

Can you trust Harper?



Ten years ago, Canadians threw out the scandal-plagued Liberals

Now the scandal-plagued Conservatives want us to trust them for more of the same

STEPHEN HARPER says the Oct. 19 election is about trust. After a decade of declining opportunities for working families and individuals, and huge tax giveaways to corporations and the rich, he wants to stay the course.

Our choice is whether we want a government that will provide more opportunities for ordinary people, or more of the same from a government that has:

- Chalked up the worst economic record of any government since World War II, with a significant decline in good, family supporting jobs, and a significant increase in precarious, insecure, low-paying jobs.
- Deepened inequality by forcing the majority of Canadians to pay for tax breaks to those who already have the most.
- Threatened the future of public health care by refusing to negotiate a renewed health accord with the provinces, and slashing federal funding by \$36 billion.
- Broken its promise to reform the Senate and instead appointed close friends and insiders like Mike Duffy, Pamela Wallin and Patrick Brazeau to live high on the hog at public expense.
- Broken federal commitments to First Nations peoples, many of whom live in third world conditions.
- Broken commitments to the international community, lowering Canada's status in the eyes of the world on vital issues such as climate change.
- Raised the retirement age for our children and grandchildren to 67.

**Don't just vote against Harper
Vote for the change you want**

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In this edition

A critical federal election will be held October 19. For 10 years, Stephen Harper has steadily made Canada a less civil, less equal society.

We can make a better choice. We can move forward with hope and optimism towards a better future.

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A clear choice for older and retired workers and our families

By Diane Wood
President
BC FORUM

NEVER BEFORE have I seen seniors come together in such huge numbers to ensure that the next election will be the first step in building a better Canada.

I'm proud that BC FORUM is working with our members, the labour movement and so many seniors' groups to help build a better future.

Among the allies that we are working with are the Coalition for Retirement Security, which brings together organizations that represent more than 6 million Canadians, and Seniors Vote, a nation-wide association of seniors, advocacy and professional associations including the National Pensioners Federation, CARP, Réseau FADOQ, Congress of Union Retirees of Canada, International Federation on Ageing, College of Family Physicians of Canada, retired teachers, university and college professors, public employees, police and health care workers.

Together, all of these groups are calling on the next federal government to:

- Work with provinces to increase the CPP.
- Strengthen income support by restoring the OAS and GIS eligibility age to 65 from 67, increasing the exempt earnings for GIS, and increasing the amount of OAS and GIS for low income seniors.
- Increase income supports for low-income single older Canadians not yet eligible for OAS by creating an equivalent to the OAS spousal allowance.
- Prohibit retroactive erosion of earned pension benefits.
- Work with the provinces to create a national pharmacare plan, with an ultimate goal of first dollar coverage for all Canadians.
- Work with the provinces to fund and set national home care standards to improve access, affordability, and quality of post-acute and chronic care, in the home and in the community, with particular focus on dementia care.
- Increase financial support and provide workplace protection for caregivers.
- Work with the provinces to ensure every Canadian has access to housing appropriate to need, including affordable and supportive housing, and assisted living services.
- Address growing income inequality which affects Canadians of all ages.

All of these issues, plus the elimination of door to door mail delivery, have one thing in common. They are all initiatives where Stephen Harper has refused to act, or actually taken us backwards. We need a new government with a new approach.

If there is one thing I hear more often than any other from our members, it is that we want our children and grandchildren to have the same opportunities to get ahead that we enjoyed – good jobs with wages that can support a family, quality public services, public health care and education.

That's why we're working so closely with Canada's labour movement to urge all voters to make "a better choice" in this election.

Canada is a great country. We could do so much better if the Harper government was not continually setting us back, or taking us down



Diane Wood

the wrong path entirely.

By working together, we can focus on creating good jobs for our children and grandchildren, not more of the low-paid, part-time precarious jobs that are becoming so prevalent.

We can create a national child care program that allows parents to contribute their skills to our economy, and simultaneously provide more free time to the thousands of seniors who are looking after their grandchildren.

We can help people retire with dignity after a lifetime of work by taking real action on retirement security.

We can demand our governments work together to strengthen Medicare, not cut \$36 billion and walk away from the table as Harper has done.

We can do better. With your support on October 19, we will.

The worst: Canada's economy under the Harper government

By Jim Stanford

WITH RECENT bad news, Conservative hopes of cashing in on their reputation as “the best economic managers” have suddenly become faint. Months of falling real GDP, terrible export and investment numbers, and growing consumer pessimism, make their traditional chest thumping seem starkly at odds with the painful reality confronted by most Canadians.

This gap between triumphalist rhetoric and grim reality did not suddenly appear. In fact, the evidence has been piling up for years – long before the current slowdown – that Canada's economic performance under the Harper Conservatives has been uniquely poor.

