

**Answers of Jen Hunter, New Democratic Party, Ottawa-Centre
to questions from the PSAC**



PSAC questions	Jen Hunter's answers
<p>1- Quality public services a) Are you in favour of quality public services, universally accessible and delivered by permanent Public service employees?</p>	<p>Yes, this is important. We need a strong, impartial public service that can act in Canadians' best interests without being subjected to partisan political pressure or feel their job security is at stake if they do not agree with the current government. With retirement looming large, we may need to afford greater flexibility to bring in the younger generation in more appropriate ways.</p>
<p>b) What will you do to protect and enhance food safety?</p>	<p>Green Party policy advocates for more local and organic food. Regionalizing food sources is important for enhancing food safety. In addition, it seems as though we have a small number of public servants doing a very large job. It is time to look at this in light of our current reality as a society. We need more government food inspectors. I have taken the food safety pledge at foodsafetyfirst.ca.</p>
<p>c) Are you in favour of the sale of government owned buildings to the private sector?</p>	<p>We are not in favour of the sale of government buildings to the private sector as a means of raising cash when the markets are low. This does not make economic sense; it provides limited short-term gain at a significant long-term cost. If this ever makes sense, it is as a strategy to support public servants in a virtual work program to allow them to work from home. This issue needs to be thought out carefully since public buildings are part of the larger public trust.</p>

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d) If your party is elected will it pledge to reinstate the Court Challenges Program and the Law Commission of Canada?	Yes, the Court Challenges Program needs to be reinstated. I would need to do more research on the Law Commission of Canada, and I welcome input. Please feel free to make an appointment at the constituency office!
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?	Absolutely. This is critical. It is unacceptable that the past government cut its funding and mandate. Status of Women Canada's work is not done; we need to give them the resources necessary to accomplish their important goals.
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?	Yes. The Green Party proposes the conversion of the Disability Tax Credit into a refundable credit, and redesigning the Canada Pension Plan/Disability Benefit test to incorporate the DTC definition of disability and permit employment while retaining eligibility for basic income. This is one example of where we need greater policy coherence and need to show a more humane side of government.

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<p>2- Working conditions and negotiations in the public service</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>It is important to ensure that we have the best people for every public service job, which means hiring full-time, part-time, or contract workers where necessary. Where the use of part-time and contract workers does not make sense, we will encourage the hiring of full-time employees. Temporary help agencies are unnecessary and costly middlemen. They profit enormously both from the government agencies that hire through them at inflated rates, and from the independent subcontractors who are pressured to work for less so that the agencies can keep a bigger piece of the pie. The government needs to reassess this practice.</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>I would explore the possibility of using mediation at an earlier stage and applying new time limits to prevent stalling (by both government and unions) in the contract negotiation process.</p>
<p>c) Are you in favour of abolishing distinct pay zones that apply to blue collars?</p>	<p>Blue-collar workers should receive the same base pay regardless of location. However, cost-of-living supplements may be appropriate for some workers in remote regions. Members of Parliament have separate budgets (in addition to their base pay) that they can use to cover travel costs to their ridings.</p>

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d) Do you believe that pay equity should apply to all employees of the federal public sector?	Yes. Absolutely.
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?	Pregnant and nursing workers should be treated equally and have the same access to leave with pay regardless of the province in which they live.
f) Do you believe that Bill C-45 on health and security should apply to employees working on Parliament Hill?	In many cases, occupational health and safety laws fall under provincial jurisdiction. However, the government should have a legal obligation toward all federal employees to apply its own laws and standards in its own jurisdiction, and should be held liable if it fails to protect employees on Parliament Hill.

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<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>Current rules are designed to balance the rights of federal public servants to engage in the electoral process at the federal, provincial and municipal levels with the need for a politically impartial public service. For this reason, it is not unreasonable to require public servants to take an unpaid leave of absence to pursue political office. Public servants should be free to work on political campaigns (other than as candidates) provided they do so on their own time, that they do not use government resources, and that it does not affect their ability to do their jobs in an impartial fashion. The government should retain some oversight in this area to ensure that federal public servants do not take unfair advantage of their professional position. Hence the current requirement to seek permission from the Public Service Commission before engaging political activities. This may not be a perfect solution, but it does allow each case to be assessed individually.</p>
<p>3- Greater justice in the taxation system What do you intend to do so that the taxation system stop widening the gap between rich and poor Canadians?</p>	<p>The Green Party has a comprehensive plan to change the federal taxation system both to reduce pollution and to ensure greater equality. We support, in the long term, the move towards a Guaranteed Livable Income, allowing the lowest earners in Canada to remain above the poverty line. In the short term, we support a reduction in income and payroll taxes, — specifically, the elimination of income taxes for the lowest income bracket, with a shift towards the taxation of carbon instead.</p>

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<p>4- National Child Care Strategy Will your government invest in a publicly delivered, national child care strategy to address the needs of families outside of Quebec?</p>	<p>We support the creation of a high-quality, federally funded, universal child care program. We will reinstate the 2005 agreement with the provincial and territorial governments. We will accelerate the creation of new workplace child care spaces through a direct tax credit to employers.</p>
<p>5- Environment If your party is elected to form a government, will you pledge to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • support the re-instatement of adequate funding of federal environmental programs; • support international initiatives calling for firm commitments to cut greenhouse gas emissions; • 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? 	<p>The Green Party is well known for our stance on environmental issues. We absolutely support the increase of funding for federal environmental programs. We support international cooperation for the reduction of greenhouse gasses. We are firmly committed to reaching and exceeding the commitments made by our government in the Kyoto Accord. The most important element of our strategy to reduce carbon emissions is a revenue-neutral tax shift, which includes a \$50 per tonne carbon tax. The climate crisis is a serious issue that requires immediate action!</p>
<p>6- Anti-scab legislation 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>I have not studied Bill C-257 in enough detail, but I support measures to ensure that employers do not have an unfair advantage over workers in labour negotiations.</p>
<p>7- Working in French in the Public Service What do you intend to do to promote the use of French in the Public service, particularly in the National Capital Region?</p>	<p>I support the right of our public servants to be able to work in their preferred language when possible and appropriate. However, there is already a great deal being done to promote the use of French in the Public Service.</p>