

Election 2004 Voter's Guide

In this Federal Election, vote for the Canada YOU WANT!

The Canada that The Council of Canadians wants is a country where our elected representatives:



- Maintain Our Sovereignty
- Make Trade Work For Everyone
- Protect Our Drinking Water
- Label Our Food
- Save Public Health Care
- Stop A New Arms Race
- End Public-Private Partnerships
- Recognize Water as a Human Right
- Stop Corporate NAFTA Lawsuits
- Protect Our Wheat
- Introduce Pharmacare
- Defend Family Farmers

If this is the country you want too, let's work together. The future of this country is unwritten and the pen is now in our hands. Never has it been so important to vote.



The Canada we want includes:

- **CLEAN WATER:** 97% of Canadians believe Canada should have a comprehensive national water policy that recognizes clean drinking water as a basic human right.
- **FAIR TRADE:** 60% oppose giving corporations the right in trade deals to sue the government when public interest legislation affects their profits.
- **SAFE FOOD:** 83% want a moratorium on genetically modified crops until health and environmental issues have been addressed.
- **PUBLIC HEALTH:** 64% believe that the health care system should exclude for-profit corporations, and instead rely on not-for-profit health care providers.
- **SOVEREIGNTY:** 91% want Canada to maintain the ability to set its own independent environmental health and safety regulations, even if this might reduce cross-border trade opportunities with the U.S.

(The foregoing are results of Ipsos-Reid polls conducted for The Council of Canadians, March 23-25 and March 30-April 1, 2004. The polls were based on a sampling of 1056 Canadians and are considered accurate to within +- 3.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.)

In this federal election, vote for the candidate you think best represents your interests and those of your community.

Your vote does count.

If you want to know who is going to change this country, just look in the mirror.

Ask questions and press the candidates to make real promises

- **MAINTAIN OUR SOVEREIGNTY:**



Canada's corporate elite is pushing an agenda of "deep integration" with the U.S. This agenda would "harmonize" our standards and regulations down to U.S. levels. It would remove the flexibility of the Canadian government to determine its own social, foreign, defence, environmental, agricultural and cultural policies. It is imperative that deep integration is made an election issue.

Fifteen years ago, the Business Council on National Issues lobbied and won the Free Trade Agreement (FTA), followed shortly by the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

Will you categorically reject the "deep integration" agenda now being pushed by the Canadian Council of Chief Executives?

- **MAKE TRADE WORK FOR EVERYONE:**



Canadians rely on good trading relationships with many countries around the world for our prosperity. However, trade should not be aimed at enriching transnational corporations at the expense of the public good. The first priority of trade should be our common well-being. Yet Canada's trade policy falls short.

The North American Free Trade Agreement has been a failure for Canadians, and our aggressive trade strategy has hurt developing countries and damaged our reputation abroad.

Now that we have had fifteen years of free trade, will you conduct a full public review of our trade policy before any new trade deals are signed?

- **PROTECT OUR DRINKING WATER:**



Our current system of providing drinking water to Canadian homes – as a public service – is being threatened by public-private partnerships (P3s). Because water is essential to everyone, business sees the selling of water as a guaranteed way of making huge profits.

A P3 is a step-by-step privatization scheme presented to the public as a way to get new money for an essential service, such as water. But a P3 usually brings user fees and less public accountability. Moreover, P3 privatization coupled with the disciplines of trade agreements can result in our water systems being run by foreign corporations as for-profit businesses. People across Canada and around the world are working to stop the privatization of water in their communities.

Will you ensure that corporations are prevented from using a P3 arrangement as a first step to running our water services for their profit?

- **LABEL OUR FOOD:**



When we go grocery shopping, we want to be sure that what we are buying for our families is safe and nutritious. Although 35 countries have labelling laws to inform people whether their food contains "genetically engineered" ingredients, Canadians do not have the same protection.

There is simply no long-term research to prove that genetically engineered food is safe to eat, and without that proof Canadians should have the right to choose a brand that is GE-free.

At least 35 countries around the world have labelling laws to inform people if their food has been genetically engineered.

Do you support mandatory labelling legislation for our food?

- **SAVE PUBLIC HEALTH CARE:**



It is hard to imagine not being able to afford the treatment or the medication you need. With medicare, Canadians do not face personal bankruptcy and being turned away by a hospital, as many do just south of our border. But with step-by-step privatization, the building of private-public partnership hospitals, and loud calls in favour of for-profit health services, Canada must not only affirm its commitment to medicare, it must expand medicare.