To further investigate this dissonance, I have worked with my Unifor colleague Jordan Brennan to compile an exhaustive empirical comparison of Canada's economic record under the Harper government, and compared that record to previous post-war prime ministers.

The performance of the economy under each prime minister was described on the basis of 16 conventional and commonly used indicators of economic progress and well-being. These indicators fall into three broad categories:

- **Work:** Job creation, employment rate, unemployment rate, labour force participation, youth employment, and job quality.
- **Production:** Real GDP growth (absolute and per capita), business investment, exports and productivity growth.
- **Distribution and Debt:** Real personal incomes, inequality, federal public services, personal debt,

and government debt.

These are the bread-and-butter indicators of real economic progress. All indicators are measured using annual data from 1946 through 2014, obtained from Statistics Canada and other public sources.

There is no other time in Canada's post-war history in which the economy has performed worse than it did under the Harper government

We considered the record of every prime minister who served at least a full year in office. (We didn't think that John Turner had much chance, in 77 days, to really affect the country's economic direction!) We compared changes, annual average rates of growth, or average levels for each variable, from the year each PM came into office, until the year they left.

If you have been swallowing the rhetoric about Conservatives naturally being the “best economic managers” then these results are going to shock you.

For seven of the 16 indicators, the Harper government ranks last (or tied for last) among the nine post-war prime ministers. In six more cases, it ranks (or is tied) second-last. Among the remaining three indicators, the Harper government never ranks higher than sixth out of nine.

Considering the overall average ranking of each prime minister across all 16 indicators, the Harper government receives an average

ranking of 8.05 out of a worst-possible 9.0. That is dead last among the nine post-war governments, and by a wide margin – falling well behind the second-worst government, which was the Mulroney Conservative regime of 1984-93.

The very poor economic record of the Harper government cannot be blamed on the fact that Canada experienced a recession in 2008-09. In fact, Canada experienced a total of 10 recessions during the 1946-2014 period. Most governments had to grapple with recession at some point during their tenures – and some prime ministers had to deal with more than one. Instead, statistical evidence shows that the recovery from the 2008-09 recession has been the weakest (by far) of any Canadian recovery since the Depression. A uniquely weak recovery, not the fact that Canada experienced a recession at all, helps to explain the Harper government's poor economic rating.

This statistical review confirms that it is far-fetched to suggest that Canada's economy has been well-managed during the Harper government's time in office. To the contrary, there is no other time in Canada's post-war economic history in which Canada's economy has performed worse than it did under the Harper government.

For Canadians, the legacy of this government has been unemployment, insecurity and debt. It is definitely time for a change.

Jim Stanford is an economist with Unifor. This article, originally published by rabble.ca, has been edited for length. The full 64-page report “Rhetoric and Reality: Evaluating the Economic Record Under the Harper Government,” is available at www.unifor.org.

Universal drug plan would save Canadians billions of dollars

By David J.A. Porteous EPC

CANADA IS the only developed country with universal health insurance coverage that does not also offer universal prescription drug benefits.

Sadly studies suggest about one in 10 Canadians say they can't afford to take their medications as prescribed.

Here in BC, the situation is even worse than the Canadian average, with almost one in six leaving their prescriptions unfilled.

These numbers reflect a high percentage of seniors who are on very limited incomes.

With the federal election just over a month away Canadian voters



David Porteous

have an opportunity to seek out politicians who will vote for a universal drug program.

A universal prescription drug plan could reduce total spending on medication in Canada by billions and cover everyone at an affordable price health policy researchers say.

Not only will seniors and individuals without health plans save, those that are fortunate enough to have a benefits plan on their own or at work will save billions.

It's time for a change. We can get the change we want by voting.

David Porteous is an Elder Planning Counselor, and a charter member of the Canadian Initiative for Elder Planning Studies.

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A call to revitalize democracy

LLOUD CHEERS and standing ovations greeted NDP Leader Tom Mulcair's commitment to revamp the voting system when he brought his Campaign for Change to Courtenay.

"Friends, I believe it's time to revitalize our democracy," said Mulcair.

"It's time that every Canadian's vote is directly reflected in the outcome.

"The NDP is clear in its commitment to replace the first past the post voting system with proportional representation, and to make this the last unfair election."

Under the current electoral system, majority governments are often elected by a minority of Canadians.

For example, the Harper Conservatives won a majority in 2011 with 39.6 percent of the vote.

Considering that the turnout was just 61.1 percent, less than a quarter of eligible voters actually cast a ballot for the Conservatives.

Under a system of proportional representation, every vote would count.

Many experts believe this would encourage more Canadians to cast their ballot.

It could also help encourage civil debate because everyone could vote *for* the change they want, rather than *against* a particular party.

"We can't just hope for it. We can't just advocate for it. We have to win to make it a reality," said Mulcair.

