

# Your Family. Your Future. Your Canada.



In the last five years, Canadian families have lost ground in the financial squeeze. Our democracy has been weakened. And Canada's standing in the world has declined. Equal opportunity has driven our prosperity in the past, and it can again in the future. With better choices, we can turn the page. This is a plan for a stronger Canada.

  
Liberal

# In a **Stronger Canada** we can...

**W**hen middle-class families are strong, our economy is strong. When Canadians all have an equal shot at getting ahead, Canada succeeds. A Liberal government will put Canadian families at the centre of our economic priorities.

We'll pay for better choices without raising your taxes by cancelling tax cuts for the largest corporations, and turning the page on the mistaken priorities of the last five years, like \$30 billion for stealth fighter jets, \$13 billion for mega-prisons, and \$1 billion for the G-20 summit photo-op.

## **Liberal Priorities**

Family Care: support for those caring for sick loved ones at home: \$1 billion

Learning Passport: direct financial support to families for higher education: \$1 billion

Secure Retirement Option, to help Canadians save

Green Renovation Tax Credit: \$400 million

## **Conservative Priorities**

Tax cuts for the largest corporations: \$5-6 billion per year

Stealth fighter jets: \$30 billion

U.S.-style mega-prisons: \$10-13 billion

Wasteful G8/G20 summit: \$1 billion

### **→ A Prudent Plan to Reduce the Deficit**

We'll set a firm and realistic deficit target – down to 1 percent of GDP within two years. Then we'll set new, near-term targets each year until the deficit is eliminated. We'll also restore a Prudence Reserve in each budget. That's money set aside to ensure unforeseen events don't knock us off the targets. If it isn't needed, it goes toward the deficit.



# Make better choices to manage the ***Economy*** responsibly

## → **Competitive and Affordable Tax Rates**

Canada's 2010 tax rate for large corporations was very competitive – 25 percent lower than in the US. And yet the Harper government is cutting it further, borrowing more than \$5 billion a year to pay for it. A Liberal government will cancel further tax cuts for the largest corporations and restore the 2010 rate. That will free up billions for the priorities of middle-class families. We'll also cap the tax break for cashing in stock options, something that currently benefits some very wealthy Canadians excessively.

## → **Spending Discipline**

The Liberal Platform identifies where we will find every dollar needed to pay for all our new initiatives, while also reducing the deficit responsibly. A Liberal government will review all program spending. We'll cut waste that has ballooned in recent years, for example promotional advertising, an over-sized Cabinet, and staff in the Prime Minister's Office. Overall, this Platform will cost less than the Conservative plan.

## → **Innovation for the Jobs of Tomorrow**

A Liberal government will focus on three *Canadian Champion Sectors* – areas driving growth and innovation in global commerce, and where we already have competitive advantages: *Clean Resources, Health and Biosciences,* and *Digital Technologies*. These are the growing sectors of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