Health care bills are the leading reason for bankruptcy in American families. Canadians are spending more and more on their own health care.

What will you do to stop privatization of medicare?

- **END PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS:**



Although some claim that public-private partnerships have "shared benefits," the reality is that P3s are a step-by-step form of privatization. Due to years of underfunding, our essential services – health care, education and water – are in need of reinvestment.

P3s are presented as a way to achieve this, but such an approach comes with a huge cost. P3s can bring user fees, less public accountability, and the risk of the full-privatization of an essential public service. Our essential services need government reinvestment, not corporate money.

Will you invest in our public systems and prevent public-private partnerships?

- **PROTECT OUR WHEAT:**



Canadian farmers are opposed to the introduction of genetically engineered wheat. Aside from the health and safety concerns associated with GE wheat, farmers are faced with the prospect of losing

important export markets. Around the world, many of their largest customers have made it very clear that if GE wheat is approved in Canada, they will stop buying our wheat. Since wheat in an open field can be blown into another field, it is impossible to contain; so even farmers who choose not to grow GE wheat would be affected.

Introducing genetically engineered wheat into Canada would create havoc in our wheat industry. Canadian wheat farmers face losing two-thirds of their export market if GE wheat is approved.

Will you prohibit the introduction of genetically engineered wheat into Canada?

▪ **STOP CORPORATE LAWSUITS:**



Business should be able to conduct their affairs without unfair actions taken against them. But the North American Free Trade Agreement has given corporations the right to sue governments when legislation to protect the public affects their profits. For instance, an American corporation sued the Canadian government when it banned the company's toxic additive to gasoline. Canada was forced to apologize and repeal the ban; Canadian taxpayers had to pay compensation to the corporation.

Corporations have billions of dollars in lawsuits pending due to public interest legislation that affects their profits. They have sued to export our water, to keep a dangerous fuel-additive in our cars, and to undermine environmental protection.

Will you remove from NAFTA the "Chapter 11 investor-state clause" that gives big business this right?

▪ **RECOGNIZE WATER AS A HUMAN RIGHT:**



Around the world, people are going without water. Due to drought, pollution and scarcity, millions die every year because they do not have access to clean water. With fresh water in short supply and worldwide demand growing, big business sees a supply-demand opportunity for profit. But water is different from a compact disc or a second car; it is essential to life. At the United Nations, the Canadian government has refused to recognize water as a human right. Canada must change its position.

Every year, more than 2 million children die because they lack access to clean water. Yet 84% of the world's population supports the fundamental human right to water.

Will you commit to supporting water as a human right at the United Nations?

▪ **INTRODUCE PHARMACARE:**



Canada needs a pharmacare program in order to make prescription drugs more accessible to the sick, to curb the outrageous profits of

pharmaceutical corporations, and to curtail the fastest growing costs within medicare. Both in Canada and around the world, the drive for corporate profit must not endanger those in need of life-saving, essential medicines.

Canadians overwhelmingly supported the Romanow Commission's call for pharmacare in Canada. Yet, more than a year after the Romanow report, Canada still lacks a program to make prescription drugs less costly for individuals and for the health care system as a whole.

Will you introduce pharmacare into Canada?

▪ **STOP A NEW ARMS RACE:**



Canadians want their government to make decisions that reflect their values, not the demands of powerful interests. Canada should not reverse its long-standing policy against the militarization of space by endorsing U.S. President Bush's national missile defence program.

Canada must remain independent and refuse the lobbyists that would have Canada trade away its independence for the promise of more business with the U.S.

More than one hundred of the top CEOs in Canada are lobbying for deeper integration into the United States. They say that supporting George W. Bush's space-missile program and their foreign policy will help us trade with the U.S.

Are you willing to trade our independence for these promises?

▪ **DEFEND FAMILY FARMERS:**



The transformation of the livestock sector in Canada is being carried out at the cost of family farmers, the environment (especially air and water quality), rural communities, workers' rights, consumer choice, and humane conditions for the animals. Not surprisingly, there is a growing resistance to factory farming in Canada. Canadians want a food system that works for people, animals and the land.

We need a sustainable agriculture policy, not a cheap food policy that off-loads environmental, social and economic costs onto us, while agri-business sector profits.