"So I say this to every British Columbian, if you want change in Ottawa, if you want this to be the last election under the first past the post, then I'm inviting you to join us... because here in B.C. it's the NDP who will defeat Conservatives."



Tom Mulcair, Leader of Canada's NDP, drew a large and enthusiastic crowd when he brought his Campaign for Change to Courtenay. With polls predicting British Columbia ridings will be tight races between the NDP and the Conservatives, every vote will count.

Stephen Harper "games the system" and we get a billion dollar bill

WHEN STEVEN HARPER'S Conservatives came to power, they promised to do things differently.

"...fixed election dates stop leaders from trying to manipulate the calendar simply for partisan political advantage."

– Stephen Harper, May 26, 2006

"The previous Liberal government repeatedly abused the power to call general elections."

– Peter Van Loan, May 3, 2007

So Conservatives passed a law fixing the next election date as October 19, 2009.

Stephen Harper almost immediately broke his own law, threw out his fixed election date, and called a snap election in 2008.

"Prime Minister Stephen Harper pulled the plug on his own minority government on Sunday, setting off a national election campaign that will send voters to the polls on Oct. 14 at a cost of about \$300 million."

– Canwest News, Sept. 7, 2008

Now, with the longest campaign any living Canadian has ever seen, Stephen Harper is at it again in 2015.

"He games the system.... What it does is completely distort everything we've ever fought for, everything we've established as rules."

– Former Chief Electoral Officer Jean-Pierre Kingsley, August 1, 2015, CBC Radio's *The House*.

Calling an early election is another hypocritical attempt by Conservatives to try and gain a financial advantage – and foot taxpayers with the bill. The early election call will cost taxpayers hundreds of millions more – and the total cost for the campaign could now reach as high as \$1,000,000,000.

Stephen Harper's cynical ploy is a brazen attempt to try to boost the fortunes of the Conservative Party.

It won't kick-start a sagging economy.

It won't put 1.3 million unemployed Canadians back to work.

BC FORUM calls for improved pensions, financial security

THE FACTS are stark. Eleven million Canadians do not have a workplace pension plan. Baby boomers are about to retire in unprecedented numbers. The number of seniors living in poverty is steadily increasing.

Despite the obvious need for action, the Harper government has steadfastly ignored the looming crisis and insisted Canadians fend for themselves.

“For years, we have worked with our allies in the labour movement and seniors’ groups to push for improvements in pensions and more financial security for retirees,” says Diane Wood, President of BC FORUM.

“It’s been very frustrating. At every step, the federal government has blocked our efforts, and the efforts of provincial governments to deal with this looming crisis,” she said.

“Instead of supporting improvements in the hugely effective Canada Pension Plan (CPP), Harper is pushing our children and grandchildren into risky private plans that funnel large management fees to big financial institutions. And on top of that, he had the nerve to announce in Switzerland that he was unilaterally raising the retirement age to 67,” she said.

Wood noted that Canadians are increasingly worried about their retirement. Many fear they won’t have enough money saved. For some, the investment returns they were promised never materialized or were eaten away in fees. Others just couldn’t save enough on their own.

“After a lifetime of work, no one should have to retire in poverty,” said Wood.

A small increase in CPP contributions would help make that goal a

reality. Current CPP benefits replace a maximum of 25 percent of a worker’s earnings. For less than a cup of coffee and a donut a day, the average worker could double their CPP benefits.

Expanding the CPP is a simple and effective solution for all workers. It helps the millions of Canadians who don’t have a workplace pension. It helps the millions of women and men who, often through no choice of their own, must frequently change jobs – because unlike any other plan, the CPP follows workers from job to job in every part of Canada and covers all workers.

Unlike the private plans promoted by Harper, the CPP has very low management costs, keeps up with the cost of living, pays out benefits until death, and if applicable, continues to pay a portion of benefits to a surviving spouse.

“The CPP is just about the safest investment there is. It has massive resources because we’re all in it together. It costs taxpayers nothing because it’s financed exclusively by workers and employers. We can all be confident it will be there for us,” said Wood.

“It has the additional advantage of being a defined benefit so we can know exactly what we’ll get.

“Harper’s plan is exactly the opposite. With his promotion of defined contribution pensions, every worker’s retirement security is held hostage to the wild swings of the stock market, contingent on their employer’s stability, and eaten away by significant investment fees.

“Expanding the CPP is the best choice to ensure today’s workers – our children and grandchildren – can retire with dignity tomorrow,” said Wood.

NDP will act to secure your retirement

IF YOU work hard and play by the rules your whole life, you should be able to expect a stable income in retirement — and you deserve a Prime Minister who understands that,” says Opposition Leader Tom Mulcair.

“After a lifetime of hard work, every Canadian deserves to retire with dignity and financial security,” he says.



After a decade of Stephen Harper, two out of three working Canadians don’t have a pension. Instead of working to fix it, Conservatives have raised the retirement age from 65 to 67 and refused to boost Canada’s rock-solid public pension system, the CPP.

