As consolidated by the National Policy Committee
and approved by National Council**

Founding Principles

The Conservative Party will be guided in its constitutional framework and its policy basis by the following principles:

- A balance between fiscal accountability, progressive social policy and individual rights and responsibilities;
- Build a national coalition of people who share these beliefs and who reflect the regional, cultural and socio-economic diversity of Canada;
- Develop this coalition, embracing our differences and respecting our traditions, yet honoring a concept of Canada as the greater sum of strong parts;
- The Conservative Party will operate in a manner accountable and responsive to its members;
- A belief in loyalty to a sovereign and united Canada governed in accordance with the Constitution of Canada, the supremacy of democratic parliamentary institutions and the rule of law;
- A belief in the equality of all Canadians;
- A belief in the freedom of the individual, including freedom of speech, worship and assembly;
- A belief in our constitutional monarchy, the institutions of Parliament and the democratic process;
- A belief in the federal system of government as the best expression of the diversity of our country, and in the desirability of strong provincial and territorial governments;
- A belief that English and French have equality of status, and equal rights and privileges as to their use in all institutions of the Parliament and Government of Canada;
- A belief that the best guarantors of the prosperity and well-being of the people of Canada are:
 - The freedom of individual Canadians to pursue their enlightened and legitimate self-interest within a competitive economy;
 - The freedom of individual Canadians to enjoy the fruits of their labour to the greatest possible extent; and
 - The right to own property;

- A belief that a responsible government must be fiscally prudent and should be limited to those responsibilities which cannot be discharged reasonably by the individual or others;
 - A belief that it is the responsibility of individuals to provide for themselves, their families and their dependents, while recognizing that government must respond to those who require assistance and compassion;
 - A belief that the purpose of Canada as a nation state and its government, guided by reflective and prudent leadership, is to create a climate wherein individual initiative is rewarded, excellence is pursued, security and privacy of the individual is provided and prosperity is guaranteed by a free competitive market economy;
 - A belief that Canada should continue its strong heritage of national defence, supporting a well-armed military, honouring those who serve, and promoting our history and traditions;
 - A belief that the quality of the environment is a vital part of our heritage to be protected by each generation for the next;
 - A belief that Canada should accept its obligations among the nations of the world;
 - A belief that Canadian Jurisdiction extends beyond the coastline to include the internationally recognized regions of the Territorial Sea, Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and Continental Shelf;
 - A belief that good and responsible government is attentive to the people it represents and has representatives who at all times conduct themselves in an ethical manner and display integrity, honesty and concern for the best interest of all;
 - A belief that all Canadians should have reasonable access to quality health care regardless of their ability to pay; and
 - A belief that the greatest potential for achieving social and economic objectives is under a global trading regime that is free and fair.
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POLICY DECLARATION OF THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY

A) ROLE OF GOVERNMENT

1. Role of Government

The Conservative Party believes the role of government is to:

- i. protect the lives and property of its citizens;
- ii. ensure equality of opportunity;
- iii. foster an environment where individuals and private initiative can prosper;
- iv. ensure the security of our nation's borders and the safety of our citizens at home and abroad;
- v. provide services to Canadians that cannot be provided more efficiently and effectively by individuals or by the private sector; and
- vi. maintain and enhance national infrastructure.

B) GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

2. Ministerial Accountability

A fundamental component of Parliamentary government is ministerial accountability to Parliament. The Conservative Party is determined to enforce parliamentary principles of government accountability. We believe that ministers should continue to have authority and be accountable for the policies they implement and the administrative actions of their departments.

3. Public Service Excellence

The Conservative Party believes that all Canadians deserve an efficient, effective, and independent professional public service. We believe the government should build upon the whistle-blowing protection legislation to ensure that those who expose corruption and wrongdoing are protected from reprisal. We continue to support any measures which enhance public service effectiveness and accountability.

We believe that Public Service benefits and pensions should be comparable to those of similar employees in the private sector, and to the extent that they are not, they should be made comparable to such private sector benefits and pensions in future contract negotiations.

4. Sound Financial Management

The Conservative Party believes:

- i. the government should continue to strengthen the internal audit and comptrollership functions of government, ensuring that program delivery matches the intent of the program, spending is measured against objectives and cost overruns are brought to the immediate attention of Parliament;
- ii. in the audit role of the Treasury Board;
- iii. the Auditor General should be able to table reports with the Clerk of the House of Commons when Parliament is not sitting, and have them made public through the Speaker; and
- iv. the government should ensure transparency, accuracy of and confidence in the government's finances by providing the Auditor General with full access to all documents from all federal organizations, including all agencies, Crown corporations, the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board and foundations.

5. Government Duplication and Waste

The Conservative Party believes the government should implement detailed processes to streamline government services and eliminate waste, unnecessary overlap, duplication between the levels of government and within and between the Departments of the Federal Government.

C) DEMOCRATIC REFORM

6. Officers of Parliament

The Conservative Party believes that senior officers such as the Auditor General, Chief Electoral Officer, Comptroller General, Ethics Commissioner, Information Commissioner, and Privacy Commissioner should be appointed by Parliament and report to it.

7. Free Votes

The Conservative Party believes in restoring democratic accountability into the House of Commons by allowing free votes.

All votes should be free, except for the budget, main estimates, and core government initiatives.

On issues of moral conscience, such as abortion, the definition of marriage, and euthanasia, the Conservative Party acknowledges the diversity of deeply-held personal convictions among individual party members and the right of Members of Parliament to adopt positions in consultation with their constituents and to vote freely.

8. Supreme Court Judge Appointments

The Conservative Party believes that nominees to the Supreme Court of Canada should be ratified by a free vote in Parliament, after receiving the approval of the justice committee of the House of Commons.

9. Senate Reform

The Conservative Party supports the election of senators.

The Conservative Party believes in an equal Senate to address the uneven distribution of Canada's population and to provide a balance to safeguard regional interests.

We believe that wherever the people of a province or territory by democratic election choose persons qualified to be appointed to the Senate, the government should continue the practice of filling any vacancy in the Senate for that province or territory from among those elected persons.

10. Electoral Reform

The Conservative Party believes the discussion of possible changes to the electoral system is valuable in a healthy democracy.

In reviewing options for electoral reform, we believe the government should not endorse any new electoral system that will weaken the link between Members of Parliament and their constituents, that will create unmanageably large ridings, or that will strengthen the control of the party machinery over individual Members of Parliament.

A national referendum should be held prior to implementing any future electoral reform proposal.

The publicly-funded annual payment to federal political parties of \$1.95 per vote received in the previous federal election should be cancelled immediately and there should be no additional public funding of federal political parties beyond that presently contained in the Elections Canada Act.

11. Independent Judiciary

The Conservative Party believes that an independent judiciary is a vital safeguard of the freedom of Canadians against the exercise of arbitrary power by the state.

12. Parliament, the Courts and the Charter

The Conservative Party believes that Parliament, rather than the courts, is the law-making body of Canada.

We support the establishment of a parliamentary judicial review committee to prepare an appropriate response to those court decisions that Parliament believes should be addressed through legislation.

We re-affirm the legitimacy of the entire *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* including section 33 (notwithstanding clause).

We support legislation to remove authority from the Canadian Human Rights Commission and the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal to regulate, receive, investigate or adjudicate complaints related to section 13 of the *Canadian Human Rights Act*.

13. Property Rights

The Conservative Party believes the government should seek the agreement of the provinces to amend the Constitution to include this right, as well as guarantee that no person shall be deprived of their just right without the due process of law and full, just, and timely compensation.

We believe the government should enact legislation to ensure that full, just and timely compensation will be paid to all persons who are deprived of personal or private property as a result of any federal government initiative, policy, process, regulation or legislation.

14. Rights of Workers

The Conservative Party of Canada:

- i. supports the right of workers to organize democratically, to bargain collectively and to peacefully withdraw and withhold services while:
 - a. respecting the law,
 - b. respecting the right of other workers, without sanction, not to participate should they so chose, and
 - c. respecting private property;
- ii. believes that Government should work with unions and employers in areas of Federal jurisdiction to develop dispute settlement mechanisms and encourage their use to avoid or minimize disruption to services to Canadians;
- iii. supports the right of union workers to a secret ballot in any strike vote and in all union elections;
- iv. supports the requirement that unions be subject to full, transparent annual financial reporting so long as they enjoy a not-for-profit status and receive public support in the form of tax deductibility of union dues;
- v. believes that the federal government must act to ensure that members of unions under federal jurisdiction have control over the use of the funds collected in the form of mandatory dues. The federal government should legislate the following:
 - a. federal Public Service unions and unions in federally-regulated industries must explicitly detail on an annual basis for their membership the portion of their budget allocated to political donations, donations to media organizations, and to political activism and campaigns; and
 - b. federal Public Service Unions and unions in federally-regulated industries must allow members to opt out of the portion of their dues that are allocated to the activities in (i) above.

D) OPEN FEDERALISM

15. Federalism

The Conservative Party supports the restoration of a constitutional balance between the federal and provincial and territorial governments.

We are committed to the federal principle and to the notion of strong provinces within Canada. We believe the government should work co-operatively with the provinces to improve the lives of Canadians while respecting the division of power and responsibilities outlined in the Constitution of Canada.

We believe the use of the federal spending power in areas of provincial jurisdiction should be limited, and that provinces should be authorized to use the opting out formula with full compensation if they want to opt out of a new or modified federal program in an area of shared or exclusively provincial jurisdiction.

16. Reform of the Federation

The Conservative Party believes the government should consider reforming Canadian federalism, taking into account:

- i. the need to consolidate Quebec's position within the Canadian federation due to the province not signing the *Constitution Act, 1982*;
- ii. the need to alleviate the alienation felt by the citizens of the West; and
- iii. the importance of building a long term partnership with aboriginal peoples.

We believe the new Council of the Federation is an important innovation in Canadian intergovernmental relations with the potential to improve collaboration among governments, while respecting regional diversity and flexibility within the federation. We support the work of the Council of the Federation and will encourage the development of better methods of inter-provincial information sharing.

17. Fiscal Imbalance

The Conservative Party believes that fiscal balance, brought in by Budget 2007, must be maintained.