Will you work to ensure the survival of family farmers and curb the growth of factory farms?

YOU ARE ENCOURAGED TO:

1. **Vote for the candidate and the party that you feel most reflects your values and the Canada you want.**
2. **Distribute this Voter's Guide in your community. For bulk orders, please call 1-800-387-7177.**

3. **Read The Canada We Want by Maude Barlow. Work for social change during and after the election. Participate in your local chapter of The Council of Canadians.**
4. **Join The Council of Canadians. Call 1 800 387-7177 or go to Join/Donate section of the website.**

What can I do?

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A voter's guide to party policies



The Council of Canadians is an independent, non-partisan citizens' interest group. We provide a critical voice on key national issues and do not endorse any specific party or individual candidate. The following information was obtained from a combination of direct calls to political party offices, research on party web sites and the public record. It is based on information available at the time of publication. The political parties noted below all received more than 2 per cent of the popular vote in the last federal election.

LIBERALS

PUBLIC HEALTH: Failed to exempt health care from NAFTA, cut billions from health care, have now agreed to reinvest some funding but without the demand that provinces stop privatization. Failed to introduce pharmacare and home care programs.

FAIR TRADE: Support more free trade, including the FTAA and agreements through the WTO that could open public health care, education, water and culture to privatization and foreign ownership.

CLEAN WATER: Threatened public control of water by signing NAFTA, refuse to ban bulk water exports, failed to adopt a national water policy, refuse to recognize water as a human right. Support the pricing and privatization of water.

SAFE FOOD: Oppose mandatory labelling of genetically engineered foods, refuse to introduce long-term independent health and environmental safety tests, promote widespread trade in GE crops, refused to sign the international Biosafety Protocol regulating trade in GE goods, refuse to ban the introduction of GE wheat. Promote factory farming.

DEEP INTEGRATION: Support deeper integration with the United States, including participation in the national missile defence program.

CONSERVATIVES

PUBLIC HEALTH: Believe spending decisions within the health care envelope should be left with the provinces. Would have responsibility for the well-being of citizens rest first and foremost with the individual and the family.

FAIR TRADE: Committed to the FTA and NAFTA, support more free trade through the FTAA and the WTO.

CLEAN WATER: Believe water is adequately protected under the FTA and NAFTA. Refuse to recognize water as a human right. Support the pricing and privatization of water.

SAFE FOOD: Oppose mandatory labelling. No position on the introduction of GE wheat. Support factory farming.

DEEP INTEGRATION: Support deeper integration with the United States, including participation in the national missile defence program.

[NEW DEMOCRATS](#)

PUBLIC HEALTH: Would restore federal funding partnership, stop privatization, enforce the Canada Health Act to address existing violations and expand health care.

FAIR TRADE: Demand that WTO and FTAA negotiations ensure protection of human rights, core labour standards, cultural diversity and the environment. Oppose investor-state provisions in trade agreements.

CLEAN WATER: Support a national water policy, including standards for safe drinking water and a federal ban on bulk water exports. Would renegotiate NAFTA to exclude water. Recognize water as a human right.

SAFE FOOD: Support mandatory labelling, endorse the Biosafety Protocol, want independent health and environmental safety testing. Oppose the introduction of GE wheat. Oppose factory farming.

DEEP INTEGRATION: Oppose deeper integration with the United States, oppose participation in the national missile defence program.

[BLOC QUEBECOIS](#)

PUBLIC HEALTH: Would increase health care funding, but silent on the issue of privatization.

FAIR TRADE: Support free trade, with some exceptions. Demand more transparency from WTO negotiations, and favour allowing input from citizens, elected officials and civil society groups. Oppose the Chapter 11 investor-state clause.

CLEAN WATER: Have not developed a policy on water.

SAFE FOOD: Support mandatory labelling, endorse the Biosafety Protocol, want independent health and environmental safety testing. Oppose the introduction of GE wheat.

DEEP INTEGRATION: Oppose deeper integration with the United States, oppose participation in the national missile defence program.

For information on the positions of other political parties, go to:

- Canadian Action Party
www.canadianactionparty.ca
- Communist Party of Canada
www.comunist-party.ca
- Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist)
www.cpcml.ca
- Green Party of Canada
www.greenparty.ca
- Marijuana Party of Canada
www.marijuanaparty.org

For general information on the election, go to [Elections Canada](#).