Tom Mulcair has outlined a concrete plan to strengthen the middle class and help families get ahead by ensuring seniors get the benefits they’ve earned.

As Prime Minister, Mulcair will cancel the Conservative decision to raise the retirement age — bringing it back down to 65. And he’ll work tirelessly to strengthen public pensions while protecting workplace pensions.

Harper's partisan political attack on the labour movement

By Hassan Yussuff
President
Canadian Labour Congress

ON JUNE 30, the Prime Minister used his Conservative Senate majority to re-write Senate rules, shut down debate and force through Bill C-377.

I want to thank all of you for your dedication and hard work over the last four years to try and defeat this fatally flawed Bill. (*An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act* and impose unique requirements on labour organizations.)

Of course, the labour movement was not alone in our criticisms.

We worked with many other individuals and organizations to coordinate our messages and opposition to C-377, including: seven provincial governments; Canada's Privacy Commissioner; constitutional and labour lawyers; the Canadian Bar Association; the insurance and mutual fund industries; benefits and pension plan managers; medical associations; and academic experts.

We also worked closely with legislators in both the House of Commons and the Senate to highlight the Bill's flaws and ensure it had a rocky ride through Parliament from the start. In particular, the NDP in the House of Commons, and the Liberals in the Senate, did all they could to oppose, delay and defeat this flawed Bill.

Although the Conservative majority rigged the game and forced Bill C-377 through the Senate, this is not the end of our fight.

Bill C-377 is unconstitutional, undemocratic, discriminatory, and an invasion of personal privacy. The Bill will be subject to a constitutional challenge in the courts in the future.



In the meantime, we must not forget why this fatally flawed Private Member's Bill was ultimately able to get through Parliament: From the start, C-377 was orchestrated direct-

ly by the heavy hand of the Prime Minister.

Bill C-377 is Stephen Harper's partisan political attack on unions. He ordered Conservatives in the House of Commons and the Senate to ignore the evidence, ignore the experts, ignore the critics, break the rules and pass the Bill.

It is clear what we are up against. Stephen Harper is prepared to do whatever it takes to silence the voice of our labour movement.

As we head towards the federal election on October 19, 2015, it is critical that we remind our members, and others, about Harper's partisan political attack on our labour movement.

The best way we can ensure this Bill is repealed is to defeat Stephen Harper and elect a new federal government this October.

We have a lot of hard work ahead of us. Harper broke the rules to force C-377 through the Senate. What is he prepared to do to win the next election?

Rising youth unemployment shows it's time for a change

STATISTICS CANADA reported this summer that youth unemployment rose from June's 12.9 per cent to 13.2 per cent in July, with 29,000 fewer young workers in full time jobs.

"We need a new government that will commit to adequately funding initiatives like targeted paid internships and skills training for youth, and requiring that any business benefiting from federal infrastructure spending hires apprentices," said CLC president Hassan Yussuff.

Canada's job market also lost

34,000 public and private sector jobs, while workers in the often precarious self-employed sector rose by 41,000. Over the past year, overall job growth has been stagnant, with unimpressive private sector job growth of just 0.7 per cent.

"The federal election offers Canadians the opportunity to make a better choice for the economy, one that would spur the creation of good jobs, and stop the trend of growing instability and uncertainty facing workers today," said Yussuff.

Canadas top labour leaders set out a new agenda for Canada

WHILE CANADA'S premiers held their annual meeting in St. John's in July, the presidents of Canada's provincial and territorial labour federations hosted parallel meetings where jobs, pensions, childcare, health care and climate change were the big-ticket items.

Canada's top labour leaders said it was time to come together with unprecedented unity to set a new agenda for Canada.

"The Harper government will go down in history as one of the most undemocratic and divisive ones in Canadian History. Every important issue facing Canadians, our provinces and our territories, has been flattened under the bulldozer of Harper's uncompromising ideological agenda," said Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Labour President, Mary Shortall.

The labour leaders called on the provinces and territories to lay out the building blocks for a 'caring society' that provides a fair minimum wage and dignity in retirement; supports parents through affordable national child care and takes care of us when we are sick; and protects jobs and the environment for future generations through a green economy.

Under Stephen Harper, Canada has been undergoing a shift towards a low-wage economy, in which cuts to Employment Insurance and growth of the Temporary Foreign Worker Program have been used to drive down wages for every worker, said the labour leaders.

Parents across the country have been burdened by impossible childcare costs that have kept many women, in particular, out of the workforce.

Meanwhile, two thirds of Can-



By refusing to work with the provinces on a renewed health accord, and unilaterally cutting federal funding by \$36 billion, Stephen Harper has undermined the future of public health care for our children and grandchildren.

adian workers don't have a workplace pension plan and 10 percent of Canadians 65 and older live in poverty.