E) FISCAL

18. Balanced Budget Legislation

The Conservative Party believes the government should enact balanced budget legislation, which includes overrides for declared national emergencies or other defined, and presumably rare, circumstances.

19. Debt Repayment

The Conservative Party believes the government should continue to pay down the national debt, thus reducing the interest payment which is the single largest federal budgetary commitment.

We support the introduction of a debt repayment plan with the main part of budget surplus being allocated to debt repayment, in order to have a debt-to-GDP ratio well under 20% as soon as possible, thus having greater flexibility to deal with the fiscal pressure coming from the aging of the Canadian population.

20. Tax Code Simplification

The Conservative Party believes that government should simplify the Income Tax Act, remove many of the complexities that have been built up over the years and simplify the Income Tax forms.

21. Tax Relief

The Conservative Party supports both immediate and long-term broad-based tax relief. Reducing personal income taxes is a priority for the Conservative Party because it increases the take-home pay and raises the living standard of all Canadians.

We encourage the government to continue the process of reducing business taxes. Reducing business taxes encourages both foreign and domestic businesses to invest in Canada, meaning more and better jobs for Canadian workers. Lower business taxes mean more jobs as well as greater returns for pension plan members and those who own RRSPs, mutual funds and common shares.

We believe that government should reduce capital gains tax and eliminate tax on capital gains that are reinvested. Lower capital gains taxes encourage saving and investment which means more capital for Canadian businesses, more jobs for Canadian workers and bigger returns for Canadian investors. Therefore, we support new measures in which the lifetime capital gains exemption for small business owners, farmers, wood-lot operators, and fishermen were increased.

We believe that payroll taxes should not exceed the amount necessary to properly fund Employment Insurance because unnecessarily high payroll taxes are a tax on job creation. Lower payroll taxes encourage hiring and business expansion.

Canada's tax system must be built on a foundation of fairness. In this regard, we encourage the government to continue to close loopholes such as the use of offshore tax havens which erode the Canadian tax base and allow companies to avoid paying Canadian taxes. The Conservative Party supports the concept that all taxation must be fair and be reasonable. The government should work to eliminate instances of taxation on taxation.

We encourage the Conservative Party to move to a less progressive tax system by reducing the number of personal income tax brackets.

22. Supporting Families

The Conservative Party recognizes the need to support families and children. We believe that Canada's decreasing birthrate needs to be addressed by reducing the barriers facing those wishing to start and grow their families, thus ensuring the well-being and long-term sustainability of our communities.

We support tax fairness for families by eliminating inequities between single and dual income families and introducing a deduction for dependent children.

We support the elimination of all tax disadvantages to families including those who care for children at home. This recognizes the economic value of stay at home parents, and supports the introduction of tax fairness measures such as income splitting for couples with children.

We also recognizes that many of our seniors lived on single family incomes as one parent stayed home and cared for their children. Our seniors deserve tax fairness to eliminate the discrepancy between single and dual family income in retirement.

We recognize the value of the home caregiver and supports tax relief for families who provide homecare.

23. Spending Controls

The Conservative Party believes the government should strengthen enforcement and criminal code penalties for fraud involving the misuse of tax dollars.

We believe the government should introduce a system of program evaluation to ensure that all major government spending programs are independently evaluated on a regular basis. This will ensure that programs are meeting government priorities and delivering value for money.

We believe in an effective and efficient penal system. We need to implement cost controls and income earning opportunities for individual inmates and for prison institutions to reduce the burden on the taxpayer. This will also provide job-ready skills, training and work experience for the inmates upon release.

24. Equalization

Equalization is an essential component of Canada's nation building efforts. The Conservative Party believes that provinces and territories should be able to provide comparable public services at comparable levels of taxation; therefore, we support an equalization formula and a territorial financing formula which are fair to every jurisdiction and which promote economic growth.

25. Monetary Policy

The Conservative Party supports a stable and predictable monetary policy that creates a positive climate for investment and growth for Canada within the context of the global economy.

26. Pensions

The Conservative Party believes that company pension funds should be invested by independent trustees for the benefit of employees and should be held at arm's length, not accessible by the company or its creditors.

The Conservative Party is committed to bring public sector pensions in-line with Canadian norms by switching to a defined contribution pension model, which includes employer contributions comparable to the private sector.

F) ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

27. Economic Principles

The Conservative Party believes:

- i. that it is the responsibility of government to create an economic climate in which Canadians can thrive and prosper, and with their success create quality job opportunities for Canadians;
- ii. in the principle of maximizing value-added processing in Canada, and that the government should create an economic environment that encourages Canadian businesses to export products rather than raw materials;
- iii. that a dollar in the hand of a Canadian citizen is better than a dollar in the hand of a government bureaucracy. Canadians should be enjoying a higher standard of living, a more competitive economy and greater productivity, similar to our major trading partners;
- iv. that Canada's competitive position in the world should never be impeded by a lack of ethics in Canada's government ;
- v. that lower taxes and reduced government interference in the economy will result in more purchasing power in the hands of the people of Canada, which leads to a more competitive economy, greater productivity, more quality job opportunities, and a higher standard of living ;
- vi. that the Government adopts an aggressive regulatory reform process designed to eliminate red tape ; and
- vii. that the government of Canada takes action to accelerate Canada's productivity growth rate by:
 - a) increasing human capital through better secondary, post-secondary and job related education as well as more efficient immigration of skilled workers; and
 - b) encouraging efficiency and innovation in small and medium-sized enterprises through greater R&D, capital investment and organizational sophistication.

28. Industrial Development

The Conservative Party favours reducing subsidies to for-profit businesses. We believe it will be possible not only to reduce, but eventually to eliminate subsidies to for-profit businesses by focusing on improving overall economic growth through facilitating competition, improving productivity, streamlining regulation and fostering innovation in concert with free and fair trade agreements.

We believe the government should work with international organizations and individual nations to reduce protectionist policies to secure free trade agreements. Our goal in negotiations should

be to secure agreements that benefit Canadian manufacturers by allowing them to compete and succeed through competition on a level playing field. Where there is injurious harm caused by a trade action, and we have a reasonable chance of winning and/or reversing this action, we should support an industry on a temporary basis until the trade action is resolved.

We support amending the *Investment Canada Act* to expand the review process to include not only the net benefit to Canada in reference to our industrial, economic and cultural policies, but also a consideration of our national security interests. This would include security of supply, technology transfer and any anti-trust implications.

We support the privatization of crown corporations that compete directly with comparable services from existing private sector institutions.

29. Science, Research and Development

The Conservative Party supports the establishment of a single authority or single window to review big science projects according to published guidelines. These types of projects are often tied up in the bureaucracy because, under the current system, they are forced to seek funding from a myriad of departments and agencies. A single-window approach would be more transparent for the research community and more accountable to Canadian taxpayers.

We support the creation of an independent Chief Scientist who would advise and report to Parliament on scientific matters, and help coordinate science policy issues within government, and internationally. This office would be modeled on the Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology in the United Kingdom. The Chief Scientist should be mandated by Parliament to provide independent and balanced analysis of public policy issues related to science and technology. This information should be provided openly to Parliamentarians and Canadians to enable informed decisions.

We support the funding of innovation, technology and research through the granting councils. We support a competitive peer review process and enhanced transparency and accountability to determine who shall receive grants through these councils.

We recognize the importance of private sector investment in research and development of commercial applications. We recognize that the Scientific Research and Experimental Development (SR&ED) tax credit has been successful in spurring private investment in research and development. The government should work with stakeholders in all fields of research and various industry sectors to expand this tax credit. We support the elimination of the capital tax and the reduction of the capital gains tax because the effectiveness of the SR&ED tax credit relies upon the general level of tax on capital and investment. In principle, we believe the government should provide more scientific research and experimental development tax incentives.

30. Foreign Ownership Restrictions

The Conservative Party supports relaxing foreign ownership rules on Canadian industry in concert with our major trading partners in the telecommunications, broadcast distribution, and

airline industry. We believe the government should conduct an immediate review to determine whether to reduce or completely remove these rules.

31. Infrastructure

The Conservative Party believes the government should allocate a portion of federal retail gasoline taxes to the provinces and territories to fund infrastructure.

To augment direct Government support for infrastructure, the Conservative Party supports using the P3 funding model to expand and hasten the renewal of Canada's infrastructure.

32. Financial Institutions

The Conservative Party believes that government should protect the best interests of consumers by fostering competition and ensuring that the financial services sector is appropriately regulated, balanced with stability and opportunity for success and growth in these institutions.

33. National Securities Regulator

The Conservative Party recognizes that efficient capital markets are vital to Canada's prosperity and that a single, national, securities regulator with robust enforcement powers is the most effective way to fight white collar crime and protect the savings and investments of Canadians. We believe the government should work with the provinces and territories to create such a regulator.

34. Labour

The Conservative Party supports the right of workers to organize democratically, to bargain collectively and to strike peacefully while:

- i. respecting the law;
- ii. respecting the right of other workers, without sanction, not to participate should they so choose; and
- iii. respecting private property

We believe that government should work with unions and employers in areas of federal jurisdiction to develop dispute settlement mechanisms to minimize or avoid disruption to services to Canadians;

We support the right of union workers to a secret ballot in a strike vote.

We support right to work legislation to allow optional union membership including student unions.

We support requirements for clarity and public transparency in financial returns from labour unions.

We believe that the government should prevent mandatory dues collected by unions from being diverted to fund political causes unrelated to workplace needs.

We believe that mandatory union membership and forced financial contributions as a condition of employment limit the economic freedom of Canadians and stifle economic growth.

35. Regional Development

The Conservative Party recognizes that regional development policies are an important part of any comprehensive strategy to assist the regions of Canada to meet the opportunities of the new global economy. Regional development agencies, like ACOA, WED, FEDNOR and CED-Q, must be de-politicized and focussed on attracting new private sector investments.

36. Intellectual Property – Patent Legislation

The Conservative Party supports the creation of a process to allow the patent holder to restore time lost on 20 year patent protection due to delays in government approvals.

