

**Answers of Amy O'Dell, New Democratic Party, Ottawa-Orléans  
to questions from the PSAC**



<b>PSAC questions</b>	<b>Amy O'Dell's answers</b>
<p><b>1- Quality public services</b> a) Are you in favour of quality public services, universally accessible and delivered by permanent Public service employees?</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>b) What will you do to protect and enhance food safety?</p>	<p>New Democrats have a comprehensive federal policy that will ensure the food we sell is safe to eat. We will work in consultation with consumers, workers and industry to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase number of food inspectors at CFIA, and increase administrative support so that inspectors spend time on the production floor and not on paperwork.</li> <li>• Reduce worker injuries, increase the quality of the food, and ensure greater product safety by introducing regulations on “line speed” in meat processing plants that match existing requirements in the European Union.</li> <li>• Improve the system for warning families of potential dangers with consistent policies for immediate public notification of food safety problems.</li> <li>• Require mandatory labelling of farmed fish and genetically engineered food, as is already done in Europe, Asia and Australia.</li> <li>• Require full accuracy and accountability for labels stating “Product of Canada”.</li> <li>• Require labels to inform consumers of the region of origin of food products and ingredients – so they know how far food has traveled to reach their table and are able to choose food produced by Canadian farmers.</li> </ul>

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c) Are you in favour of the sale of government owned buildings to the private sector?	No. There is undoubtedly a massive cost to taxpayers in the federal Conservatives plan to sell the buildings and then lease them back. The City of Ottawa could lose up to \$25 million in revenue with the sale of government buildings.
d) If your party is elected will it pledge to reinstate the Court Challenges Program and the Law Commission of Canada?	Yes. A New Democrat government will restore the court challenges program, eliminated by the Harper government, which funded equality seeking groups to go to court to protect their rights and establish a fair jurisprudence.
e) Will your party reverse the cuts to Status of Women funding within and outside government and restore funding for women's groups who do research and advocacy work?	As a young female candidate this issue is very important to me and I'm proud that the New Democrats have proposed action on a national level. New Democrats will empower Status of Women Canada and other appropriate federal agencies to work to implement the recommendations of the report on Canada by the UN Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. We will also properly fund Status of Women Canada, re-investing in women's programs and organizations that had their funding cut by the Harper government, as well as re-open regional Status of Women offices and strengthen their mandate to achieve equality for women.
f) The last time the support program for Persons With Disabilities (PWD) was overhauled was in 1995. The cost	Yes. New Democrats will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement a Canadian Disabilities Action Plan based on the vision of an inclusive and accessible Canada. Our goal is to ensure the full participation of all persons with disabilities in every aspect of life.</li> </ul>

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<p>of living has continually gone up since then. Do you think it is time for an overhaul of the support programs for PWDs?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and implement accessibility standards and laws for all areas under federal jurisdiction.</li> <li>• Use federal government funding to leverage improvements to employment, public transit and services. For example, we will use universal design principles in federally-funded infrastructure initiatives.</li> <li>• Make the federal disability tax credit fully refundable and accessible to all CPP disability pensioners.</li> <li>• Establish a Canadian Disability Employment Fund to assist employers under federal jurisdiction with the costs of providing reasonable accommodation.</li> <li>• Establish specific targets within labour market agreements negotiated with the provinces and territories to assist those with disabilities.</li> <li>• Create a Canadian Disability Accommodation Commissioner to advise Parliament and the responsible minister on issues affecting persons with disabilities.</li> <li>• Support a pan-Canadian strategy to stop violence and abuse of disabled persons.</li> <li>• Establish nation-wide goals to ensure that every Canadian in need of non-acute care will receive an appropriate level of care, including home care.</li> <li>• Immediately implement the UN Covenant on the Rights of People with Disabilities, which Canada signed.</li> </ul>

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<p><b>2- Working conditions and negotiations in the public service</b></p> <p>a) Would you support the government reducing its use of precarious workers, by ceasing temporary help agencies hiring, and by reducing the number of part-time and contract workers?</p>	<p>Yes.</p> <p>The government is breaking its own guidelines by hiring temporary workers for jobs that should be hired as permanent employees. Documents show temporary help agencies in the national capital region that cost the government \$100 million five years ago are poised to hit \$200 million by the end of the fiscal year.</p>
<p>b) Employees of the federal public sector want their negotiations to accelerate and result in fair pay increases. What will you do to ensure they get satisfaction?</p>	<p>We will work to ensure a climate of respect for public servants, and fair and equitable pay in a timely manner.</p>
<p>c) Are you in favour of abolishing distinct pay zones that apply to blue collars?</p>	<p>Yes, New Democrats believe that there should be one national rate of pay, coast to coast for trades people. We believe in equal pay for equal work.</p>

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d) Do you believe that pay equity should apply to all employees of the federal public sector?	Yes.
e) Do you agree to modify Part II of the Canadian Labour Code in order to offer pregnant or nursing workers the same access to leave with pay as under the Québec Labour Code?	Yes.
f) Do you believe that Bill C-45 on health and security should apply to employees working on Parliament Hill?	Yes, all workers deserve health and security protection.
g) Are you in favour of modifying the rules concerning political rights of federal public service workers, in order to allow their full participation in the electoral process?	Yes.