Harper's refusal to renew the Canada Health Accord last year has led to deep cuts to hospitals and health care across the country and paved the way for a patchwork of provincial and territorial systems that provide differential access based on where people live and their ability to pay.

His staunch rejection of international climate change agreements has earned Canada a reputation as an impediment to progress.

The labour federation presidents called for a series of specific steps to help Canada move forward:

- a \$15 an hour minimum wage across the country;
- doubling of the Canada Pension Plan;

- creation of an affordable national childcare program;
- revival of the Canada Health Accord to strengthen public health care;
- a comprehensive immigration strategy with a pathway to citizenship;
- establishment of a Green Jobs agenda for Canada.

"Canada's economic policy can no longer simply serve the partisan interests of the Harper government and his corporate backers. We need an economy that serves every Canadian," said Manitoba Federation of Labour President, Kevin Rebeck.

"The shift to a green economy, with fair wages and strong public services supporting Canadians, will guarantee a future of good jobs that cannot be exported overseas, a thriving workforce and a planet that can support the generations to come."

Conservatives convicted of cheating in every election they've won

STEPHEN HARPER'S Conservative Party will say and do anything to cling to power, including breaking the law and even changing the law to make it easier for them to get away with it.

This year, Dean Del Mastro – hand-picked by Harper to be his spokesperson on ethics – was sentenced to a month in jail, four months house arrest and 18 months probation for breaking Canada's election laws.

Justice Lisa Cameron called his offences an “affront” and the very “antithesis” of democracy.

“This type of cheating and lying will result in serious sanctions. Custody is required to reflect the need for denunciation and deterrence,” she said as she passed sentence.

Harper's Conservatives have now been convicted of cheating in every election they've won.

In 2006, they attempted to get around legal spending limits through an infamous “in-and-out” scheme that hid expenditures by shifting money between ridings and the national party. Some would call it money-laundering.

In 2008, there were more spending violations.

And 2011 brought us the robo-calls scandal. Voters who supported other parties were told in automated phone calls purporting to be from Elections Canada that their polling place had been changed.

Conservative operative Michael Sona was convicted of vote suppres-

sion and preventing people from casting their ballots. Since he used Conservative lists to arrange the calls it would be virtually impossible for him to have acted alone, but no other Conservatives were charged.

Despite all these ethical violations and convictions, the Conservatives did not respond with a commitment to respect and uphold democratic values.

Instead, they rammed a new law through Parliament. The Conservatives called it the Fair Elections Act. Many critics and experts say it read more like an “Unfair Elections Act” designed to make it easier for Harper's Conservatives to continue operating as they have in the past.

Liberals and Conservatives team up to gut Canadians' privacy protections

NEW DEMOCRATS are outraged by a recent report which shows that the sweeping new information sharing measures voted into law by the Liberals and Conservatives were never requested by the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) as maintained by the Harper government.

“The Conservatives weren't truthful when they told Canadians these laws were necessary,” said Randall Garrison, the NDP's public safety critic.

“In fact, internally, CSIS was saying they could work within existing legislation.”

Contrary to the claims of the Harper government, a report obtained under the Access to Information Act revealed that the gutting



of Canadians' privacy protections under Bill C-51 was never requested by CSIS.

The new law passed by the Conservatives with Liberal support removes safeguards that ensured information about law-abiding Canadians was not referred to security and intelligence agencies without good reason.

Federal Privacy Commissioner Daniel Therrien denounced the measures as “clearly excessive.”

The legislation sparked mass rallies across Canada, with speakers accusing the Harper government of moving Canada towards a police state with no respect for the privacy of Canadians.

“New Democrats opposed this bill right from the start because it was clear these powers were unprecedented, excessive and lacked oversight,” said Garrison.

“While the Liberals serenely supported the reckless Conservative legislation, Canadians can count on Tom Mulcair's New Democrats to fix the damage done by Stephen Harper,” he said.

Moving forward to a better future

CALLING THE Truth and Reconciliation Commission's June report into the legacy of residential schools a landmark moment in Canada's reconciliation process, NDP Leader Tom Mulcair says he is determined to act upon the report.

"Our country is trying to turn the page on the many dark years and to move forward towards a better future for all peoples," said Mulcair.

"As Canadians, we must all learn more about this sombre chapter in our history. We will not forget the testimonies and we will remember the children who never made it home to their families."

He said the NDP is determined to repair the broken relationship with Indigenous peoples, which is the re-

sult of inaction by previous governments at the nation to nation level.

"Canada must show leadership and we must ensure that formal apologies made in 2008 were not in vain.

"The government must act immediately in the areas of education, child protection and health care in order to put an end to the inequalities and sorry legacy of residential schools," he said.

"We are determined to act upon the report of the Commission.

"We will consult with Indigenous people and establish which of the recommendations require the most pressing attention.