37. Copyright Legislation

The Conservative Party believes the objectives of copyright legislation should be:

- i. to create opportunities for Canadian creators to enjoy the fruits of their labour to the greatest possible extent;
- ii. to ensure the rights of Canadian creators are adequately protected by law;
- iii. that these rights are balanced with the opportunity for the public to use copyrighted works for teaching, researching and lifelong learning;
- iv. to continue to allow an individual to make copies of recordings of musical works and video for that person's personal and individual use; and
- v. that enforcement is applied fairly and in accordance with international standards.

We believe that reasonable access to copyright works is a critical necessity for learning and teaching for Canadian students and teachers, and that access to copyrighted materials enriches lifelong learning and is an essential component of an innovative economy.

We believe the government should give consideration to educational public policy goals within the copyright framework and work with industry to increase awareness and to develop a public education campaign to better inform users and creators of the copyright laws in Canada.

We support the elimination of the levy on blank recording materials.

38. Northern Development

The Conservative Party believes it is essential to the economic development of the three northern territories to ensure they have a resource revenue sharing agreement with the federal government immediately.

We are committed to the devolution of responsibilities for northern development from Indian and Northern Affairs Canada to the three territorial governments, Aboriginal governments, and where necessary to the appropriate federal departments. Northerners shall control their own future and we are committed to the orderly devolution of decision-making away from Ottawa to the territories.

We support investing in scientific infrastructures specializing in polar scientific research in order to increase the body of scientific knowledge on the Arctic region.

We support strategic investments in the Far North and the Territories, especially in communications and defence infrastructure and transportation, including new highways.

39. Arctic Sovereignty

The Conservative Party believes that demonstrating Canada's presence in the Arctic requires both political and economic development in northern Canada. We believe the government should:

- i. work with the territories to streamline regulatory processes;
- ii. make substantial strategic investments in the territories, particularly in transportation infrastructure;
- iii. fast-track the devolution of "provincial type" responsibilities to the territories from Indian and Northern Affairs Canada and other federal departments; and
- iv. work in partnership with the governments of Yukon, NWT, and Nunavut to assert and maintain sovereignty in the Canadian Arctic with clear, effective and consistent rules and with an integrated, coordinated resource management approach to meet the challenges associated with increased exploration, development and marine traffic in the Arctic.

40. Long-Term Energy Framework

The Conservative Party believes that Canada has a natural economic advantage due to an abundance of fossil fuels, uranium, renewable sources of biomass fuel, hydro power generation, and some of the world's best wind regimes.

We believe that government should develop a renewable and non-renewable energy framework which takes into account outstanding obligations and which will meet our long-term requirements for domestic consumption and export.

We believe that strengthening energy market integration will ensure greater reliability of energy supplies across Canada. We encourage the government to explore ways to reduce barriers to the

movement of energy products across provincial and other borders. The government of Canada should provide leadership and work closely with provincial and territorial governments to align energy goals in the best interests of all Canadians and seek to achieve a positive impact on energy infrastructure development, energy supply and energy demand in Canada by removing artificial barriers to interprovincial and international energy trade.

We continue to support exploration for fossil fuels, pipeline construction, transportation efficiencies and plant improvements to increase energy conversion efficiencies and reduce pollutant and greenhouse gas discharges.

We support the application of nuclear energy and its associated industries to provide energy to Canadians while reducing negative impacts on the environment.

We believe the government should support and encourage the private development of alternative sources of energy and fuels, including: wind, solar, and geothermal sources of energy; alternative transportation fuels including bio-diesel from oil seed crops and methanol, ethanol or methane from biomass and organic waste; fuel cell technology and the use of hydrogen as transportation fuel.

We believe that pipelines provide effective and efficient transportation of fossil fuels and will work to insure that Canada has an efficient pipeline network, and that legislation implemented through the National Energy Board ensures any liability from pipeline operation and abandonment is assumed by the operator of the pipeline and not the public, or the property owner through which the pipeline passes.

41. Mining

The Conservative Party supports positive policies pertaining to the mining industry for the future such as:

- i. increased investment in geosciences programs and research ; and
- ii. streamlining regulatory processes related to these industries.

G) TRADE

42. International Trade

The Conservative Party of Canada strongly supports international trade initiatives that will generate increased economic activity, jobs, and a greater understanding and collaborative relationship between emerging economies and our democratic, streamlined regulatory, free enterprise approach to governance.

The Conservative Party believes that the government is responsible for taking the lead in working with its provincial partners to eliminate inter-provincial trade barriers in transportation, commerce, labour, and capital mobility.

We support bringing more security to existing trade related jobs. To create new employment opportunities, our trade agenda will focus on diversifying both the products we sell abroad and the markets into which we sell those products. We emphasize the importance of secure access to international markets through a rules-based trading system. We believe that Canada should strive to maximize the benefits we have as a free trading nation, and emphasizes the need to establish trading relationships beyond North America.

In future rounds of trade negotiations, we believe the government should:

- i. vigorously pursue the reduction of international trade barriers and tariffs;
- ii. pursue the elimination of trade-distorting government export subsidies within clearly established time limits; and
- iii. seek a clear definition of what constitutes an export subsidy.

We support efforts by the government to develop new markets for Canadian goods and services by emphasizing the development of trade ties with emerging markets.

In recognition of freshwater as a critical resource to the future of Canadians, we believe that there should be an investigation into the protection and security of our long-term freshwater resources as they pertain to exportation as a commodity.

We believe the government should strive to maximize the benefits of our cross border trade by reducing or removing impediments to the efficient flow of goods, services and people at border crossing points. The government should also pursue agreement on standards for secure identification of cross-border travellers that are both affordable and convenient.

43. Inter-provincial Trade

The Conservative Party believes that the government must take the lead with its provincial partners to eliminate inter-provincial trade barriers in transportation, commerce, labour, and capital mobility.

We recognize and support that professional certification obtained through a recognized certification process in one province or territory shall entitle that person to work in their

profession in any other province or territory. Further the Conservative Party of Canada supports and encourages cooperation between provinces toward the standardization of certification processes.

H) TRANSPORTATION

44. Transportation Principles

The Conservative Party supports a modern, efficient transportation system that is integral to the well-being of Canada's economy, and essential for Canada to be competitive in continental and global markets.

We support public-private infrastructure investment as part of a comprehensive approach to improving and sustaining a world-class transportation system.

We believe that ensuring access to future transportation infrastructure for people with disabilities is a fundamental priority for all future public or private transportation installations.

We support the reduction or elimination of federal government fees, levies, taxes and rents, hidden and otherwise, associated with Canada's national transportation system.

We believe that it is an important ongoing responsibility of government to improve border crossings and alleviate congestion at the border. This will result in the timely delivery of goods.

We also recognize the need for improving security and improved relations with the United States and recommends that the feasibility of a North American perimeter be studied.

We believe the government should assume responsibility for legitimate Customs and Immigration costs for all points of entry into Canada.

We believe the government should improve the security of Canada's transportation system, including ports and marine facilities.

45. Air Transportation

The Conservative Party believes the government must negotiate reciprocal "Open Skies" type agreements where it is deemed to be in Canada's overall interest.

We support strong accountability mechanisms for the corporate governance of Canada's airport authorities.

We support ensuring airlines are represented on the board of NAV Canada.

46. Ground Transportation

The Conservative Party believes the government should work with the provinces and utilize revenues from the federal fuel excise tax as a source of funding to achieve a truly 'National Highway System.'

We believe the government should work in partnership with the provinces and territories to achieve an integrated transportation system.

We believe that, in order to reduce automobile-rail accidents at level crossings, the government should continue to ensure that railroad owners take more responsibility for ensuring consistency in level crossing markings and equipping rail cars with side reflectors.

I) ENVIRONMENT

47. Environmental Principles

In order to have a strong economy and maintain good health, Canada must have strong, coordinated and achievable environmental policies. The Conservative Party believes that responsible exploration, development, conservation and renewal of our environment are vital to our continued well-being as a nation and as individuals.

We believe that it is the responsibility of government to ensure that the sometimes competing values of preserving the environment and creating jobs are maintained in proper balance.

We believe that all environment and energy initiatives should be reviewed.

We believe that an effective international emissions reduction regime on climate change must be truly global and must include binding targets for all the world's major emitters, including China and the United States.

We believe that Canada should create a program to heighten public awareness to the economic benefits of environmental solutions which minimize the waste of resources.

We believe that Canada should establish a program of tax credits to promote environmental solutions in the areas of transportation and entrepreneurial innovation, among others.

We believe that the federal and territorial governments should make joint investments to study and address climate change adaptation in the North.

48. Clean Air and Greenhouse Gas Reductions

The Conservative Party supports the legislated emissions caps to fight smog-causing pollutants such as nitrogen oxide, sulphur dioxide, and volatile organic compounds, and supports the initiative to cut air pollution from industry in half by 2015.

We support the mandatory renewable fuel content in gasoline requirement and support more stringent automobile fuel efficiency standards.

49. Alternative Energy and Transitional Fuels

The Conservative Party believes the government should promote alternative energy (such as wind, solar, geothermal), transitional fuels (such as biodiesel, ethanol, natural gas), and the development of hydrogen as a fuel. The expense of assuring the security of traditional fuel sources and concerns over pollution makes the use of these energy sources necessary.

We believe the government should enhance tax incentives for energy efficient measures which lead to a cleaner environment.

We believe the government should work with the provinces and territories to promote the development of ecological recycling plants, using incinerators that capture waste gas and transform it into energy.

50. Contaminated Sites

The Conservative Party supports initiatives to provide stable long-term funding for the cleanup of contaminated sites in cooperation with the provinces, territories and municipalities.

We believe the government should continue to remove roadblocks that discourage the private sector from cleaning and developing contaminated land:

- i. amend the *Income Tax Act* to allow remediation expenses to be treated as a deductible expense;
- ii. introduce legislation to terminate regulatory liability upon issuance of regulatory approval of remediation to encourage development of brownfields, reversible only in emergency and in cases of fraud;
- iii. create an insurance fund for post liability insurance claims. This will permit the quantification and spreading of development risk through insurance, reinsurance and diversification of ownership; and
- iv. provide economic incentives to the private sector to clean up contaminated lands.