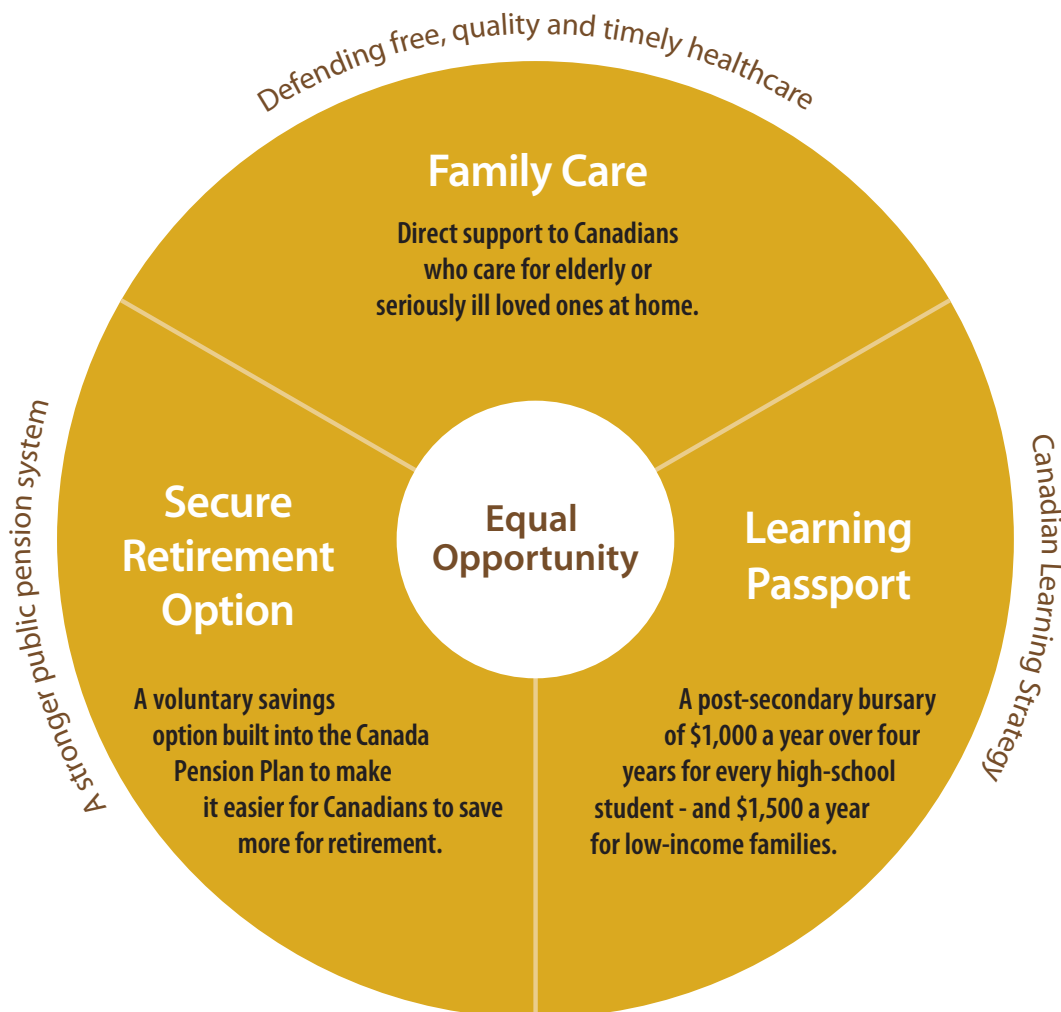
New tax incentives will boost investment and job creation in small, innovative start-up businesses in these sectors. The goal will be for Canada to become a world leader in each of them. Scattered programs will be consolidated so we can also improve support for innovation in major, established areas like aerospace and manufacturing.

## → **Boosting Youth Employment**

Youth unemployment is nearly twice the national average. A Liberal government will put in place a **Youth Hiring Incentive** for small and medium sized businesses: they'll pay no Employment Insurance premiums for any Canadian youth they hire.

# In a **Stronger Canada** we can... Help **Families** ease their financial squeeze

**M**ore families than ever are caring for aging parents as well as our kids, and putting older children through college or university while trying to save for retirement. A Liberal government will stand with middle-class families, so they're not alone as they work through the financial squeeze. Strengthening families will build a stronger economy and put equal opportunity back at the centre of Canadian life.



*"It's time to put equal opportunity back at the centre of our idea of Canada. We're proposing practical steps to put solid ground under the feet of Canadian families."*

**Michael Ignatieff**



## → Family Care and Health Care

A Liberal government will deliver direct support to Canadians who care for elderly or seriously ill loved ones at home. The Liberal Plan for Family Care includes a **Family Care Employment Insurance Benefit**, allowing Canadians to take six months off work to care for loved ones without having to quit their jobs, and a **Family Care Tax Benefit** of up to \$1,350 a year to help low- and middle-income family caregivers manage the costs.

