

Canadian Taxpayers Federation's Top Ten Policy Questionnaire

Received from Conservative leadership candidate Belinda Stronach on March 3, 2004.

If you become Prime Minister, will your government introduce legislation:

1. To raise the Basic Personal Exemption from federal income taxes (both the individual exemption and the spousal exemption) to \$15,000 by 2008 as a way to provide all Canadians with some tax relief?

We must reduce the tax burden on all Canadians. That's why I believe that a Conservative government should initially raise the Basic Personal Exemption to \$12,000 within the first mandate.

2. To mandate the federal budget is balanced on an annual basis, and to give Canadians a greater role by ensuring any proposed tax increase is approved in a referendum? Such a law would mirror Ontario's *Taxpayer Protection and Balanced Budget Act*, which was passed by the provincial legislature in 1999 with bipartisan support.

I support the introduction of balanced budget legislation similar to that introduced in a number of the provinces. I believe that any balanced budget legislation should also include a commitment to debt repayment.

3. To allocate 5 per cent of annual federal tax revenue to repaying the principal of Canada's \$510-billion national debt?

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4. To enact a Municipal Roadway Trust whereby the federal government will return half of its ten-cents-per-litre fuel tax to Canadian municipalities for roads and infrastructure?

We must invest in re-building our country's infrastructure – it has been neglected for far too long. While using the fuel tax to accomplish this is one option, we should be willing to explore other sustainable sources of revenue with municipalities and the provinces. We should not act unilaterally without the provinces.

5. To end corporate welfare by eliminating \$4-billion in government subsidies paid to businesses through agencies such as Western Economic Diversification, Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, and Technology Partnerships Canada?

I believe that by creating the most competitive tax structure in the world, we can make all regions of the country competitive and prosperous. Government should not be in the business of propping up businesses. Government grants

should have clear criteria and guidelines, there should be measurable benchmarks for success and grants should be terminated if those benchmarks are not met.

6. To amend the Canada Health Act to give provinces greater flexibility in the delivery of health care?

The Canada Health Act already gives provinces flexibility in the delivery of health care. The problem for the last decade has been the deliberate misinterpretation of the Act by Jean Chretien and Paul Martin. The result of 10 years of Liberal rule is an underfunded system that has not been allowed to adapt to new developments in Medicine. We must end the Liberal practice of using the Canada Health Act to stifle innovation by the provinces and encourage open and honest debate how we make healthcare sustainable within the context of the Canada Health Act.

7. To establish fixed dates for federal elections (such legislation would have special provisions dealing with minority governments, non-confidence votes, and other unusual circumstances), and to give Canadians the right to initiate referendums on issues of their choice as well as recall their Member of Parliament?

We need more transparency in government – that includes making it clear to everyone when they will be going to the polls. I support fixing election dates every four years.

I believe that we should use referendums to settle constitutional issues and other questions of transcending national importance, such as electoral reform or constitutional amendments.

I encourage everyone to read my 13 point plan to strengthen democracy at www.Belinda.ca.

8. To phase out the Indian Act and the Department of Indian Affairs, and establish private property rights for Canadian Aboriginals and develop an accountable and democratic systems of governance for reserves?

The current regime serves neither the interests of Canada's Aboriginal peoples nor those of the country as a whole. I support a process leading to Native Self-Government.

9. To repeal the federal gun registry?

Yes. The federal gun registry is expensive and ineffective. I will scrap the gun registry for long-arm rifles and shotguns, and use a portion of money to fight against illegal guns and drugs. I will also stiffen penalties for crimes involving guns.

10. To withdraw Canada from the Kyoto Protocol?

We need a made-in-Canada solution to climate change that reflects the experience and expertise of provincial governments, not a made-in-Ottawa proposal imposed on the provinces without consultation. I will work with the provinces, industry, and other stakeholders to develop a truly national plan to address climate change.

Bonus Question: (Yes or No answer only.)

To change the federal income tax system to ensure it is neutral in its treatment of single-income-earner families and dual-income-earner families?

Yes.