

**Answers from Lawrence Cannon, Conservative Party, Pontiac  
to questions from the PSAC**



<b>PSAC questions</b>	<b>Lawrence Cannon'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>The Liberal's last Budget, Budget 2005 cut \$69 million from the Canadian Food Inspection Agency.</p> <p>We're spending extra \$113 million over two years Canada's Food and Consumer Safety Action Plan. We have increased by 200 the number of inspectors.</p> <p>We launched an independent investigation of the listeriosis outbreak. It will make recommendations, based on lessons learned from this event and from other countries in terms of best practices, as to what could be done to enhance both prevention of a similar outbreak occurrence in the future, and removal of contaminated product from the food supply. We will study those recommendations.</p>
<p>c) Are you in favour of the sale of government owned buildings to the private sector?</p>	<p>Only where it makes sense for the taxpayers of Canada. Before making a decision to sell any properties we would obtain independent external advice to analyze whether or not it makes economic sense. The operation of shopping centres, such as 240 Sparks is not part of the federal government's core business.</p>

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<p>d) If your party is elected will it pledge to reinstate the Court Challenges Program and the Law Commission of Canada?</p>	<p>Our Government was elected because of its promise to deliver value for taxpayer dollars. This promise is being kept. Programs are being reviewed to ensure every taxpayer dollar is spent to achieve results that benefit Canadians. Government waste is being eliminated and reinvested in programs for people.</p> <p>Programs such as the Court Challenges Program (CCP) will provide savings of up to \$2.8 million annually for 2006-07 and 2007-08. In areas of federal jurisdiction, the Government considers that the Commission of Official Languages has, and will continue to play, a key role in ensuring compliance with the Official Languages Act.</p> <p>The Commissioner may even apply to the Court for remedy on behalf of a complainant. Such mechanisms are not affected by our recent decisions. Our Government remains firmly committed to support the development of official-language minority communities and the promotion of English and French in Canadian society.</p>
<p>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?</p>	<p>Funding to Status of Women Canada has not been cut. To achieve greater accountability, efficiency and effectiveness, our Government has streamlined SWC by saving \$5 million in administrative costs. These savings will be redirected to funding initiatives that will directly benefit women in their communities.</p> <p>Also, for the first time, funding applications will be available online, increasing accessibility for Canadians. Four regional SWC offices will be maintained to provide the needed support to women across Canada. To be clear, no funding for women's programs will be cut and will continue to receive the same amount of funding. Our Government remains committed to equality for all Canadians - women and men.</p>

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<p>f) The last time the support program for Persons With Disabilities (PWD) was overhauled was in 1995. The cost of living has continually gone up since then. Do you think it is time for an overhaul of the support programs for PWDs?</p>	<p>Our Government is committed to creating new opportunities and choices for people with disabilities. We have in place the Opportunity Fund for Persons with Disabilities to assist in covering all or part of their living expenses, specialized services, transportation and course training. As with all other programs, our Government will continually assess the effectiveness and efficiency of its programs with respect to a number of factors including the cost of living.</p>
<p><b>2- Working conditions and negotiations in the public service</b> 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>This is a complex issue. For example, we have a large number of employees that are near retirement, or who have just retired. I won't support banning them from contracting with the government. Our older workers provide valuable experience and their contributions are a benefit to all Canadians.</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>The government is committed to reaching a negotiated settlement that is fair for employees and Canadian taxpayers. The Government of Canada values its employees and the work they do for Canadians.</p>