Liberals can be relied on to defend **free, quality and timely medicare for all Canadians**. We'll work with provincial and territorial governments to strengthen the system and contain costs. Our priorities will include good home care services and prescription drug coverage from coast to coast to coast. Canada's first **National Food Policy** will put more healthy Canadian food on Canadian plates and a new **Health Promotion Strategy** will encourage better exercise and nutrition. A new **Canadian Brain Health Strategy** will accelerate research on Alzheimer's Disease and dementia and help patients and their families cope.

## → The Learning Passport and the Canadian Learning Strategy

The jobs of the future will demand more knowledge and skills than ever. Under a Liberal government, learning at all stages of life will become a Canada-wide priority. A new **Learning Passport** will provide \$1,000 a year over four years to every high school student to use for college or university. For students in low income families, the amount will be \$1,500 a year, or an extra \$6,000 in total.

Anchored by the Learning Passport, the Canadian Learning Strategy will also include an **Early Childhood Learning and Care Fund** to support new, affordable, high-quality childcare and learning spaces. We'll invest in **Aboriginal learning** and expand **language training for new Canadians**. Liberals will create a new **Veterans' Learning Benefit**, and we'll work with partners on workers' **skills training and adult literacy**.

## → A Stronger Public Pension System for Working Canadians

Seventy-five percent of all private sector employees do not have a registered pension plan. A Liberal government will work with provinces and territories to **gradually expand the Canada Pension Plan (CPP)**, the most reliable, simple and low-cost way to save for retirement. In addition, our proposed **Secure Retirement Option (SRO)** will be a voluntary supplement within the CPP for any Canadian worker who wants it. Under the SRO, Canadians could save a tax-deductible 5-10 percent of their pay in a secure retirement fund backed by the CPP. Millions of Canadians can't afford the risk or cost of the stock market or RRSPs. This is an option for them.

We'll also help low-income seniors in need by **enhancing the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS)**.



# In a **Stronger Canada** we can...

In the coming years, the most competitive economies will be the cleanest ones. Countries that get ahead on clean energy will create more jobs. Canadians working in agriculture, forestry, mining, fisheries and energy have the knowledge and experience needed to compete in today's environmentally-conscious global markets. And families that make strides on energy-efficiency at home will save money and help the environment.

## → **More Renewables in our Energy Mix**

A Liberal government will quadruple Canada's renewable energy production by 2017, restoring successful incentives for energy entrepreneurs in areas such as solar, wind, tidal and biomass.

## → **Climate Change Action at Home and Abroad**

A Liberal government won't wait for the US Congress to develop our policy. We will work to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and advance carbon pricing through the kind of equitable cap-and-trade system already operating in Europe, and being pursued by BC, Ontario, Manitoba and Quebec. We'll work closely with the U.S. and other partners on energy and climate change issues, and play a constructive role in international negotiations.

## → **Cleaner Oil Sands Development**

Canada is fortunate to have abundant energy resources. The oil sands in particular contribute to prosperity across the country, but they have to be developed more sustainably. A Liberal government will take the federal role in regulating the oil sands seriously. We will immediately end a corporate tax break for oil sands development. We'll redirect the revenue toward incentives for technologies that reduce oil sands impact on the environment, and toward science and monitoring for federal regulatory responsibilities.