51. Offshore Resource Development

To capture economic, social and net environmental benefits, the Conservative Party believes the government should promote exploration and development of offshore resources along all our coastal waters. This should be carried out in cooperation with the provinces and territories, affected First Nations, private industry and other relevant business, scientific and environmental groups.

We believe that companies should follow best practices and the precautionary principle to mitigate environmental risk.

We believe government should allow for arms-length regulatory processes to ensure safe and environmentally responsible practices in the exploration for and development of these natural resources.

We believe government should consider the potential of these natural resources before designating new Marine Protected Areas.

We support ensuring that accurate and complete information on the risks and benefits of such developments is made available to the public.

52. Water - Great Lakes

The Conservative Party believes the government should:

- i. continue working with the United States and the provinces to address critical threats to the sustainability of our shared resource, the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River basin;
- ii. address the threats to our shared resource, including water levels, invasive species, pollution and other threats to the tourism industry and the living conditions and economic well-being of area residents;
- iii. provide adequate funding to fulfill its commitment to this region, which is home to 16 million Canadians and is a crucial source of clean air, drinking water, food, shelter, health, employment and recreation, as well as Canada's highest concentration of industry; and
- iv. establish long-term outcomes; translate them into real plans for the basin; apply a consistent basin-wide approach for issues that span the entire basin; clarify responsibilities of federal and provincial governments; and recognize constitutional authority of the provinces.

53. Illegal Oil Dumping

The Conservative Party believes in the following initiatives:

- i. expanded oil-dumping detection;
- ii. prohibitions to prevent ships from entering sensitive sea areas;
- iii. legislation requiring ship operators to account for their ships' waste; and
- iv. incentives to dump waste at our port facilities, not in our waters.

We support increased fines for illegal oil dumping, a practice that kills hundreds of thousands of sea birds every year along Canada's coastlines. Ship operators caught illegally dumping oil should face criminal charges and be prevented from plying Canadian waters.

54. Aquifer Mapping

The Conservative Party supports the development of a long-term plan in cooperation with the provinces and territories to create an inventory that could define significant and key aquifers and establish policy to protect the quality and sustainability of Canada's major aquifers. With the threat of groundwater resources becoming depleted in Canada we will face increasing need to understand the extent and replenishment of aquifers.

55. Aquatic Invasive Species

The Conservative Party believes the government should in cooperation with local, provincial and international governments make mandatory the existing voluntary guidelines for ballast water management practices and enforce compliance for all ships carrying ballast water.

We believe the government should ensure all ships plying Canadian waters built after a set date have proper ballast water treatment technology and implement economic incentives. This will see ship owners and operators rewarded for improved ballast water treatment practices. Such

measures will address the introduction and spread of aquatic alien invasive species that severely impair biological integrity and threaten the economies of water-dependent communities in Canada. They will also alleviate the costs for treatment, containment and control of these invasive species, which are massive and generally borne by local communities, rather than the industries that contribute to the problem.

J) HEALTH

56. Health Care

The Conservative Party believes all Canadians should have reasonable access to timely, quality health care services, regardless of their ability to pay.

The provinces and territories should have maximum flexibility to ensure the delivery of medically necessary health services within a universal, public health care system. We support adding a sixth principle to the *Canada Health Act* to provide stable and transparent federal funding. The government should work with the provinces in a co-operative and constructive manner.

Flexibility for the provinces and territories in the implementation of health services should include a balance of public and private delivery options.

The government should work with the provinces and territories in the development of national quality indicators and objectives.

The government should work with the provinces and territories and professional medical groups to increase the supply of health care professionals where shortages exist.

57. Medicare Audit

The Conservative Party supports the concept of a social audit, under the existing office of the Chief Actuary, to help Canadians and their governments determine how well their Medicare is working. The audit would include actuarial advice on program design and health care financing issues.

58. Wellness Promotion

The Conservative Party recognizes the importance of wellness promotion and disease prevention in enhancing the health of Canadians and contributing to the sustainability of our health care system.

59. Protecting At Risk Workers

The Conservative Party believes the government should work with the provinces and territories to get a nationwide agreement to amend labour codes to provide "at risk" workers such as prison guards, law enforcement officials, and health care workers, and their physician or other medical professionals, the right to know when they have been exposed to infectious diseases. This right should transcend the privacy rights of the infected individual, and should be analogous to workers' rights with respect to hazardous materials exposure.

60. Health Sciences Research, Development and Innovation

The Conservative Party recognizes the importance of health sciences research in enhancing the health of Canadians and as a dynamic economic sector in its own right.

We encourage all governments to foster an environment that encourages health sciences research and development of new health care technologies, which in part can be achieved through the provision of an adequate level of federal funding.

We believe the government should support projects which would reduce waiting lists, improve the quality of care, and ensure better co-ordination and information sharing in the delivery of health care.

A Conservative government should, in consultation with the provinces and territories, be open to the implementation of new advances so that all Canadians can benefit from a modern, effective, and sustainable health system tailored to meet their needs.

61. Pharmaceuticals

The Conservative Party believes that Canada's pharmaceuticals legislation must strike a balance between encouraging the development of new drugs and ensuring that those drugs are available to Canadians at affordable prices. We believe that part of this balance is achieved through adhering to the international standard of 20 years patent protection for pharmaceuticals.

We believe no one should lose their life savings because of unexpected health problems or as the result of the costs of prescription drugs.

We support faster processing of drug approvals without compromising patient safety.

62. Natural Health Products

The Conservative Party supports enhanced freedom for Canadians in their choice of natural health products and complementary treatments, with proper safeguards for public safety.

63. Assisted Human Reproduction and Related Research

The Conservative Party recognizes the need for federal regulation in assisted human reproduction and related research. This field should be governed by principles that respect human individuality, integrity, dignity and life. In recognition of the ethical and scientific concerns around research using human embryos, we support an initial three-year prohibition on embryonic research, and call on the federal government to encourage its granting agencies to focus on more promising adult (post-natal) stem cell research.

64. Abortion Legislation

A Conservative Government will not support any legislation to regulate abortion.

65. Euthanasia

The Conservative Party will not support any legislation to legalize euthanasia or assisted suicide.

K) SOCIAL POLICY

66. Social Principles

The Conservative Party is committed to a strong and effective health care program, well-funded post-secondary education and an effective safety net so that Canadians will be able to face the challenges of life. We believe the government should work with the provinces and territories to strengthen the social fabric of Canada to improve the quality of life for all Canadians but especially children, seniors and the disabled.

67. Post-Secondary Education

The Conservative Party believes in greater accessibility to education by eliminating as many barriers to post-secondary education as possible. The transfer should be distributed to provinces and territories on the basis of the numbers of enrolled students. We believe strongly that provincial jurisdiction must be respected. However, the federal government must play a role in addressing tuition and standards.

We support removing post-secondary education funding from the Canada Social Transfer and creating an independent Canada Education Transfer. The Transfer should be funded at a base level and increased annually according to inflation and demographic growth. It should be negotiated with the provinces and territories to ensure the funding is targeted to post-secondary education.

We believe the government must ensure that scholarships and bursaries, which were made tax-free in the 2006 budget, are not taxed in the future.

The Conservative Party recognizes the investment of Canadian students and will make an additional eight months of interest relief available on Canada student loans to allow students to better adapt to evolving market conditions.

68. Student Loans

The Conservative Party believes that post-secondary education is to be available to Canadians through a Student Loan program that provides funds to those in need. This program is to be student focused and is to promote ease of access for all students.

The Conservative Party supports eliminating the inclusion of parental income and assets in the assessment of loan applications and supports a loan availability model based on personal resources.

We support providing greater flexibility to students paying back federal student loans by implementing Income Contingent Loans and providing a preferred interest rate on student loans post-graduation.

69. Employment Insurance

The Conservative Party supports the establishment of an independent employment insurance system, with a self-accounting fund administered by employees and employers, the surplus of which being used to increase workers' benefits or reduce contributions.

70. Family and Marriage

The Conservative Party believes that the family unit is essential to the well-being of individuals and society, because that is where children learn values and develop a sense of responsibility. Therefore government legislation and programs should support and respect the role of the Canadian family.

We believe in the right and duty of parents to raise their own children responsibly according to their own conscience and beliefs. We believe no person, government or agency has the right to interfere in the exercise of that duty except through due process of law.

We believe that Parliament, through a free vote, and not the courts should determine the definition of marriage.

We support legislation defining marriage as the union of one man and one woman.

We support the freedom of religious organizations to refuse to perform unions or allow the use of their facilities for events that are incompatible with their faith and beliefs.

71. Shared Parenting

The Conservative Party believes that in the event of a marital breakdown, the *Divorce Act* should grant joint custody and/or shared parenting, unless it is clearly demonstrated not to be in the best interests of the child. Both parents and all grandparents should be allowed to maintain a meaningful relationship with their children and grandchildren, unless it is demonstrated not to be in the best interest of the child.

72. Child Care

The Conservative Party recognizes that parents are in the best position to determine the care needs of their children, and that they should be able to do so in an environment that encourages as many options as possible, and in a manner that does not discriminate against parents who opt to raise their children in the family, social, linguistic, and religious environment that they judge to be best for their own families.

We believe that support should go to all parents and families raising children, especially to lower and middle income parents. We strongly support the Universal Child Care Benefit.

73. Women

The Conservative Party supports the full participation of women in the social, economic, and cultural life of Canada.

The Canadian workforce has evolved to include more women than ever. We believe all Canadians have the right to freedom from discrimination in the workplace and equality of opportunity.

Individuals should be only judged on skills, qualifications and merits. Women must be entitled to equal pay for equal work.

We recognize the value of the caregiver. We will examine measures within the tax system to help offset economic costs without discrimination.

We condemn discrimination against girls through gender selection

74. Seniors

The Conservative Party recognizes that those over the age of 65 are becoming a dominant segment of our population. We also recognize that in ten years, the baby boomers will have reached retirement age, representing a significant portion of the population. We are committed to ensuring that seniors continue to have quality of life, accessible health care and the ability to stay in their homes longer.