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c) Are you in favour of abolishing distinct pay zones that apply to blue collars?	This matter is currently being discussed at the bargaining table. It would be inappropriate for me to comment specially on this issue. I can say that I support the work of public servants, including hard-working trades-people across the government and across Canada.
d) Do you believe that pay equity should apply to all employees of the federal public sector?	Our employment equity strategies have increased the number of women recruited and promoted into professional and executive positions. Women's salaries are growing faster than men's in the public service. (4.4% vs. 3.6%). Women's salaries are growing faster in the public service than in the overall economy. (4.4% vs. 3.2%). Women now make up 41.3% of senior executive ranks, compared to 26% in 1999. Our government is committed to maintaining this progress.
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?	<p>I am aware of the difference in benefits provided to Quebec pregnant or nursing women when they must leave their jobs, depending on whether they work in the federal or provincial jurisdiction.</p> <p>The issue relates to eligibility for benefits under a provincially managed regime.</p> <p>To provide the same benefits to all Quebec women, the Quebec government needs to adjust its benefits program. My Government has encouraged my counterpart in Quebec to examine how this can be done.</p> <p>Our government would suggested a balanced approach to reviewing Part III of the Canada Labour Code; such as consultations with stakeholders to discuss the possibility of examining options that would be mutually acceptable to employers and workers.</p>

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<p>f) Do you believe that Bill C-45 on health and security should apply to employees working on Parliament Hill?</p>	<p>Parliament is one of the safest and most secure environments on Parliament Hill and the Speaker of the House of Commons takes a particularly strong interest in the Health and Safety of Employees. As Parliament is not subject to many of Canada's laws, it is the Speaker of the Houser of Commons and not the Government of Canada that is responsible for the health and safety of employees working in the Parliamentary precinct.</p>
<p>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?</p>	<p>Every Canadian has the right to participate in the electoral process. Public servants are free to participate on their own time. They are also entitled to take a leave of absence to work full time on an election.</p> <p>It is important to maintain a politically neutral public service to avoid the appearance of a conflict of interest. To ensure this, public servants are guided by the Values and Ethics Code for the public service.</p> <p>I believe we have the right balance between the rights of individuals and the need to preserve a truly non-partisan public service.</p>

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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>We intend to continue putting dollars back into the pockets of families and taxpayers. Under the Liberals, working families and seniors were squeezed while the Liberal government rewarded Liberal insiders and mismanaged our tax dollars.</p> <p>Under the strong leadership of Prime Minister Stephen Harper, Conservatives are cutting taxes to build a better Canada.</p> <p>The Conservative Record</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GST cut from 7% to 6%, and now to 5% - that's a tax cut for all Canadians.</li> <li>• Reduced the lowest personal income tax rate to 15% from 15.5% as of January 1, 2007.</li> <li>• Created the new Working Income Tax Benefit to help 1.2 million people over the "welfare wall".</li> <li>• Created the new \$1,000 Canada Employment Credit to lower taxes for working Canadians.</li> <li>• Created the new \$2,000 Child Tax Credit amount for every child under 18, a \$1.5 billion tax savings for families.</li> <li>• Increased the amount all Canadians can earn without paying federal income tax to \$9,600 in 2007 and 2008 and to \$10,100 in 2009.</li> <li>• Enacted the Tax Fairness Plan to provide \$1 billion in tax relief for Canadian seniors and pensioners.</li> <li>• Delivered new tax credits for public transit, kid's sports, textbooks, tools, and apprentices.</li> <li>• Eliminated income tax on student scholarships, fellowships and bursaries.</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cut taxes on small businesses.</li> <li>• Ensured fairness for single-earners by ending the marriage penalty.</li> <li>• Eliminated the job-killing corporate capital tax.</li> <li>• Enacted the "Tax Back Guarantee"- a plan to use interest savings from national debt repayments to reduce personal income taxes, each and every year.</li> </ul> <p>The Liberal Record</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liberals promised to scrap the GST 13 years ago but never did.</li> <li>• Instead, Liberals squandered billions of tax dollars on scandals like the Sponsorship Program and failed schemes like the Human Resources boondoggle and the long gun registry.</li> <li>• Liberals voted against every tax relief measure put forward by the Conservative government.</li> </ul>