## → **Stewardship of our Natural Environment**

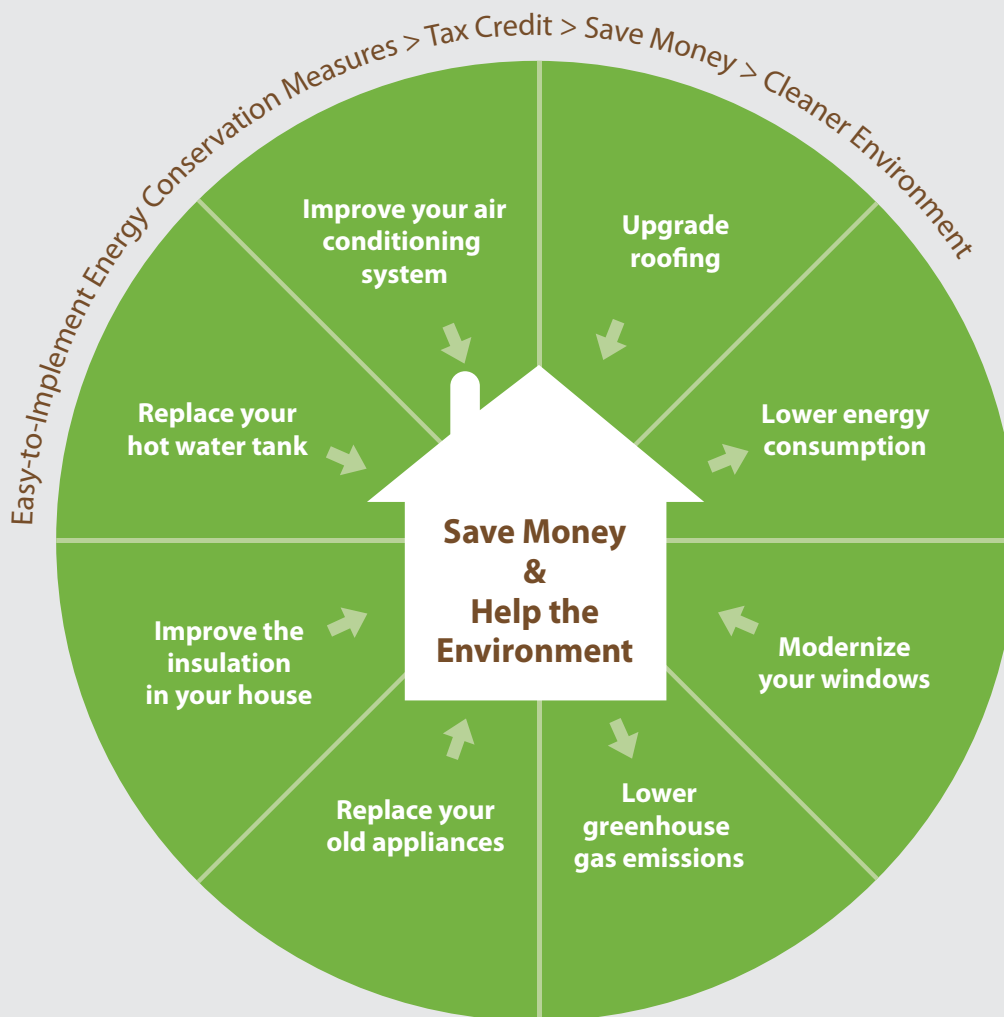
A Liberal government will put a high priority on protecting our increasingly fragile ecosystems and the biodiversity they support. We will partner with provinces, territories and First Nations to expand Canada's **parks and protected spaces**. A Liberal government will develop a new **Canadian Freshwater Strategy** to address shared challenges like pollution, drought, flooding, and better management of consumption and invest in clean-up efforts in the Great Lakes, St. Lawrence and Lake Winnipeg. We will protect **Canada's Oceans**, by expanding Canada's marine protected areas network, and strengthening safeguards against oil spills.

# Protect our natural *Environment* as we transition to the cleaner economy of tomorrow

## → Save Energy, Save Money: The Green Renovation Tax Credit

Energy conservation must play a major part in Canada's efforts to reduce the greenhouse gases that cause climate change. For families, improving our homes' energy-efficiency will also save money on heating and air-conditioning bills. But the renovation work has up-front costs that few can afford these days.