"Let us undertake to always pur-

sue the truth, and to work together towards healing and reconciliation," said Mulcair.

The Harper government has made no similar commitment and is remembered as the government that tore up the Kelowna Accord, an historic 10 year agreement between governments and First Nations to work together to close the gap between the living standards of Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals.

Achieved after 18 months of consultations, the Kelowna Accord was designed to significantly improve health, education, economic opportunities, housing and infrastructure, accountability, and relationships between Aboriginal communities and the federal government.

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Canada's Senate: Cronies, cover-ups and corruption

STEPHEN HARPER knows nothing about it. The \$90,000 paid by his chief of staff, Nigel Wright, to try to get Mike Duffy out of trouble over expenses was “a secret arrangement,” according to the Prime Minister. Nobody ever told him anything about it.

He must have been just about the only person in the prime minister's office who was kept in the dark.

According to RCMP documents filed with the court, 13 members of Harper's staff were in on the secret.

They work for Harper.

They report to Harper.

They are responsible to Harper.

But apparently not one of them ever bothered to talk to the boss about an issue that has dominated the news for months.

Perhaps they were just too busy trying to put Humpty Dumpty together again.

The boiling scandal and Harper's desperate attempts to distance himself raise troubling questions about his judgment and management skills.

What kind of manager is it who has absolutely no idea what his staff is doing? How could he not know?

And what does it say about his judgment that he hired or appointed every one of the people whose names have since been dragged through the courts?

At one time Harper described Duffy as his “*best and hardest working appointment ever.*”

Court testimony has revealed that even Ray Novak knew about the \$90,000 deal. Novak had been described as squeaky clean when he replaced Nigel Wright as Harper's



SENATOR MIKE DUFFY: The tip of a dirty iceberg.

chief of staff.

Senate without elections.

Stephen Harper came to power promising to end the Liberals' scandals and patronage. As part of that commitment, he promised that he would not appoint people to the

Since then, he has appointed 59 senators. His record shows he was more interested in looking after his friends than keeping his promises to Canadians.

A commitment to clean up the Senate

OUTSIDE THE courthouse where Senator Mike Duffy was on trial on 31 charges, the NDP outlined their plan to raise the bar on accountability in the Senate, and end wasteful spending and blatant partisan abuses.

“We believe Canadians deserve immediate accountability on the Senate - once and for all,” said the NDP's ethics critic Charlie Angus.

While working to abolish the Senate, the NDP would immediately:

- Prohibit Senators from tax-payer funded partisan work. Senators would no longer participate in party caucuses or do fundraising, organizing or public advocacy on behalf of a political party using Senate resources.
- End taxpayer-sponsored travel not directly related to Senators' legislative work.
- Establish a single Ethics Code and a single Ethics Commissioner for all Parliamentarians.

“Stephen Harper promised to clean up Liberal corruption, but he's actually made things worse” said Angus.

“Today there are 35 Senators under RCMP investigation, including 12 Senators appointed by Stephen Harper, 19 appointed by other Conservative Prime Ministers and 16 appointed by the Liberals,” said Angus.

Solving the health care crisis

What's the best way to improve health care – with cuts or by investing wisely?

The better choice gives Canadians access to health care when they need it.

CANADA is aging. By 2026, one in five of us will have reached age 65, and over the next 10 years we face a shortage of 86,000 long-term care beds.

Considering many of us already struggle to find quality long-term care for our loved ones, it's no wonder we worry about having the health care we'll need in the future.

And it's not just seniors who are waiting. Four million Canadians don't have a family doctor.

While Canadians wait for care, the federal government is breaking its promise to put the funds we need into the system.

Before the last federal election, Prime Minister Harper promised to renew the Federal Health Accord, committing to increasing health care transfer payments to the provinces by six per cent a year.

All political parties recognized that making this commitment was the only way to ensure Canadians would get the care they need, despite a rapidly aging population and increased demand and costs.

But in 2013, the government broke that promise, tying any further increases to economic growth. Even if the outlook for Canada's economy exceeds expectations and improves, increases in funding for health care are unlikely to exceed 3 per cent.

That means a funding shortfall



Improvements in Canada's health care system depend on the federal and provincial governments working together – something the Harper government has refused to do. We need a new government to ensure that public health care will be available for our children and grandchildren, with action to provide better access to home care, home support, and more affordable prescription drugs.

of about \$36 billion in health care transfers by 2024.

How does that make sense?

We have a better plan.

One that will ensure Canadians get the care they need, when they need it. One that also creates good jobs.

Instead of cutting, let's get back to the original plan to invest enough in the system to recruit and train the healthcare professionals we need and improve access to – and the quality of – long-term care.

Let's also invest in universal drug coverage.