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<p><b>3- Greater justice in the taxation system</b> What do you intend to do so that the taxation system stop widening the gap between rich and poor Canadians?</p>	<p>Phase in a new Child Benefit. This benefit, modeled on the existing Canada Child Tax Benefit, will expand in phases to \$5,000 a year per child, and consolidate the current piecemeal system of benefits and tax credits for children into a single, better, non-taxable monthly cheque to parents. In addition, this benefit will be extended until the child turns eighteen, far exceeding the Conservatives commitment to children until the age of six.</p> <p>We will change that and bring a more balanced approach to Ottawa. The New Democrats will not implement Mr. Harper's profligate, wasteful and unproductive corporate tax breaks. We'll restore a uniform 22.12% tax rate – what it was before the Martin and Harper governments began these giveaways as opposed to Mr. Harper's plan to further reduce the corporate tax rate at a huge cost to ordinary tax payers.</p>

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<p><b>4- National Child Care Strategy</b> Will your government invest in a publicly delivered, national child care strategy to address the needs of families outside of Quebec?</p>	<p>Yes. In consultation with the provinces and territories, Jack Layton and the New Democrats will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enact the New Democrats' <i>Early Learning and Child Care Act</i> – which has already passed Second Reading in Parliament - to establish the program in law for the first time in Canada.</li> <li>• In the first phase of this program, create 150,000 new child care spaces in the first year, growing to 220,000 spaces by year four.</li> <li>• Ensure a healthy head start for kids. We will develop a Children's Nutrition Initiative to support and expand provincial and local programs that provide healthy meals to school children.</li> <li>• Establish and adequately fund a Canada-wide child care and early learning program. We will make high quality, accessible, affordable, non-profit and licensed child care available to Canadian families, including aboriginal Canadians.</li> </ul>

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<p><b>5- Environment</b> If your party is elected to form a government, will you pledge to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• support the re-instatement of adequate funding of federal environmental programs;</li> <li>• support international initiatives calling for firm commitments to cut greenhouse gas emissions;</li> <li>• and ensure that Canada lives up to its international agreements, including meeting the legally binding targets agreed upon when Canada signed on to the Kyoto Accord?</li> </ul>	<p>Yes. Climate change is one of the most urgent threats facing our planet today. We are already seeing a sharp rise in deaths caused by air pollution related diseases.</p> <p>To ensure a healthy Canada for future generations, we must move from a polluting economy to a sustainable one now.</p> <p>Science tells us that unchecked greenhouse gas emissions invite catastrophe—vanishing polar ice caps, rising sea levels, altered agriculture, massive deforestation, species extinctions, virulent diseases, extreme weather events, economic hardship. Faced with this conclusive evidence, successive governments have promised to act, but have failed to do so, allowing us to fall behind.</p> <p>Our Better Environmental Plan implements a new energy economy strategy and builds on the Climate Change Accountability Act that Jack Layton proposed and that was adopted by Parliament on June 4, 2008. This bill sets the target of an 80% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, and provides the enforcement tools needed to do the job.</p> <p>Our plan introduces Canada Environment Action Bonds to raise capital for the plan's goals and we'll make polluters pay for the real costs of pollution through a cap-and-trade system that rewards big polluters who reduce emissions, and punishes those who don't.</p> <p>We will also continue our fight to halt new tar sands development until emissions are capped.</p> <p>This election, my party has pledged \$8 billion over four years to fuel the creation of these “green-collar” jobs and industries that includes help for the auto industry to design and produce environmentally friendly cars and trucks. Our plan would also retrain workers for these jobs in the environmental industry and invest in</p>

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	<p>research and development tax credits.</p> <p>We will help families make the transition to a sustainable economy with a \$750 million green-collar jobs fund and ensure greener homes and cities with average of almost \$1 billion a year for public transport and an energy efficiency retrofit program.</p> <p>We will ensure that environmental programs are adequately funded, and that Canada lives up to its international obligations.</p>
<p><b>6- Anti-scab legislation</b> Did you vote (or would you have voted) for or against the anti-scab bill tabled in 2007? What action would you take to have an anti-scab bill passed at the federal level?</p>	<p>New Democrats voted in support of anti-scab legislation and have worked hard with labour to develop and promote this legislation. New Democrats will continue to push to have anti-scab legislation passed in the new parliamentary session.</p>
<p><b>7- Working in French in the Public Service</b> What do you intend to do to promote the use of French in the Public service, particularly in the National Capital Region?</p>	<p>New Democrats support all efforts to promote the use of French in the Public service, particularly in the National Capital Region, and we will work with PSAC and other interest groups to develop the best strategies to ensure that French language rights are protected and promoted.</p>