

Questions for Candidates

There are so many issues that are important in Canada today that it can be hard to know what to ask candidates running for federal office. Here are 16 issues that we focus on and which need more public discussion.

Medical Assistance in Dying (MAID)

Canada has legalized euthanasia and assisted suicide under certain circumstances such as an adult's natural death being 'reasonably foreseeable.' Some groups are advocating to remove some of the safeguards and to expand access. They want assisted suicide and euthanasia to be available to mature minors, those for whom mental illness is the sole underlying medical condition, and by advance directive.

- What is your position on changing the safeguards and expanding access to medical assistance in dying, for example, to mature minors, to those with mental illness as the only underlying medical condition or by advance directive?
- Do you believe that health care practitioners should have the freedom of conscience not to participate in medical assistance in dying if it is against their deeply held beliefs? If so, how will you defend that right?
- What do you see as a connection between lack of access to palliative care and expansion of medical assistance in dying in Canada? What are your thoughts about medical assistance in dying being available when only 15% of Canadians have access to palliative care?

More information: www.TheEFC.ca/Euthanasia

Prostitution

Under Canada's current prostitution laws, passed in 2014, the purchase or attempted purchase of sex is illegal. This approach considers prostitution to be inherently exploitive and seeks to reduce the demand for paid sex by targeting pimps and buyers of sex. The prostitution laws are to be reviewed after five years, which will be December 2019.

- Do you support the current approach to prostitution that criminalizes the purchasers of sex and pimps? Will you support the laws when they are reviewed?

- What will you do to support and enhance enforcement of the current prostitution laws?
- What specific measures will your party take to assist prostituted persons in exiting prostitution, for example in funding and support services?

More information: www.TheEFC.ca/Prostitution

Religious Freedom in Canada

Religious freedom is a fundamental human freedom, one that is protected in Canada's *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. Many faith communities share concern about a growing anti-religious bias in Canada. Religious freedom in Canada is being challenged more regularly.

- Do you believe that people of faith have a right to express their religious viewpoints regarding public policy?
- Can you share your opinion on some of the recent developments in Canada viewed by many as challenges to religious freedom, such as the Canada Summer Jobs attestation requirement and that Ontario doctors must participate in euthanasia by making effective referrals, even against their deeply held beliefs?
- How will you work to prevent attacks against religious Canadians, such as the Québec mosque shooting, instances of anti-Semitism across the country, or any other violent act targeting members of faith or belief communities?

More information: www.TheEFC.ca/ReligiousFreedomCanada

Pornography

There are significant public health impacts from degrading and violent pornography online. It is easily accessible and widely used.

- Would you support a government initiative to prevent children from having access to harmful pornography online, such as a law that requires pornography websites to have age verification?
- Would you support a study of the public health impact of violent online pornography?

More information: www.TheEFC.ca/Pornography

Palliative Care

Palliative care is a holistic approach to caring for people who are at the end of life or who have been diagnosed with a serious, life-limiting illness. It provides care and comfort, managing pain, as well as meeting spiritual, emotional, psychological and physical needs.

Currently only 15% of Canadians have access to palliative care at the end of life.

- What steps will you take to improve Canadians' access to quality palliative care?
- How does your party plan to support palliative care providers and caregivers, and to move ahead on research and data collection on palliative care?
- What is your perspective about medical assistance in dying being readily available when only 15% of Canadians have access to palliative care?

More information: www.TheEFC.ca/Palliative

Human Trafficking

Human trafficking involves a person being forced, coerced or deceived into doing exploitive work. The majority of trafficking cases in Canada are domestic – Canadians are being trafficked within our borders, primarily for exploitation in the commercial sex trade.

Women and girls are the majority of those exploited by sex trafficking. Risk factors for trafficking include poverty, social dislocation and being a youth in government care. Indigenous women and girls are particularly at risk.

- How will your party combat sexual exploitation, prostitution and human trafficking in Canada?
- How do you propose to address the social conditions that make people vulnerable to trafficking, such as poverty and housing needs, and strengthen families and communities?
- Will your party commit to a new National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking, including significant long-term funding for victim supports and services?

More information: www.TheEFC.ca/HumanTrafficking

Refugees

A refugee is a person who has fled their country because of persecution, war or violence. There are 25.4 million refugees around the world, and over half are children.

Canada has a history and an international reputation as a welcoming nation to refugees, although many other countries in other parts of the world welcome far more refugees, because of their locations or their policies.

- Canada is moving from resettling refugees from many regions in the world to a more targeted approach, where only a few specific refugee groups will be resettled by the government. What is your party's position on that?
- Churches play a huge role in Canada's program of private refugee sponsorship, as seen most recently in Syrian Refugee resettlement efforts. How do you think government and Church can work more effectively together?
- The number of refugees private sponsors can resettle has many more restrictions than in the past, particularly with refugees from Africa. On the other hand, private sponsors are being encouraged to sponsor more refugees that the government has identified as priorities. What is your party's position on this?

More information: www.TheEFC.ca/Refugees

Children and Youth in Government Care

An estimated 30,000 children and youth are waiting to be adopted in Canada, with a shortage of adoptive families and foster homes. Child protection services are the jurisdiction of the provinces, but provincial advocates for children and youth and others have called for a national children's commissioner and for co-ordinated national programs.

- What will you do to address the need for a permanent home faced by many Canadian children and youth?
- Do you support a national review of programs that focus on children and youth, particularly those in government care? How will you advance this initiative?
- How will you work to improve national data collection so that we can know how many children and youth across the country are in government care and awaiting adoption?