A Liberal government will implement a permanent \$13,500 **Green Renovation Tax Credit** for home improvements that bring environmental benefits such as energy-efficient windows, doors and roofing. This is a smart way to help families protect the environment, fight climate change, and save money.





# In a **Stronger Canada** we can...

**M**ore than ever, we need to bridge the gaps that divide us, not exploit them. Liberals believe that bringing Canadians together is the most important job for political leaders.

## → **Stronger Communities, Stronger Canada**

Stronger, safer communities are the result of combined efforts of all citizens. A Liberal government will invest in a renewed, national **Affordable Housing Framework**, work with all partners on a **Poverty Reduction Plan** for Canada, and support police by maintaining and simplifying the **long gun registry**.

## → **Rural Canada Matters**

In rural Canada many essential services lag behind those in urban centres. A Liberal government will work to narrow those differences by achieving **100% high-speed internet** connectivity everywhere in rural Canada within three years and forgiving student loan debt for **doctors, nurses and nurse practitioners** who practice in rural communities. We will protect **universal postal service** by freezing further post office closures, and provide **volunteer firefighters** a new, \$3,000 refundable tax credit to recognize their community service. Liberals will develop new agriculture programs from the farm up, in support of sustainable farm incomes, research and innovation, environmental stewardship and opening new markets.

## → **Valuing Volunteerism**

A Liberal government will encourage even more Canadians to volunteer their time, talents and energy to our communities by creating a new **Canada Service Corps**. It will offer \$1500 in student loan forgiveness for young Canadians who volunteer at home or abroad.

## → **Arts, Culture and Home-Grown Content in a Digital Canada**

Talented artists and creators help tell Canada's story. A Liberal government will help Canadian artists exploit the digital revolution, and will double the annual budget of the Canada Council for the Arts. We will increase investment in cultural promotion programs, and provide stable and predictable funding to the CBC. Liberals are also committed to effective copyright legislation that rewards creators while ensuring consumers enjoy freedom for personal use of digital content.

# Bring Canadians together to strengthen our *Society and Democracy*



## → **Canadians Make the Rules: Respecting and Renewing our Democracy**

Canadians expect their leaders to respect our democracy *between elections*, not just when we vote. The Harper government has been obsessed with secrecy, and shut down Parliament to avoid accountability, behaving as though rules and laws don't apply to them.

The Liberal team will create an **Open Government**, proactively posting information online about government spending, making databases accessible and searchable, and putting all Access to Information requests and responses online. We'll also restore the mandatory **long-form census**.

We will cooperate with all parties to make Parliament work better. Among other measures, we'll strengthen the role of Standing Committees, and propose reforms to **Question Period** to make it more substantive and less partisan. We will also place new **limits on the Prime Minister's power to shut down Parliament**.

We'll institute a **People's Question Period**, with the Prime Minister and cabinet ministers going online to answer questions from Canadians unfiltered and unscripted. A Liberal government will also develop an **internet voting option** for federal elections, to encourage more people to vote.

## → **Supporting Official Languages**

Bilingualism helps bring Canadians together. A Liberal government will develop the next generation Official Languages Plan, seeking input from communities in all regions.



# In a **Stronger Canada** we can...

**E**vents around the globe have a direct impact every day on our economy, our standard of living, our security, and our environment. The world matters to Canada. Canada should, once again, matter to the world.

## → **A Network Approach to a Rapidly Changing World**

Our skilled diplomats and experienced armed forces are the face of Canada in the world. So are Canadians with cultural roots in all corners of the globe, and business people, entertainers, artists, scientists, academics, students and non-governmental organizations working internationally. A Liberal government will harness all the ways in which Canadians connect across international borders.

Canada is an Asia-Pacific country, with nearly four million Canadians of Asian descent. As China, India and other emerging powers reshape the global landscape, we must find new ways to build our relationships, or risk being left behind.