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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>Many families struggle with the cost of childcare. For 13 years, Liberals promised but never delivered new child care spaces. Conservatives are giving parents choice in childcare – direct support to fit each family's unique needs – and investing in new child care spaces.</p> <p>Conservatives are building a stronger, safer, better Canada for families and children. The Conservative Record</p> <p>Delivered choice and support to parents through the Universal Child Care Benefit: \$1,200 per year in direct support for every child under six – over \$3.7 billion in 2006 and 2007 to help parents with the cost of child care</p> <p>Invested \$250 million per year to assist the provinces and territories in creating new child care spaces</p> <p>The Liberal Record</p> <p>Liberals oppose the new \$1,200 Universal Child Care Benefit and have promised to take it away from thousands of families. Liberals voted against \$250 million per year for the provinces to create new child care spaces. The Bloc talks a lot about childcare. But what can they actually do other than talk? With the BLOC, we can't achieve anything.</p>

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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>First, on funding of environmental programs, our Government has spent millions of dollars on grants and contributions to organizations for the environment. In fact, we've already spent in the current year about \$57 million in grants and contributions, so in fact we are funding these programs. In addition, our Government has worked hard over the last three years to boost funding for environment programs that were not adequately funded by Stéphane Dion and the Liberals. For example, last year we announced funding to hire 100 new environmental enforcement officers. Last week, Stephen Harper announced that a re-elected Conservative government would spend \$113 million over the next 5 years to further boost environmental enforcement.</p> <p>Secondly, Canada is actively involved on the world stage when it comes to the environment. At the recent G8 meetings in Japan, Stephen Harper helped secure, for the first time in history agreement by all G8 nations to set a global target of a 50% reduction by 2050. This includes Canada, the European Union, Japan, Russia and the United States. We are also committed to working through the United Nations to deliver agreements on climate change.</p> <p>Third, our Government has been clear that when we came into Government in 2006, the targets signed onto by the previous Liberal government were already unreachable due to their inaction. The Kyoto Protocol was a ten-year marathon to reduce our emissions, and when the gun when off, Canada under the Liberals ran in the opposite direction. As a result, our greenhouse gas emissions skyrocketed under the Liberals 30% above our international commitments.</p> <p>Our Government cannot take responsibility for the failed actions by pas governments, but what we can do is take responsibility for our current and future actions. That's why our tough Turning the Corner plan, for the first time in Canadian history, require big polluters to cut their emissions an absolute 20% by 2020.</p>

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<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>The current provisions under Part I (Industrial Relations) of the Canada Labour Code reflect a careful balance of competing interests between employers, unions and employees.</p> <p>Under Part I of the Code, the use of replacement workers is clearly prohibited during a legal work stoppage if they are used to undermine the union's representational responsibilities to its members.</p> <p>If a trade union feels an employer has interfered with these responsibilities, it can file a complaint of unfair labour practice with the Canada Industrial Relations Board for determination.</p> <p>Any amendment to the Code, without the full participation of all those affected by it negatively affects the balanced approach to labour relations in the federal jurisdiction.</p> <p>Further, several independent studies have concluded that a legislative ban on replacement workers provides no benefits in terms of number of strikes, number of days lost, average length of strikes or wage gains.</p>

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<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>The position of Canada's Conservative government is clear. The growing use of French in the public service is a result of our higher esteem for linguistic duality within federal institutions. We have two official languages in Canada and we don't want to see two isolated linguistic communities, but rather the interaction of our two official languages in one environment.</p> <p>We must therefore ensure that the right of public servants to work in the official language of their choice is respected. That applies to those who work in the national capital region as well as those who work in regions that are designated bilingual. In order for that to happen, it is not enough to merely permit Francophones to work in French, but to go further by putting in place a series of strategies to ensure that the Public Service is a truly bilingual environment.</p> <p>Clearly, an obvious first element is to continue to provide public servants with access to language training. We have to make sure that the senior ranks of the public services are aware of their leadership responsibilities in creating a work environment where Anglophones and Francophones feel welcome. Our government supports the development and provision of teaching materials and adapted learning strategies in order to support the availability of language training in every department. We continue to support the work of the Canada Public Service Agency, which plays an important supporting role in ensuring that federal institutions respect high standards.</p> <p>The Conservative government new strategy for official languages was released in June 2008 and titled, "Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality, 2008-2013." It will contribute \$17 million over 5 years to the Agency.</p>

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	In various departments, practices such as bilingual work meetings have been developed to promote a bilingual work environment. We must continue to encourage these practices at every level within the public service.