Today, more than 3 million Canadians can't afford the medication they need. A study published in the Canadian Medical Association

Journal found that investing just \$1 billion annually would save \$7.3 billion every year – a 32 per cent reduction in overall spending on prescription drugs.

Investing in Canada's health care system will benefit all Canadians. It will create skilled, high-value jobs and help keep Canadians healthy and able to work. These are long-term benefits that only investment can deliver for our economy.

Investing in our health care system is the better choice for all Canadians.

The Canadian labour movement is urging all Canadians to make a choice for the better in the federal election.

Visit betterchoice.ca for more information.

Moving forward with quality, affordable child care

“As a father, grandfather, and former cabinet minister, I’ve seen firsthand how quality childcare helps families and boosts the economy.”

– Tom Mulcair

PARENTS WORK hard and sacrifice to give their children the best possible start in life, and continue to support them as they grow older.

Across Canada, thousands of seniors are spending their retirement years looking after their grandchildren due to a lack of quality, affordable child care.

There are also thousands of single parents who don’t have that kind of support, and are thereby prevented from contributing their skills to the economy.

The median cost of child care for one infant is \$1,215 a month in Vancouver. It can go as high as \$2,000 a month, and that assumes you can even find a space.

After 10 years of Stephen Harper, too many families still can’t find affordable childcare. It leaves too many Canadians struggling to fully participate in the workforce.

Tom Mulcair and the NDP have announced a concrete plan to strengthen the middle class and help families get ahead by ensuring quality childcare is affordable for every Canadian family.

Mulcair will create a million child care spaces and cap fees for parents – no more than \$15 a day.

It’s a plan that will save young families money, provide a few days off for grandparents, and enable



Tom Mulcair and the NDP have announced they will create one million child care spaces at \$15 a day. This includes 110,000 in British Columbia where parents face long waiting lists and pay fees that are among the highest in Canada.

greater participation in the workforce – especially by women.

A money maker for governments

RESearch PUBLISHED by the Research Chair in Taxation and Public Finance, Université de Sherbrooke, demonstrated that Quebec’s affordable, quality child care program more than pays for itself – it actually makes money for governments.

The authors found that the service made it possible for 70,000 more women to take long term jobs, increasing the number of women in the workforce by 3.8 percent. In turn, that increased the provincial GDP by \$5.1 billion. The tax-transfer return to governments significantly exceeded the cost of subsidies.

Not only does universal child care improve the lives of children and families, the report concluded that providing the service is “a profitable

enterprise” for all levels of government.

Research also shows that every dollar of public funds invested in quality child care provides a 254 percent return in socio-economic benefits. High quality child care is a program that benefits many groups: children, families, women, employers, communities, and society at large.

Today, four out of every five children under six years old don’t have access to a regulated child care space.

For many of the families that have found a space, the cost of child care is their second-highest expense after housing.

Finding quality, affordable care shouldn’t be a never-ending struggle. Quebec’s example shows that affordable childcare benefits everyone. A national child care system is a better choice for children, families and the economy.

Strengthening BC FORUM has never been more important

Please encourage your friends to join our team

THROUGH OUR UNIONS, before we retired, we've all seen the benefits of collective action. Our voices are strongest when we stand together in solidarity.

That's where BC FORUM comes in. We are the only provincial organization that represents union members who have retired or are nearing retirement. We are an integral part of the labour movement, with formal representation in leadership bodies, and maintain strong links with provincial and national seniors' groups.

Together, we can make a difference for ourselves and our families. Please encourage friends, colleagues and family members to join us using the form below, or on-line at www.bcforum.ca.

Renew your membership – and sign up a friend

PLEASE HAVE A LOOK at the mailing label on this edition of *The Advocate* to check whether your membership is now due for renewal. If your membership is about to expire, you can renew by mailing the coupon below to BC FORUM, #200 - 5118 Joyce St., Vancouver, B.C. V5R 4H1.

You can also renew your membership on-line at www.bcforum.ca.

We also ask for your help in reaching out to people who are nearing retirement or have already retired. Like all membership-based organizations, we are all stronger when as many people as possible work together.

Remember that BC FORUM actively welcomes workers who are 50 and older, so don't be shy about encouraging your friends and family members to join us, even if they are still in the workforce.

Solidarity makes us strong.



BC FORUM has always provided free \$2,500 Accidental Death and Dismemberment insurance coverage to members.

We are proud to now extend this coverage to members' spouses at the low cost of \$5 per year. All you have to do is check the appropriate box when you apply or renew your membership. BC FORUM's AD&D coverage is valid until you reach age 86, the maximum age we were able to negotiate.



Please check expiry date on mailing label. If membership is due you can also renew at www.bcforum.ca. BCGEU, HSA, COPE, CEU and UFCW will pay first year BC FORUM dues for qualified members.