A Liberal Government will propose a new kind of economic partnership, **Global Network Agreements, first with China and India**. They will boost trade, but also go beyond exports and imports, building on people-to-people connections in strategic sectors such as higher education, clean technologies, culture, tourism, financial services, trade logistics, public health and food.

Canada must also become a **leader in the Arctic**, to advance the well-being of Arctic people, and protect the sensitive Northern environment, its cultures, security and its economic development. We'll re-commit to the Arctic Council and appoint a new Ambassador for Circumpolar Affairs.

## → **Human Development**

A Liberal government will return to **Africa**, in a spirit of partnership and opportunity, not charity. We'll take a "**whole-of-Canada**" approach to international development. A new Canada Democracy Agency will marshal the expertise and dedication of Canadians in the private and non-profit sectors. Troubled states need stronger governance, and Canadians are well-equipped to help build democracy and public services in areas like elections, policing, justice, financial administration and public health.

We'll also make unlocking the massive, **untapped potential of women** in the developing world an overarching priority in Canada's development assistance.

# Achieve our full potential in the *World*



## → **Leading in International Peace Operations**

Canada was the original leader in peacekeeping, though it has changed since we vacated the field. Following the end of Canada's combat role in Afghanistan, our accomplished military will contribute to this era's more dangerous and demanding **peace operations**. Canada will lead in **conflict prevention** and resolution, and advance the acceptance of the **Responsibility to Protect** doctrine, which Canadians authored and advocated in the United Nations.

## → **A Better Balance of Defence, Diplomacy and Development**

In recent years, Canada's international role has seemed almost exclusively about combat and defence. Looking ahead, there is a much bigger picture for our security, our economic interests, our relationships with and contributions to the world around us. Many Canadians are already playing an ambitious role. They will have partners and leaders in a Liberal government.

---

# Your Family. Your Future. Your Canada.

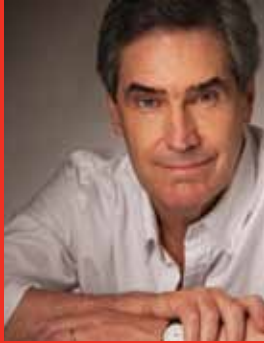


Photo: Philippe Landreville

## It's time to put equal opportunity back at the centre of our idea of Canada.

We believe every family ought to be able to prosper; every child should get a good start in life; every new immigrant deserves a fair chance to get ahead.

Our platform in this election has one overriding objective: to make equal opportunity a reality for every Canadian, whether you live in a big city, a small town, a remote community, a farm or a fishing village.

We will invest in quality, affordable child care for every young family that needs it. We will help every family with the costs of college or university, so your kids can be ready for the jobs of tomorrow. We will help families take time off from work to look after sick loved ones at home. We'll strengthen universally accessible health care for all, and build on the Canada Pension Plan so everyone can retire in security and dignity. We'll also have a new tax credit to help with the up-front costs of renovations to make your home more energy-efficient.

Finally, since opportunities for Canadians are now global, we will promote Canadian success overseas and stand up for the proud ideal that a citizen of Canada is truly a citizen of the world.

We can afford to do this while reducing the Conservative deficit responsibly, without raising your taxes, by making better choices. We will cancel unnecessary and unaffordable tax cuts for the largest corporations, reverse wasteful spending habits and focus on what really matters – giving every Canadian the tools to succeed in the years ahead.

Advancing equal opportunity is the work of a healthy democracy. But in the last five years, our democratic institutions have been weakened by an autocratic and secretive regime that evades the rules and shuts down debate. We will begin the hard work of restoring the credibility of Parliament and reconnecting government to the people it serves.

That's our election pledge to you: a government that respects our democracy and strengthens equal opportunity for every man, woman and child in this incredible country. When each of us gets a chance to succeed, we all succeed together.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stéphane Dion'.

March, 2011



For the detailed Liberal Platform visit  
[www.liberal.ca](http://www.liberal.ca)