Four million Canadians are now over the age of 65, a number that is growing rapidly as Canadians are living longer. Many Canadians wish to continue working but are penalized by the loss of retirement benefits. We oppose the discriminatory practice of mandatory retirement and believe Canadians should be given the choice of retiring or continuing to work without the loss of federal retirement benefits.

We believe that those over the age of 65 should only pay Employment Insurance premiums if they qualify to receive Employment Insurance benefits.

Policies must be developed in order to enable a greater number of Canadian seniors in need of care to remain in their own homes, rather than in more expensive institutional accommodations where their independence suffers and costs are higher to the taxpayer. We support tax incentives for non-professional caregivers to look after the elderly or disabled in the home.

We favour tough measures to prevent elder abuse, and more severe punishment for those who commit this crime.

We believe the government should work with provincial counterparts to identify seniors entitled to either federal or provincial benefits. We believe the government should review the retroactivity policy of entitlement to federal benefits.

75. Retirement Savings

The Conservative Party values retirement security as a vital element of independence. We confirm our commitment to the Canada Pension Plan (CPP) and Old Age Security.

We favour economic and fiscal policies that will ensure government retirement programs are affordable and sustainable over the long run, protecting the sanctity of the CPP investment fund so that it will not be available to be raided as a vehicle to balance the budget or for any other political purpose.

We emphasize the importance of ensuring the CPP Investment Fund is mandated to seek maximum security and to maximize the rate of return being earned on behalf of Canada's pensioners. No other policy objective should be permitted to interfere with the objectives of security and maximum rate of return.

We believe the Tax Free Savings Account must be preserved and enhanced.

We believe that the significant increase in the Guaranteed Income Supplement exemption must be maintained.

76. Housing and Homelessness

The Conservative Party believes that all Canadians should have a reasonable opportunity to own their own home and to have access to safe and affordable housing.

We support a broad-based tax relief, income support programs and tax incentives to make home ownership and rental accommodation more attainable and accessible.

We believe that all governments should address homelessness by assisting in the provision of shelters and by recognizing, addressing and seeking solutions to contributing factors of homelessness.

We believe the government should partner and link with the respective jurisdictions of provincial, territorial and municipal governments, business initiatives and the work of social agencies and non-profit organizations, in dealing with housing, homelessness, social infrastructure and related support services, such as skills development, literacy, substance abuse treatment, health and social development.

We believe the government should work with the provinces and municipalities to develop framework agreements that help low-income city dwellers access affordable housing, through the use of tax incentives for private sector builders. We recognize that most renters live in urban centres, and that the pressures of population growth as well as certain economic factors have made it increasingly difficult for many renters to find housing.

77. National Disability Act

The Conservative Party supports a National Disability Act designed to promote reasonable access to medical care, medical equipment, education, employment, transportation and housing for Canadians with disabilities.

78. Harassing Telephone Calls

That the harassing telephone calls Section 372 (3) of the Criminal Code be amended to include digital communications (e.g. text messages).

79. Faith Based Organizations

The Conservative Party supports the right of faith based organizations to refuse the use of their facilities to individuals or groups holding views which are contrary to the beliefs or standards of the faith based organization without fear of sanctions or harassment and that discrimination based on the beliefs of a faith based organization be excluded from the definition of disallowed discrimination under Human Rights.

L) ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

80. Aboriginal Affairs Principles

A fundamental obligation of the federal government is to improve the living conditions of Aboriginal Canadians, including the Inuit, in terms of economic opportunity, health, education, and community safety.

The Conservative Party believes the following principles should govern the administration of existing federal Aboriginal programs:

- i. the need for a legislated framework for federal aboriginal expenditures;
- ii. self government – legal and democratic authority;
- iii. transparency;
- iv. respecting the Canadian constitutional framework;
- v. a framework for the settlement of comprehensive claims and self government agreements;
- vi. the resolution of existing specific claims and lawsuits against the federal Crown; and
- vii. economic sustainability.

We support provisions for property ownership and women's equality on reserves.

These principles should also govern future legislative reform to the *Indian Act* and related legislation. They should also form the basis for government decision making in the resolution of rights disputes – whether based upon existing treaties, court decisions or section 35 of the *Constitution Act*.

81. Legislated Framework for Federal Aboriginal Expenditures

The Parliament of Canada must develop legislation which governs the delivery of federal governmental programs to Aboriginal Canadians. Both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians deserve to know the legislative basis upon which the Government of Canada is expending funds on Aboriginal health, education, social welfare and infrastructure. Legislation should be developed which governs such programs and which prescribes the standards of service which the federal government has undertaken to provide to aboriginal Canadians.

82. The Legal and Democratic Authority for Aboriginal Self Government

The *Indian Act* (and related legislation) should be replaced by a modern legislative framework which provides for the devolution of full legal and democratic responsibility to First Nations, including the Inuit, for their own affairs within the overall constitutional framework of our federal state. Such legislative reform should be pursued following full consultation with First Nations, with the objective of achieving a full and complete devolution of democratic authority that is consistent with the devolution of other decision making responsibility within our federal

system. First Nations like other Canadians, are entitled to enjoy democratic control over their own affairs within a legislative context that ensures certainty, stability, respect for the rule of law and which balances collective and individual responsibility.

First Nation communities must have the flexibility to determine for themselves, whether and how free market principles (such as individual property ownership) should apply to reserve lands. Self-government should be accomplished in a manner which takes into account the cultural and linguistic diversity of Canada's First Nations. Within the context of the Canadian Constitution, we should be prepared to make flexible accommodations for the protection of language and culture within self-government agreements.

We believe the government should not negotiate land claims where the rule of law is not respected.

83. Transparency in Aboriginal Affairs

Both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians are entitled to complete transparency and accountability in the expenditure of all public funds on aboriginal programs, services and inter-governmental transfers. Aboriginals, like other Canadians, must have ready access to police and judicial intervention to constrain and check any exercise of governmental authority (whether aboriginal or non-aboriginal) which is illegal, corrupt or an abuse of power.

The Auditor General should be empowered to review the spending of Aboriginal governments and Aboriginal organizations which receive public funds.

84. Respecting the Canadian Constitutional Framework

We are a nation governed by the *Constitution Act*, under which the rights of all citizens are protected and advanced by the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. Our future together as a country must be built upon the universal application of that framework.

All Aboriginal rights recognized under section 35 of the *Constitution Act* must be conferred within the four square corners of the *Constitution Act* and the *Charter*, with full protection for equality rights, such as women's rights, for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians. Future Aboriginal legislation, policies and programs must balance the collective rights of Aboriginal Canadians under section 35 of the *Constitution Act* with the individual equality rights enshrined in the *Charter* – which protect all Canadians – whether Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal. Aboriginal Canadians are entitled to the full benefits of Canadian citizenship and the full protection of the *Charter* - in areas such as economic opportunity, the delivery of health services, community safety, women's rights, respect for the rule of law, and the education and protection of children. Canada must develop in a manner that ensures constitutional equality and workability.

85. A Framework for the Settlement of Comprehensive Claims and Self Government Agreements

Settlement of all outstanding “comprehensive claims” must be pursued on the basis of a clear framework which balances the rights of Aboriginal claimants with those of Canada. In particular, negotiated settlements must balance the economic and social needs of Aboriginal Canadians with Canada’s need for certainty and finality of terms. Self-government agreements must reflect Canada’s need for both efficacy and practicality in institutional structure, and “constitutional harmony” so as not to impede the overall governance of Canada.

86. The Resolution of Existing Specific Claims and Lawsuits against the Federal Crown

The federal government should, as a priority, adopt measures to resolve the existing backlog of “specific” claims so as to provide justice for Aboriginal claimants, together with certainty for government, industry and non-Aboriginal Canadians. Institutional reform in the specific claim area should be pursued in a manner which resolves claims in a timely manner. The jurisdiction of the Federal Court should be expanded and the arbitrary ambit of the Indian and Northern Affairs Canada Minister and the Specific Claims Policy contracted to eliminate the inherent conflict of interest of the Federal Crown in the resolution of ‘specific claims’.

87. Measuring Outcomes in Aboriginal Affairs.

The federal government, in consultation with the provinces, territories and aboriginal leaders, should direct an independent audit of all social service providers to aboriginal communities to determine what, if any, measures of effectiveness are employed and whether the programs provided result in desired outcomes.

The federal government should work with the provinces, territories and aboriginal leaders to establish a three-party coordinating body tasked with developing a strategy for coordination of all programs and services provided to aboriginal communities.

The Auditor General of Canada and the Auditors General of the provinces should include an evaluation of actual outcomes as well as financial accountability in their audit reports on aboriginal services.

88. First Nations Land Title

The Conservative Party supports the development of a property regime that would encourage lending for private housing and businesses. This will promote economic opportunity and individual freedom.

We support the development, in conjunction with First Nations, of a First Nations Land Ownership Act, which would transfer Reserve land title from the Federal Crown to willing First Nations.

89. First Nations Matrimonial Property

The Conservative Party supports, in conjunction with First Nations, the creation of a matrimonial property code to protect spouses and children in cases of marriage breakdown.

90. First Nations Educational Choice

The Conservative Party proposes, where available and agreed to by all parties, including provincial authorities, to offer choice in schooling for First Nations.

M) CRIMINAL JUSTICE

91. Justice Principles

The Conservative Party supports reorienting the approach to criminal justice and the policing system to give the highest priority to the protection of society through the prevention of crime. Additionally, we support emphasizing the needs and rights of victims.

We support our Canadian justice system as defined by our Charter and Constitution and does not support a parallel justice system which would contravene our existing rights and freedoms.

We believe that those convicted of more than one serious crime should serve their sentences consecutively rather than concurrently.

92. Dangerous Offenders

The Conservative Party believes the government has an obligation to strengthen Canadians' confidence in our legal system's ability to judge dangerous offenders appropriately so that dangerous offenders will not be released until they are no longer a threat to society.

Anyone convicted of two offences causing death or serious harm against a person, arising from separate occurrences, should be automatically designated as a dangerous offender and should bear the onus of proving that they are not a danger to society. This would not preclude the Crown from pursuing dangerous offender status for any other offender deemed to fit the criteria.

We believe that the government should seek Dangerous Offender Status (and mandatory life sentences) for any person convicted of a second serious violent offence, criminal organization offence, terrorism offence or serious drug trafficking offence.