More information: www.TheEFC.ca/Adoption and www.TheEFC.ca/Children

Poverty and Homelessness

A total of 3.4 million people, almost 1 in 10 Canadians, lived below the poverty line in 2017, according to Statistics Canada. At least 235,000 Canadians experience homelessness in any given year, an estimate in the 2016 *State of Homelessness in Canada* report.

Poverty and homelessness are complex issues that defy a single, simple solution. Though there are common risk factors for homelessness – including family breakdown, violence, substance abuse, unemployment, mental and physical illness – those who are homeless each face their own unique circumstances.

- How do you plan to reduce the number of people living in poverty in Canada?
- What measures will your party take to help those who are experiencing homelessness?
- What role do you imagine local churches can play in helping to care for Canadians struggling with poverty and homelessness? How would your party support those efforts?

More information: www.TheEFC.ca/Poverty

Abortion and Fetal Rights

In Canada, there is no legal protection for an unborn child in even wanted or planned pregnancies. There is no separate criminal consequence for harming or killing an unborn child during an assault on a pregnant woman.

There are no legal restrictions on abortion in Canada. Abortion may be performed up until a child is born. Sex-selective abortion particularly targets female unborn children.

- Are there any limits on abortion that you would find reasonable?
- Would you consider taking steps to limit or prevent sex-selective abortion in Canada?
- What is your understanding of the pro-life position, and how do you resonate with it as a person and as a party?

More information: www.TheEFC.ca/Abortion

Indigenous Peoples

The Federal Government is responsible for social services, education, infrastructure and all other programs and services on First Nations territories. It has obligations toward Inuit and Métis peoples, as well.

There are serious, unresolved concerns about poverty, health and illness, housing inadequacies, education, clean water, unemployment, incarceration,

and suicide within many Indigenous communities under federal responsibility.

- What will you do to ensure Canada meets its commitments to Indigenous Peoples in the future?
- How will you work with Indigenous communities to ensure that historic imbalances and injustices are remedied in this generation?
- What do you think are the most important steps toward reconciliation and how can we move forward more effectively on those?

More information is available from EFC-affiliate denominational resources:

Christian Reformed Church in Canada, www.crcna.org/indigenous
Mennonite Church Canada, <http://home.mennonitechurch.ca/indigenous/learn>

Environmental Issues and Creation Care

We have a role to play as caregivers of the world that God has made. Our country and the planet face environmental challenges and action is required on many fronts.

- What measures do you propose to care for and protect the environment both in Canada and globally?
- The world is talking about the reduction of plastic in the environment, what role do you see Canada playing in that movement?
- What role has caring for the environment played in your life and work?

More information: www.TheEFC.ca/Environment

Supporting Families

Canadian families are increasingly under stress and children are seeing their parents' relationships breakdown at younger ages.

The average age of Canadians is increasing as the baby boom generation reaches retirement years. As the Canadian population matures, aging parents become increasingly dependent on their adult children (often parents themselves) for assistance.

- Would you support better federal research on family structures, like collecting statistics on marriage and divorce rates annually, to inform government policies that affect families?

- What policies do you propose to support family relationships? How would your party reduce the stress on families and help decrease the rate of family breakdown?
- What programs would you envision to assist families caring for aging parents or grandparents?

More information: www.TheEFC.ca/Family and www.TheEFC.ca/Seniors

Global Poverty Reduction

The rate of global poverty is decreasing, but 736 million people around the world still live in extreme poverty, especially in conflict zones and other fragile contexts. Global leaders, including in Canada, aim to eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere by 2030.

- What is your party's plan to help reduce global poverty?
- What are your priorities for Canada's international aid?
- How do you propose Canada support the least developed countries in the world, including fragile states torn apart by conflict and natural disasters, that continue to face an uphill battle against poverty?

More information: www.TheEFC.ca/Poverty

Reproductive and Genetic Technologies

A surrogate mother carries and gives birth to a child in order to give him or her away. Canada's laws allow altruistic surrogacy and reimbursement for reasonable surrogacy-related expenses, but some groups are proposing to change the law to make it legal to pay a surrogate. Surrogacy arrangements can impact many vulnerable people – young, low-income women, resulting children and infertile couples. Commercial surrogacy has led to many exploitative situations around the world.

Some reproductive and genetic technologies may also involve the destruction of human life or challenge our understanding of what it means to be human.

- How does your party approach the question of paid surrogacy? What is your position?
- What are your thoughts on animal-human genome experimentation?
- Do you think there should be limits on the use of human embryos for experimentation or research?

- How would you involve your constituency and the Canadian public in discussions on the ethical and philosophical side to these issues?

More information: www.TheEFC.ca/Repro-Tech

Religious Freedom Internationally

Approximately 245 million Christians worldwide, or 1 in 9, experience high levels of persecution for their faith, making them one of the most persecuted religious groups in the world. According to Open Doors' World Watch List, more than 4,000 Christians around the world were killed for faith-related reasons in 2018.

- Canada had an Office of Religious Freedom from 2013 - 2016. Would you support establishing an office to address religious freedom specifically or do you do you support an approach that subsumes religious freedom under the broader category of human rights?
- How would your party approach negotiations in trade talks with countries where religious persecution and human rights violations are occurring?
- How do you think perceived deterioration in religious freedom in Canada impacts our ability to speak globally on this issue?

More information: www.TheEFC.ca/RFI

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