B.C. Federation of Retired Union Members • #200 - 5118 Joyce St., Vancouver, V5R 4H1
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Name: _____
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DAY MONTH YEAR

Spouse's name: _____ Spouse's birth date:* _____
DAY MONTH YEAR

\$20 - 1 year \$49 - 3 years (free \$2,500 AD&D for member)

\$25 - 1 year \$64 - 3 years (adds \$2,500 AD&D for spouse)

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* Required for AD&D group insurance coverage to age 86.

Building on the spirit and achievements of Jack Layton

By Rick Smith
Executive Director,
Broadbent Institute

IT'S HARD to believe that, four years ago on August 22, our friend Jack Layton passed away. I say hard to believe because he still seems very present to me.

The progressive causes and organizations he poured his heart into across the country continue their great work and serve as a living testament to his spirit.

Whenever I look at the windmill on the downtown Toronto shore, I think of his determination to popularize renewable energy.

Whenever I read about efforts to combat violence against women, I'm reminded of his co-founding of the White Ribbon Campaign.

Whenever I see great community leaders taking the leap into electoral politics, I see the embodiment of his passionate belief that public service is the highest of callings.

Wherever you are today, take a moment to remember Jack's legacy.

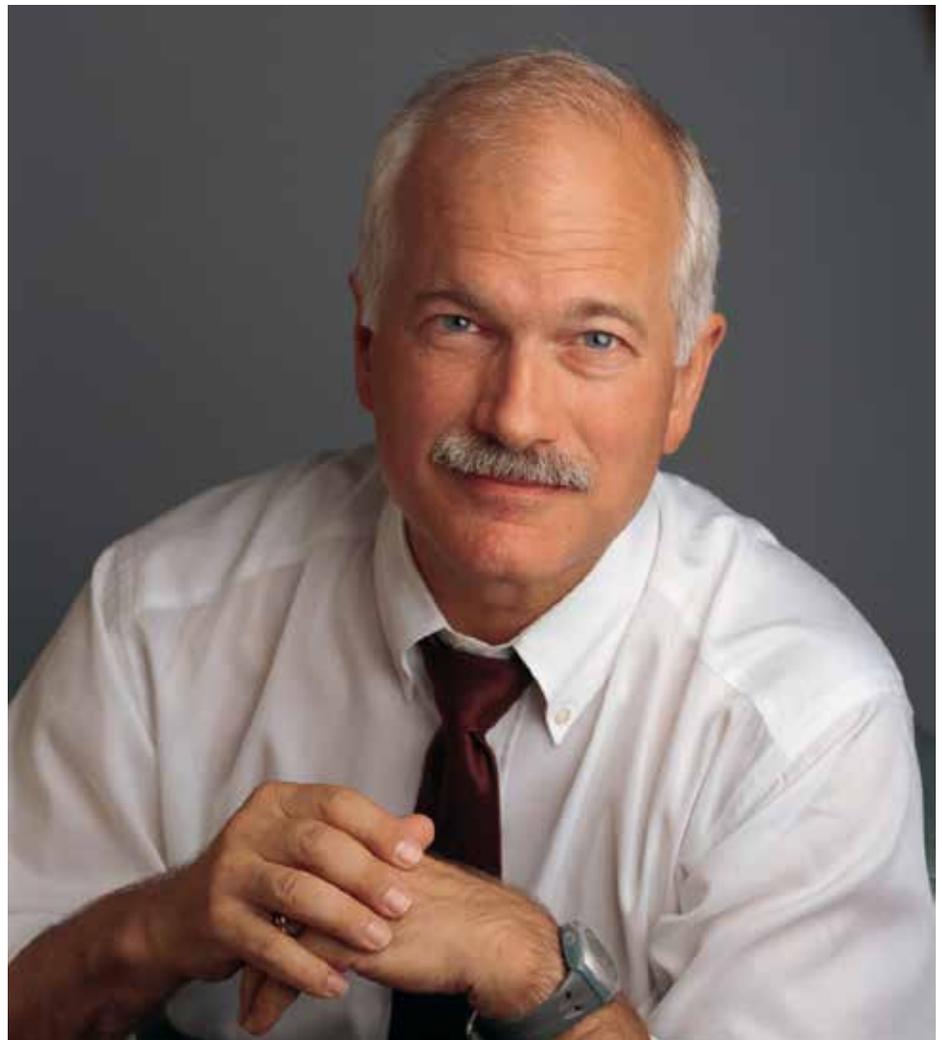
He believed that Canada was a "great country – one of the hopes of the world," and that we can be even better.

His final charge to Canadians is more relevant than ever:

"Love is better than anger. Hope is better than fear. Optimism is better than despair. So let us be loving, hopeful and optimistic. And we'll change the world."

And please take a moment to visit rememberingjacklayton.ca.

With much hope,
Rick



*Love is better than anger. Hope is better than fear.
Optimism is better than despair.*

*So let us be loving, hopeful and optimistic. And we'll
change the world.*

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