93. Sex Offender Registry

The Conservative Party supports the registration of all convicted sex and designated dangerous offenders. Such registration should be retroactive to the date of first conviction.

The registry and its services should provide:

- i. mandatory DNA sampling and banking;
- ii. a registry information network, available to all police and parole services to assist in locating (and tracking) registrants; and
- iii. a system to incarcerate registrants who break the terms of release prior to trial.

94. Protecting Pregnant Women

The Conservative Party supports legislation to ensure that individuals who commit violence against a pregnant woman would face additional charges if her unborn child was killed or injured during the commission of a crime against the mother.

95. Sentencing

The Conservative Party supports:

- i. mandatory minimum sentences for violent and repeat offenders and for those convicted of sexually assaulting a minor;
- ii. requiring that sentences for multiple convictions be served consecutively;
- iii. eliminating statutory (automatic) release;
- iv. ensuring that the community and victims have input on National Parole Board decisions;
- v. requiring applicants for parole to demonstrate to the National Parole Board that they have been rehabilitated;
- vi. no longer requiring judges to treat imprisonment as a last resort; and
- vii. repealing the "Faint Hope Clause", thus removing the possibility of parole before 25 years for those sentenced to life in prison.

96. Firearms

A Conservative Government is committed to cost-effective gun control programs designed to keep guns out of the hands of criminals while respecting the rights of law-abiding Canadians to own and use firearms responsibly.

Measures will include: mandatory minimum sentences for the criminal use of firearms; strict monitoring of high-risk individuals; increased enforcement and prosecution of smuggling; safe storage provisions; firearms safety training; a certification screening system for all those wishing to acquire firearms legally; and putting more law enforcement officers on our streets.

We recognize the legitimacy of private ownership of firearms and will resist any domestic or international pressure to the contrary.

97. Organized Crime

The Conservative Party recognizes that organized crime is growing throughout Canada, that international criminal organizations are more and more active in Canada in money laundering and illicit drug trafficking and that this phenomenon crosses boundaries.

To fight against this curse and ensure the safety of Canadians in their communities, we encourage the government to:

- i. adopt, in collaboration with the provinces, a national strategy on the fight against organized crime, including the creation of a joint national task force on security;
- ii. increase the financial resources allocated to the RCMP to help them to fight against those activities in all regions of the country;
- iii. propose an amendment to the Criminal Code to reverse the burden of proof, so that members of a criminal organization (and not the Crown) will have to prove at the time of seizure that the goods were not acquired through criminal acts committed for organized

crime. Specific criteria will govern this measure to respect the principle of the presumption of innocence of the accused; and

- iv. strengthen the legislation to prosecute any person who knowingly engages in counterfeit activities by manufacturing, reproducing, and distributing, importing, or selling counterfeit goods.

We believe the government, in collaboration with the provinces and territories, should develop prevention strategies in the fight against street gangs.

98. Young Offenders

The Conservative Party supports introducing measures to hold young lawbreakers accountable to their victims and the larger community. We believe the government should introduce measures to ensure that violent or serious repeat offenders 14 and over are tried as adults.

We encourage the government to work with the provinces and territories to ensure that the early identification and intervention strategies for youth at risk continue to work. The justice system for young people will provide effective punishment that deters criminal behaviour and instils a sense of responsibility in young offenders for their behaviour; and gives young people better opportunities for rehabilitation.

99. Family Violence

The Conservative Party believes the consequences of family violence are harmful to all of society. We support sentences for crimes of family violence that reflect our belief in the serious nature of violent criminal activity, its effect on individuals, on families and on communities. The protection of children in family violence situations is paramount.

100. Child Protection

The Conservative Party supports the protection of children through the elimination of all defences that are used to justify the possession of child pornography.

We will oppose any effort to lower the age of protection below 16 years of age.

We believe that government should fight the cyber-stalking of children by allocating more resources for Internet monitoring, by increasing the penalty for cyber-stalkers, and by taking measures to raise awareness among all Canadians (particularly young Canadians) about the importance of protecting your privacy online.

101. Missing Persons Registry

The Conservative Party supports the creation of a national missing persons registry to assist in the location and identification of persons reported missing. The registry would operate in conjunction with the Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC) and DNA databanks currently

in place.

We support streamlining and improving the existing computer systems, including DNA databanks, CPIC and the sex offender registry.

We believe the government should fight human trafficking by providing the RCMP with the personnel and resources needed to effectively combat this problem, and by instituting tougher sentences for all those involved in this form of human exploitation.

102. Sexual Exploitation in Canada

The Conservative Party rejects the concept of legalizing the purchase of sex.

We declare that human beings are not objects to be enslaved, bought or sold.

We shall develop a Canada specific plan to target the purchasers of sex and human trafficking markets through criminalizing the purchase of sex as well as the acts of any third party attempting to profit from the purchase of sex.

103. Charter of Victim's Rights

The Conservative Party shall undertake to:

- i. promote the adoption of a Charter of Rights for victims of criminals acts, reuniting the whole of the current rights of victims contained within the federal legislative corpus ;
- ii. add new rights to such a Charter ; and
- iii. make this Charter legislation-based, notably, on the rights of victims to restitution, access to information, and representation and safety.

N) COMMUNICATIONS

104. Canadian Broadcasting System

The Conservative Party believes in a stable Canadian presence in a varied and vibrant broadcasting system. The Canadian Broadcasting System (CBC) should offer a wide range of Canadian and international programming, while being respectful of Canadian content. The system should provide audiences with maximum choice and have the ability to utilize new technologies to achieve its public and private objectives.

The CBC-SRC is an important part of the broadcasting system in Canada. It must be a true public service broadcaster, relevant to Canadians. We will focus the CBC-SRC services on its mandates as public broadcasting services.

We recognize the vital role played by the private broadcasters of Canada through their local and regional programming that reflects the language and multicultural realities of our country. Private sector broadcasters and service-providers first and foremost are businesses and must be able to compete in an ever-increasing fragmented and global market. We recognize the need for both regulatory flexibility and predictability.

Broadcasting policy in Canada must be relevant in today's communications environment and responsive to the demands of Canadians. We believe the government should review and update the *Broadcasting Act* to ensure its relevance in today's technological environment. We believe the government should establish clear, national policy directions and a framework that will maximize the freedom of choice and ensure that freedom of speech is respected. The CRTC's role in content regulation should be reduced to eliminate duplication where other legislation exists.

We believe that control and operations of the CBC could be best accomplished through establishing distinct budgets for the operations of the TV and radio broadcast functions.

105. Canadian Production Industry

The Conservative Party recognizes that the creative community gives expression in the film and electronic media to Canada's identity and peoples. The production industry must be strengthened to participate in a global marketplace and become a self-sustaining, thriving industry with a skilled workforce.

106. Internet Connectivity

The Conservative Party recognizes the vital importance of internet connectivity to full Canadian participation in global economic, social, and cultural communities. The government should create an environment that encourages private sector investment to increase broadband infrastructure, especially in rural and remote areas of Canada.

O) CELEBRATING CANADA'S DIVERSITY

107. Diversity Principles

The Conservative Party believes that Canada's multicultural society is a valued reality and accepts the need to foster understanding and equality of opportunity, while expecting Canadians to adopt Canadian common values such as equality, democracy, and the rule of law.

108. Multiculturalism

The Conservative Party recognizes the rich, diverse make-up of the Canadian population and the contribution of these communities to our history and the Canadian way of life. The government should ensure that each community is able to enhance and contribute to Canada without discrimination and barriers.

109. Official Languages

The Conservative Party believes that Canada's official languages constitute unique and significant social and economic advantages that benefit all Canadians. We recognize and support the important contributions of official language minority communities to Canada.

We support the *Official Languages Act* ensuring that English and French have equality of status and equal rights and privileges as to their use in all institutions of the Parliament and Government of Canada.

We encourage the government to continue working with the provinces and territories to enhance opportunities for Canadians to learn and use both official languages.

P) CANADIAN HERITAGE AND CULTURE

110. Heritage Principles

The Conservative Party affirms the federal government's role in the preservation of Canada's natural and historical heritage (such as national parks, museums and historic sites) for the benefit and enjoyment of all and as an enduring reminder to all Canadians of our common inheritance.

111. Arts and Culture

The Conservative Party supports arts, culture and the diverse heritage of Canada. Recognition that language is an integral part of one's culture and heritage should form the basis for decision-making relating to its cultural and artistic community. We encourage the government to recognize the diverse cultural nature of Canada and its shared history, and to take these into account when working to strengthen opportunities and accessibility in both the domestic and international markets for our creative works.

We believe that government support should be linked to accountability, transparency and sustainability. We believe that ongoing scrutiny is necessary to ensure programs and policies effectively meet their objectives, to ensure they are based on merit, and to remove political involvement from the process. Arts, culture and heritage make a substantial contribution to Canadian society and have a positive impact on the lives of many Canadians.

We support measures, including those implemented through the tax system, which encourage charitable giving by individuals and corporations to the arts and cultural community.

112. Amateur Sport

The Conservative Party recognizes the value of promoting amateur sport as a means of building legacy and heritage in local communities, and as a means of serving future generations of athletes. We believe in supporting and increasing participation in local and top-tier international sporting events. An investment in amateur sport is an investment in future Canadian leaders and in building Canadian representation around the world.

Q) RURAL CANADA

113. Rural Principles

Rural Canada plays an essential role in Canada's economic and social fabric, contributing approximately 15% of Canada's GDP and 40% of our exports. The Conservative Party believes that agriculture, agri-food, fisheries, mining, tourism, and forestry - the sectors that sustain Canada's rural communities - must be a priority for the federal government.

R) AGRICULTURE

114. Agriculture Principles

The Conservative Party views the agriculture industry to be a key strategic economic sector of Canada. We recognize that various regions of Canada and sectors of the industry hold competitive advantages in agricultural production. National agriculture policy development and ongoing support will continue to reflect our belief that one size does not fit all. Agriculture policy must be developed only in consultation with the agricultural producers. Our farmers today are business operators, and to dictate policy which might have an adverse effect on this business community would have negative consequences and go against Conservative Party principles. Balancing financial responsibility with support programs that actually work is a major priority of this party.

