

Thank you for your letter. First, I would like to state that I believe that health care and educational services are the base from which our society builds.

When we support our education and health service providers our whole society benefits and thrives. Please see my response to your points below.

1.

Many members of SEIU-West work in health care and experience chronic short staffing due to ongoing and growing recruitment and retention challenges. Now, public sector workers are being asked to take a 3.5% rollback. We're concerned that this creates an unsafe care environment and that these cuts will create loss of health care services, and/or bed or facility closures in rural Saskatchewan. Where do you stand on public sector wage roll backs? What is your plan to address growing recruitment and retention challenges in health care? Will you be the voice for improved and continued health care?

I am against making the public sector pay for government mismanagement.

I believe the best way to recruit people to live in smaller cities and rural communities is to ensure they have social supports in place. Small town Saskatchewan has always been at its strongest when our communities are connected. I also believe we need to invest in childcare and early childhood educational opportunities.

People who get into frontline health care and education do so because they want to help and support people. The cuts have meant that there are fewer workers on the front lines, hospitals and health and seniors' care centres are understaffed, and workers are being asked to do more and more with less. Cutting 3.5 per cent is no way to support current workers or attract new ones and now, the Premier is saying he wants to cut another 5 per cent from workers in the public service. That's only going to make things worse.

Last year our province was second last in the country for job growth. At a time when Saskatchewan is seeing less and less employment, the Sask. Party should be focused on getting people back to work – not cutting even more public service jobs.

I am committed to working alongside the Saskatchewan NDP caucus members to fight the cuts to workers, and ensure that health and seniors' care centres and hospitals across the province are appropriately staffed and that everyone has access to the care they need.

2.

Saskatchewan has experienced a growth of population and with that comes increased student needs however, Educational Assistants and other school support positions have been cut across the province due to inadequate funding. What is your plan to address our growing classroom needs?

Last year, the Sask. Party cut \$55 million in government funding for education. Despite both the Premier and the new education minister promising to restore the funding they cut, they provided only \$7.5 million back for education funding – falling significantly short on their commitments and leaving Saskatchewan classrooms struggling with the \$47.5 million cut, growing classroom sizes and increased cost.

I have had the opportunity to work alongside many educators and support staff in schools and I admire the passion, kindness, and dedication they bring to their jobs. Our students are losing supports and they're losing those supports because of Sask. Party cuts and a funding model that doesn't account for student's needs. For too long, teachers, support staff, parents and communities – who know the needs of students – have been ignored. The last budget was particularly devastating to schools in Swift Current and area and as a teacher I have witnessed this firsthand. This is one of the reasons I chose to run in this by-election. I will continue to push the Sask. Party to admit that they cut too deep and for them to restore the full amount of funding to our classrooms and account for growing class sizes and cost increases. Our kids deserve nothing less.

3/4

We're experiencing a rise in precarious work in this province - it's becoming more difficult to find a full-time job with a good wages, benefits and job security. Our province's young workers suffer from a lack of stability in their career options and often face the burden of increased debt due to student loans as tuition costs are soaring.

What is your plan to address precarious work? Will you commit to a plan to get to \$15 per hour minimum wage?

We need to address the fact that Saskatchewan has one of the lowest minimum wages in the country and is falling further behind. New Democrats are committed to increasing the minimum to \$15 an hour.

Recently, the province's unemployment rate rose to the national average for the first time in over 40 years and it's getting harder and harder for Saskatchewan people to find and keep good mortgage-paying jobs.

The fact is, lower income and middle-income earners drive our economy and more money in the hands of these hard-working people will mean more money going back into our economy. More than that, recent research suggests that when we pay people a living wage and ensure they have income security, people are happier and healthier and our whole economy benefits.

I will continue to fight for safe, meaningful, stable, and well-paid work. The province needs a plan to deal with the changing nature of work and diversify our economy. We need to reverse the Sask. Party's cuts to employment training and supports for students as well as their tuition fee hikes.

5.

What is your plan to support women's issues in the riding and in Saskatchewan? Do you have a plan to support greater access to affordable child care? Would you support legislated provision for paid leave from employment in circumstances of domestic violence?

I am proud to be running as a candidate who would join a team of MLAs that is 50% women. Affordable child care is essential to the well being of our province and our economy, and I am ready and willing to work alongside my colleagues to increase child care spaces and reduce the cost of child care to ensure that access is universal across the province.

As a father of two young children I know the importance of affordable and accessible childcare. We also know that women are disproportionately impacted by a lack to access to childcare, and no one should be excluded from the workforce simply because they cannot afford or cannot access child care. I am ready and willing to work alongside my colleagues to increase childcare spaces, reduce the cost of childcare and to ensure that access to childcare is universal across the province.

The current NDP leader, Nicole Sarauer, introduced legislation to ensure supports for survivors of domestic violence. The Sask. Party passed two of the three recommendations brought forward in the legislation. While it was a good first step, it isn't enough, and the Sask. Party has failed to cooperate in passing the piece of the legislation that ensures paid leave. I will work alongside the NDP caucus team to keep pushing for supports for survivors of interpersonal violence. As the province with the highest rates of domestic violence, we must take action.

6.

We're highly concerned about our very future on this planet. Wildfires and extreme weather events are becoming the new norm. What is your plan to address climate change?

We all know that we, as a province, need to take steps forward to address climate change, and the Sask. NDP has been calling on the Sask. Party to do this for years. As a teacher, I would never let my students get away with ignoring the facts and just attacking their classmates instead of facing the challenges.

We need to partner with companies to improve monitoring, regulations, and enforcements to protect the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the land we grow and live on.

We also need a made in Saskatchewan solution to address climate change and protect us from Ottawa's attempts to impose their tax on us.

Instead of the Sask. Party's lines that provide almost no details or meaningful targets, to effectively address climate change, we must focus on renewable energy and the green technology sector. This will not only diversify the economy, protect our air, water and land, it will also create jobs.

7.

Last but not least, the March 2017 budget cuts hit health care, education and the community based sector very hard. What will you do to see that stable, adequate funding is committed to our valued public services so that they can be maintained and improved?

Instead of taking a serious look at their own mismanagement, to deal with their growing deficit and debt, the Sask. Party chose to target some of the most vulnerable in Saskatchewan with cruel and heartless cuts. From seniors who can no longer afford the massively increased fees to children with special needs who no longer have pre-school programs, it is clear that the Sask. Party has chosen to make cuts that hurt those who need to support most.

Until the next election, we need to keep the pressure on and keep forcing the Sask. Party to walk back some of their heartless cuts.

I want to be a voice for Swift Current that helps to speak out against these cuts and fight for the services, such as health care and education that people and the future of our province rely on.