

VOTING FOR A JUST RECOVERY

SEPTEMBER 2, 2021



Two years after the last federal election, Prime Minister Trudeau has yet again dropped the writ and called for a snap federal election. Instead of enjoying the last bit of sunshine in the second summer of a global pandemic, electioneers are now canvassing voters across the country. There seems to be more at stake this federal election than in the 2019 election, especially now after a year and a half of working people struggling to rise up and get back to a “normal” from the pandemic.

Many workers and communities – particularly those who are racialized, gendered, or marginalized – are still facing the brunt of this recovery. After many years of continued under funding and privatization of our public services, the pandemic has laid bare the conditions in long-term care, warehouses, factories, and workplaces in this country – and how fragile conditions in these sectors are to topple and harm.

It is more important than ever for workers, and especially young workers, to vote for a progressive, worker-friendly government and Member of Parliament for their riding. Working people need a vision of a society where people’s physical and mental health and well-being are put first – no matter their gender, race or creed. Workers need to demand the public delivery of long-term care, national PharmaCare and childcare programs, and to fix the broken Employment Insurance system. Workers need to elect a government that will regulate the ever expanding gig economy, provide real affordable housing (not just claims to build one million new homes over the next three years), and make real investments in expanding public transit (and *maintaining existing* transit operations) across the country.

Workers across Canada support action on climate change, but are worried what a de-carbonized economy means for their jobs. Canada needs a government that will move beyond talk and take action to bring a Just Transition with real training and new job opportunities in a low carbon economy.

Canada’s Indigenous peoples have waited too long for justice. We need a government that will move quickly to implement all of the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation report.

As it stands now, the economic recovery from the global pandemic is one that prioritizes the 1%, leaving masses of people unemployed, underemployed or working in hazardous – or less than ideal – conditions. While workers on the front lines of healthcare and essential services have died, and others have lost their jobs during the pandemic, a report last week from the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives found that Canadian executives’ pay rose 17% during the pandemic. That is a rise on average of \$171, 000 per top executive in 2020 from 2019. This showcases that the current path to recovery is one that prioritizes profits and the super-elite.

The Conservative track record – held most notably by Stephen Harper and Doug Ford – is one that is focused on business profits, reduced public spending, and the continued privatization of public services.

In spite of Premier Doug Ford and Education Minister Stephen Lecce’s claims that no other governments have invested in education as much as theirs, there remains a lack of safety protocols in schools such as improved ventilation systems, windows that open, contact tracing,

and testing protocols. Investments that could have gone into these safety protocols have instead been diverted to the private sector to create more online learning platforms, such as the contract to TVO as the “choice” for parents. Labour Council’s July 2021 statement, DÉJÀ VU – #SAFESEPTEMBER 2021, called on the provincial government to address all the education gaps they have created or ignored, including to end hybrid learning. The statement also asked affiliates to encourage union members to communicate their concerns about class sizes and other education issues to their elected representatives, particularly their MPPs, and ultimately at the ballot box on June 2, 2022.

At the federal level, Conservative party leader Erin O’Toole is no different than the likes of Harper, Ford and Lecce. Despite his rhetoric that he is friendly to unions because his father worked at General Motors, Oshawa, and was a member of UAW, O’Toole is the same breed as other Conservatives, which is to put profits and the super-elite ahead of other Canadians. Under the disguise of being a friendlier Conservative, O’Toole and his party are seeking the votes of union members and working people. It is time that the working class of this country lift our heads above the haze of this pandemic, and accurately see, and call out that a wolf in nicer clothing is still a wolf – just in nicer clothes.

On September 2, 2021 Labour Council resolved to:

1. Call on all affiliates to encourage union members to vote for a progressive, worker- friendly Member of Parliament on September 20th
2. Call on all activists and concerned citizens to join the labour canvasses being organized by the CLC
3. Join the national non-partisan campaign at www.votehousing.ca to end homelessness and make housing safe and affordable in Canada
4. Call on elected representatives to prioritize the continued housing affordability crisis and homelessness situation, which has an inequitable impact on racialized and Indigenous populations. One out of every 15 Indigenous peoples have reported to experience homelessness in their lives, compared to one out of every 128 in Canada’s general population
5. Call on all federal candidates to provide their stance on the public delivery of long-term care, a national PharmaCare and childcare programs.