Food. Food is one of the basic necessities of life, and we believe the government should place high priority on assuring that Canada's food supply is safe, secure, and sustainable. We should seek to be among the world's best when it comes to the safety of our food supply. We encourage measures to ensure accurate labelling of ingredients and country(ies) of origin, and more rigorous safety testing of imported food products.

Export and Diversification. To ensure that Canada has a secure supply of food, we support self-sufficiency in national food production, including increased diversification in the types of foods and agricultural products produced. We encourage government to seek to enhance export opportunities for all agricultural products with special emphasis on markets for processed and finished commodities. Through diversifying, the value added process and manufacturing will create new jobs within the respective communities and Canada.

Sustainability. If we are to ensure that Canada's food supply is assured in the long-term, agricultural production must be both economically and environmentally sustainable. We believe that responsible land use and receiving a fair return for growing food go hand in hand. To mitigate against unforeseen adversity, we will continue putting into the hands of the individual producer the innovative economic tools, such as stabilization accounts, to allow them to respond to changing market conditions and to manage the risks of weather and disease.

Rural Economy. As the agricultural base of the rural economy has declined, so too has infrastructure in small communities. To preserve the social fabric of rural Canada, we encourage the government to foster diversity and responsible development in small towns and villages by encouraging innovation in the development of small businesses that keep these communities alive.

115. Agricultural Trade Agreements

The Conservative Party encourages the government to continue to seek out bilateral and multilateral trade agreements that will improve market access for Canadian agricultural products and reduce foreign subsidies that distort trade and production.

116. Canadian Wheat Board

A Conservative Government will give farmers the freedom to make their own individual marketing and transportation decisions and to direct, structure, and to voluntarily participate in producer organizations.

117. Supply Management

The Conservative Party believes it is in the best interest of Canada and Canadian agriculture that the industries under the protection of supply management remain viable. A Conservative Government will support supply management and its goal to deliver a high quality product to consumers for a fair price with a reasonable return to the producer.

S) FISHERIES

118. Fisheries

The Conservative Party encourages the government to work cooperatively with the provinces and territories in all regions of the country to put emphasis on protecting and enhancing all stocks. This must be done in order to meet the needs of Canadians rather than reducing the harvesting and processing efforts to fit declining and mismanaged fisheries.

We encourage the government to take a leadership role in international dealings with other fishing countries in order to assure cooperative management of common stocks and end fishing abuses, including foreign overfishing. We encourage the government to maintain its commitment to take custodial management of the stocks on the Nose and Tail of the Grand Banks and the Flemish Cap. We recognize that fish are renewable resources that can be rebuilt and sustained through a proper investment in science and management.

We believe in investing significantly in our scientific knowledge base and in making firm and fair decisions based on facts, with a regulatory and enforcement regime that has the ability to carry out the necessary function. Responsibility must come from participating regions where more decision making must be located so that wild stocks, as well as aquaculture, can be managed appropriately.

We encourage the government to work with any interested province or territory, to increase and streamline mechanisms for provincial management of fisheries.

We believe the government must continue to support the Canadian sealing industry by working to eliminate unfair international trade bans on Canadian seal products.

119. Oceans and Coastlines

The Conservative Party believes that the oceans surrounding Canada on three sides are internationally recognized, Federal jurisdictions with rights and responsibilities in accordance with international treaties and laws. We support:

- i. the Canadian government claim to sovereign rights: in the Internal Waters, in the Territorial Sea, in the Contiguous Zone, in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and in, on, or above the Continental Shelf of Canada;
- ii. the sovereign right to:
 - a) control the Northwest Passage and the Canadian Inside Passages off the BC coast as internal waters of Canada;
 - b) explore, exploit, conserve, and manage living and nonliving resources of water column in the EEZ;
 - c) explore, exploit, conserve, and manage non-living resources of the seabed and subsoil of the continental shelf, (E.g. minerals such as ferromanganese crusts, ferromanganese nodules, gas hydrate deposits, and petroleum); and

- d) economic activities, such as the production of energy from the water, currents and winds; to construct and establish artificial islands and installations;
- iii. the rights and responsibility to:
 - a) conduct marine research as well as the right to suspend or cessation of marine scientific research activities within its jurisdiction; and
 - b) regulate marine traffic, enforce safety standards, minimize environmental impact and ensure that foreign vessel traffic is for legal and peaceful purposes only.

120. Marine Transportation

The Conservative Party supports the retention of lightstations, their personnel, and their aids to navigation. Lightstations are an important contribution to Canadian sovereignty, provide for public safety especially for recreational boaters and kayakers, are an essential presence to monitoring sea-planes and marine traffic, and assist in the interdiction of smuggling.

We also recognize the historical value of the lightstations and promote the concept that they are well situated infrastructure and personnel which can be utilized for scientific data collection and for other uses.

We support a strategic plan to address proper docking facilities for all coastal communities across the Far North.

We believe the government has an obligation to:

- i. enforce the relevant laws and regulations with respect to pollution by dumping;
- ii. adopt special discharge and navigational requirements for designated areas and to prosecute foreign vessels where an actual pollution discharge has occurred;
- iii. provide vessels passing through its EEZ with adequate charting and maritime safety information;
- iv. provide Search and Rescue capabilities which are comparable to international standards of other developed countries; and
- v. establish and enforce safety standards for local and foreign vessels which operate in Canadian Waters for the well-being of workers as well as the environment.

121. Freshwater Fish Marketing Act

The Conservative Party believes that the Freshwater Fish Marketing Act should be repealed and a voluntary dual market be instituted.

We believe that fishermen currently under the monopoly of Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation should be given the freedom to make their own individual marketing decisions and to direct, structure, and voluntarily participate in producer organizations.

122. Marine Scientific Research

We believe the government has an obligation to:

- i. promote international cooperation in marine scientific research for peaceful purposes; and
- ii. create favourable conditions to study the processes occurring in the marine environment through bilateral and multilateral agreements.

We believe that government should promote opportunities in Ocean Technologies (or Blue Technologies) by identifying and reducing barriers to ocean technologies development, and by encouraging collaboration between industry and educational institutions for innovation.

We believe that government is responsible to regulate activities on the ocean to minimize environmental impact on the marine environment.

T) IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEES

123. Immigration Principles

The Conservative Party supports a non-partisan, welcoming and well-managed immigration system for Canada based on:

- i. a fair, transparent and efficient process that earns the respect and confidence of Canadians as well as of the international community;
- ii. compassionate measures to assist in family reunification;
- iii. ensuring that Canada is successful in encouraging skilled immigrants and their spouses and children to make Canada their destination of choice;
- iv. a clear, workable and efficient process for immigrants to obtain equivalency for their international skills, training and experience;
- v. addressing the need for adequate long-term funding for settlement services providers; and
- vi. upholding Canada's humanitarian tradition of providing safe haven for refugees.

124. Settlement Support

The Conservative Party wants to ensure that immigrants have the best possible opportunity to contribute to Canada's economic and social well-being. Support from settlement organizations and the broader community plays an important role. The Conservative Party believes in:

- i. working cooperatively with the provinces and municipalities on policy relating to settlement support for immigrants;
- ii. addressing the need for adequate and equitable resources to provide language instruction (in order to allow immigrants to achieve functional capability in one of the two official languages), encourage adaptation to Canadian values and traditions and community mentoring, build job search skills and offer other settlement services to meet the needs of immigrants, including children;
- iii. working to streamline the funding process to deliver enhanced funding stability and allow long-term planning by service providers; and
- iv. examining the feasibility of having federal funds for settlement services follow the movement of newcomers from one region to another.

125. Immigration by Temporary Workers

The Conservative Party recognizes that temporary workers can be a valuable source of potential immigrants because of their work experience in Canada. We believe the government should:

- i. continue development of pilot projects designed to address serious skills shortages in specific sectors and regions of the country, and that attract temporary workers to Canada;
- ii. examine ways to facilitate the transition of foreign workers from temporary to permanent status; and
- iii. work to ensure that temporary workers, especially seasonal workers, receive the same protections under minimum employment standards as those afforded Canadian workers.

126. Entry Applications, Permits and Landing Fees

The Conservative Party endorses changes made to the applications process which minimize stress and uncertainty for applicants and their families while reducing the backlog and meeting the economic needs of Canada. We also endorse the lowering of landing fees for new immigrants.

We believe the government should:

- i. ensure that Citizenship and Immigration Canada is properly staffed, trained and resourced to improve the processing of people wanting to come to Canada;
- ii. reorganize the applications process so that applicants are given accurate information about what to expect, are readily able to obtain information on the status of their files, and are given service in a considerate and professional manner;
- iii. reverse the Liberal policy of separating married couples while the application of the non-status partner is being processed;
- iv. extend automatic Canadian citizenship to children adopted from abroad by Canadian parents once the adoption is final;
- v. provide options such as the posting of a bond to allow higher acceptance rates for family and other special visits while protecting the integrity of the system from queue jumping;
- vi. reduce the need for Temporary Resident Permits (TRPs) issued by the Minister by making the applications process more fair and efficient, and make the use of TRPs by the Minister both transparent and accountable through a process of independent review; and
- vii. refrain from using the term 'resident' or 'residence' in temporary, student and visitor visas to ensure greater certainty for those temporarily visiting Canada.

127. Recognition of International Credentials

The Conservative Party believes in providing new immigrants and Canadians with foreign qualifications with the best possible opportunity to use their education and experience here in Canada. We see this as a matter of fairness to them and their families and a means of ensuring that Canada receives the full benefit of foreign qualifications.

We support working with the provinces to develop, in consultation with Canadian professional and trade associations, a process to evaluate standards in countries of origin in order to establish a workable system for assessing and recognizing credentials and experience;

We support working with the provinces to:

- i. ensure that equivalency exams are fair and that they accurately reflect the level of understanding expected of individuals educated in Canada;
- ii. to develop, in consultation with Canadian professional and trade associations, criteria for obtaining equivalent Canadian professional status, transition and bridging programs for integration of foreign qualified individuals into the Canadian workplace; and
- iii. work with recognized professional bodies to prequalify internationally trained individuals for certain occupations as part of the immigration process.

