

Questions for Candidates Running in the Provincial Election

Legislative/Labour:

Essential Service legislation (Bill 5) and changes to *The Trade Union Act* (**Bill 6**) have created unfairness for all public sector workers. It took away the right to strike, and made it impossible to achieve a fair collective agreement. It took away the right to organize, and it invited employers like SAHO (Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations) to waste thousands of tax payer dollars on media campaigns against health care workers. What are you planning to do about Bill 5 & Bill 6?

For at least the last couple of years, Saskatchewan WCB has implemented "**Mission Zero**" as a goal to reduce injuries and fatalities; this clearly has had the **opposite effect**. For example, the Health Care sector continues to have a very high injury rate. There has been little effort to fix the hazards in the workplace, including safe staffing levels, only punitive policies which compel workers to attend work when sick or disabled. Last year 45 workers died because of workplace injury and illness. That is an increase of 11 workers who are dead because of their job. What are you planning to do to address these issues?

Recently, the government introduced **Bill 160** setting out changes to *The Human Rights Code* which includes a reduced limitation period (to one year) to file a complaint, and the elimination of the right to appeal to the Human Rights tribunal. Now all complaints will be heard by the Court of Queen's Bench and there is a requirement to have a lawyer representative. Would you not agree that these changes will reduce the opportunity for a real remedy & what are you planning to do about this?

The legislative changes to *The Elections Act* to require voter **Photo ID** at the Provincial election will only impede those most vulnerable in our community... especially seniors and people that live in poverty. Don't you find this action has a discriminatory effect on the most vulnerable? Are you prepared to change this?

Health Care:

High quality public health care is incredibly important to all Saskatchewan people. The current governments approach to health care is troubling in many ways: they are increasing the use of private, for-profit care; they are failing to properly recruit and retain health care professionals; they leave it up to towns to fight over doctors and they are closing hospitals (for example, Wakaw). **I am a health care voter** and this kind of decision-making does not sit well with me because it undermines our public health care system. Do you support public health care? Do you support what the current government is doing?

For years Unions and Workers have been lobbying Government to implement Legislated **safe staffing levels** in Health Care. Did you know that on any given day, Health Care facilities operate with less staff than Essential Service legislation provides in the event of a strike? Do you think that is fair and balanced? Do you have a plan that will fix this?

Are you aware that a large number of health care providers are in hard to recruit positions? LPN's, SCA's, MRT's MLT's are all classifications that are continuously understaffed. This causes increased stress levels for those who are working and contributes to increased sickness and

injuries. Do you have a provincial strategy to address **Recruitment and Retention** for **all** Health Care Classifications?

Do you think it is fair that several Health Regions chose to increase the CEO's salary in order to achieve equity with Alberta and other provinces, yet SAHO and the current government chose not to apply the same principle to other health care providers? What are your plans to deal with this **inequity**?

Education:

Education Assistant (EA) positions in Saskatchewan schools have been **slashed** since 2007. Ministry of Education documents confirm that 350 full-time equivalent positions have been cut, and in this same time, enrollment rose by 5,676 students. This means that those children who require one-on-one support will not receive it. At present, many children are struggling - with no real hope of a successful education experience. The current government unveiled 'Enhancing Opportunities through Full Service School Divisions'; a model which calls for the number of EAs to be reduced by 70% within seven years. What will your party do to restore this much-needed funding for EAs in education – a small price to pay to ensure a child's quality education?

Community-Based Organizations:

Community-based organizations (CBOs) provide crucial services for Saskatchewan people, yet CBOs are drastically **underfunded**. This underfunding contributes to **severe staff shortages**. What is your party's plan to fix this problem?

CBO workers are highly dedicated and skilled and work with some of our most vulnerable citizens, yet the disparity between what they earn in a CBO versus what they could earn in a comparable public sector job is huge. **This leads to constant staff turnover**. What is your party's plan to address this inequity?

Many CBOs that provide services to people with disabilities have seen the level of care required for those clients increase significantly. This has forced CBO workers to routinely perform tasks for which they are **not adequately trained or equipped**. This is not fair or **safe** for either the CBO workers or the clients. What will your party do to address this serious concern?

Many health care workers and advocates have been urging the government to implement quality of care standards, including **safe staffing levels** in facilities. Such standards are also needed in many CBOs. Will your party work to implement quality of care standards, including safe staffing levels?

CBO workers who provide addiction, mental health and justice services recognize the importance of safe and affordable housing for their clients. **A lack of safe and affordable housing** plagues far too many clients and hurts their prospects of recovery or rehabilitation. What is your party's plan to address the housing crisis in Saskatchewan?