We support requiring the credentials process to be disclosed to applicants by immigration staff overseas and on the Citizenship and Immigration Working in Canada website.

We support encouraging international students graduating from accredited Canadian colleges and universities to remain and work in Canada.

We support developing a better system to identify Canada's occupations facing current labour market shortages and make the immigration system more flexible to ensure these needs can be met.

128. Refugee Determination

The Conservative Party is proud of Canada's humanitarian tradition of providing safe haven to those who have had to flee their homeland, and we welcome refugees to Canada. We believe the government should promote the integrity and fairness of our refugee determination system, and should ensure that decisions are made expeditiously and with respect for due process. We believe the current appeals process is flawed and moves far too slowly.

We believe in:

- i. streamlining the process of validating refugee claims;
- ii. where the Immigration and Refugee Board finds claimants do not qualify as genuine refugees, ensuring such individuals are escorted from Canada in a timely manner and provided with the information they need to start the proper process of applying for an immigration permit from abroad;
- iii. giving greater priority to refugees identified pursuant to the United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees;
- iv. implementing a fully merit-based process for Immigration and Refugee Board appointments; and
- v. developing a refugee appeals process that is fair and timely.

U) FOREIGN AFFAIRS

129. Human Smuggling

The Conservative Party believes in:

- i. adopting a proactive approach to reducing human smuggling abroad, through sanctions and legal interruptions of human smuggling intended for Canada; and
- ii. promoting democratic and responsible government in the areas of the world from which the refugees originate.

130. Foreign Affairs Principles

The Conservative Party supports a foreign policy that protects Canada's sovereignty and independence, promotes our national interests (political, economic and strategic), contributes to collective security and defence, promotes democratic principles and human rights, and assists in international development.

We believe the government should recognize the importance of an ethical dimension in foreign policy and will advance the values broadly supported by Canadians.

We believe that Canada's international relations, trade and foreign aid policies should advance the country's economic interests while promoting human rights and individual freedom.

We believe the government should integrate our foreign policy with policies on trade and national defence.

We believe the government should take strong action to combat human trafficking and should take a lead in developing international agreements and protocols against human trafficking.

131. Foreign Aid – Official Development Assistance

The Conservative Party believes in the inherent benefits of development assistance to Canadians and the world. Development assistance must be anchored by expression of Canadian values and pursued within the context of Canada's strategic interests as defined by an integrated foreign policy.

We are committed to strengthening Canada's record in foreign aid. It supports the introduction of legislation that will empower Parliament to define a legal framework for Canada's Official Development Assistance (ODA) envelope of spending. This legislation will include a clear mandate for development assistance; mechanisms for policy coherence, monitoring, accountability and reporting to Parliament; and enhanced public transparency.

We support increasing the effectiveness of humanitarian aid efforts by the Canadian government. In order to accomplish this, it encourages the establishment of clear criteria for recipient countries.

We believe the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) should be authorized to monitor and report on the expenditure and implementation of all official development assistance dollars to ensure it meets the objectives of poverty reduction, respect for human rights and good governance. CIDA should be responsible for publishing an annual report to the public to maintain public support for increases in ODA, enhance transparency, and increase accountability.

We support measures to ensure that the ODA envelope of spending will increase in a steady and predictable manner, and in particular the framework for increasing Canada's contribution to the developing world, under which development assistance will be doubled by 2012.

We believe that CIDA must advise Canadian industry when and where it is committing aid dollars. This will ensure that Canadian businesses have the opportunity to bid on the tenders.

132. Parliamentary Role in Foreign Affairs

The Conservative Party believes that Parliament must be responsible for exercising effective oversight over the conduct of Canadian foreign policy and the commitment of Canadian Forces to foreign operations.

133. International Treaties

The Conservative Party supports the practice of ensuring that Parliament is fully informed and consulted before binding action is taken with regard to any major new international treaty. The provinces should also be fully consulted if such treaties have a direct effect on the authority and finances of provinces in their areas of responsibility.

V) NATIONAL DEFENCE AND SECURITY

134. Canada First Defence Strategy

The Conservative Party believes that the purpose of Canada's defence policy is to better defend the national interest – the security of the Canadian nation and the economic prosperity of the Canadian people – in accord with the values of Canadians. In all that we do in the area of defence policy, we will apply this basic measure of the national interest, and advance the “Canada First Defence Strategy” (CFDS).

We support the CFDS because:

- i. CFDS clearly lays out the priority tasks for the armed forces; surveillance and control of Canadian territory and the protection of Canada and Canadians, a strong and reliable partnership with the US in the defence of North America; a strong leadership role in international security and stability operations ;
- ii. CFDS is a 20-year strategy supported by assured long term funding to strengthen the four pillars of defence; personnel; equipment; readiness and infrastructure. The Strategy provides for a balanced increase in across these 4 pillars, including increasing the personnel strength of the CF and the replacement of all the major equipment systems with new more capable platforms ;
- iii. CFDS not only raises the strength of our armed forces but provides our soldiers, sailors and airmen with the best and most modern equipment to carry out the tasks assigned to them. The increase in personnel will reduce stress on soldiers and their families; increased funding for readiness means better and more focused training and the improvement in infrastructure will contribute to bettering the lifestyle of the military community ; and
- iv. CFDS gives Canadian industry a unique opportunity, through predictable funding and timelines, to plan and prepare in the longer term for the development of equipment and systems to support our Armed Forces. The Strategy will help the Canadian defence industry maintain and build their lead in many areas of advanced technology while providing quality jobs for thousands of Canadians across the country.

We fully support the government's prompt actions to fill some of the most pressing defence priorities: strategic and tactical airlift capability for operational and humanitarian relief tasks; the strengthening of Canada's presence in the Arctic; and ensuring our deployed troops have the resources they need to establish security and to optimize their own protection.

We fully support the government's renewal of a strong commitment to NORAD and the expanded cooperation with the US, through Canada Command, in the surveillance and control of our coasts and closer coordination of disaster response operations.

135. Veterans

The Conservative Party believes the government should be committed to providing the best possible services and benefits for veterans and their families, in recognition of their service to Canada. We are also committed to keeping the memory of Canadian veterans' achievements and sacrifices alive through the promotion of public awareness and memorials.

We support the *Veterans' Bill of Rights* to ensure that all disputes involving veterans are treated quickly, fairly and with the presumption in favour of the rights of the veteran. The Conservative Party regards this as an important component of the national commitment to treating our veterans with respect.

We would immediately institute a complete overhaul of Veterans Affairs Canada bringing it online with the needs of today's veterans of conflict and peacekeeping missions. This would include instituting a standard of delivery of services, i.e., reviews, payment of services and the like.

We support the continuing reform of the Veterans Review and Appeals Board so that it can more effectively respond to the wishes of veterans. To this end, we will work to increase the number of military peers on that Board.

We will continue to ensure veterans have the benefits and services they deserve after a life-time of dedication to their country.

We are committed to ensuring the veterans of Canada's wars and peacekeeping operations receive their veterans' benefits and health care in a timely fashion.

We are committed to ensuring that Canada's veterans' hospital and various veterans' wings in regular hospitals are in top working order.

We would immediately extend Veterans Independence Program services to the widows of all Second World War and Korean War veterans regardless of when the Veteran died or how long they had been receiving the benefit before they passed away.

We would examine measures to ensure that National military treasures are retained in Canada as a part of our Canadian heritage.

136. Security

The Conservative Party believes that Canada has a direct interest in a more stable and secure world. Our government must be positioned to deal with complex international security issues in order to protect our citizens and contribute to the broader responsibility.

We are committed to ensuring that better cooperation among Canada's intelligence and security agencies to more effectively protect Canadians against internal and external security and economic threats in a changing and unstable global environment. Canada must not be a safe haven for international terrorist operatives.

We believe the government should consider establishing a Canadian national intelligence agency to coordinate existing intelligence from all sources to provide the Prime Minister, senior

ministers and officials with national intelligence information and assessments. The creation of a new Canadian national intelligence agency will be drawn from the Privy Council Office's international assessment and security and intelligence secretariats.

We believe the government should examine the feasibility of establishing a committee of senior government and official opposition Members of Parliament (sworn to secrecy as required) to scrutinize and oversee the activities of the national intelligence agency, utilizing confidential and in-camera sessions as required, and also consider having the head of the national intelligence agency be confirmed by Parliament and appearing before the committee as required.

In a post September 11th world, we believe government should continue to enhance the foreign intelligence gathering and analytical capacity of the CSIS, Department of National Defence, and Communications Security Establishment.

We believe the government should continue to work with our North American partners to coordinate efforts on security for our collective personal safety and economic prosperity with particular emphasis on preservation of our Northern waters.

The responsibilities for a revitalized Canadian Coast Guard should be part of the Ministry of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness. As part of increasing marine security, the government should reinstitute the Ports Police as a unit of the RCMP, and increase surveillance on the coasts and the Great Lakes.

We believe the government should remain committed to ensuring that agencies such as CSIS, RCMP, Canadian Border Services Agency and Coast Guard are properly resourced both in manpower and equipment.

137. Military Reservists

The Conservative Party recognizes the important contribution that military reservists make to Canadian security, and believes the government should be committed to supporting reservists deployed on missions or occupational training. When reservists are called to leave their homes and families to serve Canada, the least we can do is ensure that their civilian job is waiting for them when they return.

We support obliging all federal departments, agencies and federally regulated corporations to guarantee that any employee, who temporarily leaves his or her non-military jobs to deploy on missions or on military training, will be guaranteed his or her non-military job upon returning from deployment or training.

A Conservative Government will work with provincial and private-sector partners to ensure that all reserve personnel who work for any provincial government, provincial agency, or private sector entity will be guaranteed their non-military job upon returning from military deployment or military training.

W) STRONG DEMOCRACY – ONGOING POLICY DEVELOPMENT

138. Policy Development Principles

The Conservative Party believes true democracy involves vigorous participation by all citizens in the affairs of the country. We will commit to broad consultation with citizens across Canada to further the ongoing policy development process and ensure Members of Parliament have the fullest input from all Canadians.

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