



August 9, 2021

Jason MacLean, President

NSGEU

Via email: [lbouchard@nsgeu.ca](mailto:lbouchard@nsgeu.ca)

Dear Mr. MacLean,

I am pleased to respond to our questionnaire as follows:

**2021 NSGEU Provincial Election Questionnaire:**

- 1. Following seven years of almost constant labour strife, will a government led by you respect the collective bargaining process? Would your government use legislation to interfere at the bargaining table?**

We are committed to an open and respectful bargaining process with all of our partners.

- 2. Bill 148, the “Public Services Sustainability (2015) Act” Imposed a non negotiated wage settlement and used legislation to unilaterally remove longstanding articles from collective agreements. The history of Bill 148 will cast a long shadow over public sector bargaining for years to come.**

**If elected Premier, will you repeal Bill 148? Will you accept the findings of the Nova Scotia Court of Appeal?**

The PC Party has already committed to repealing Bill 148 so that collective bargaining can take place. These are heavy-handed processes that will cost taxpayers more money than negotiations in good faith.

- 3. Nova Scotia’s Long Term Care and Home Care sector is currently privatized, run either as not-for-profit or for-profit enterprises. This has led to a fragmented system of operations with varying degrees of capability. The NSGEU believes that home care is health care, and should be managed and delivered as such with Nova Scotia Health. What is your stance on long-term care reform?**

A PC government is committed to legislating 4.1 hours of care per resident to raise the standards, and address the lack of quality care across our care for seniors’ and reducing burnout for staff by creating workable environments. In addition to this, we are also committed to building 2,500 new single-room long-term care beds in long-term care facilities.

- 4. Chronic health care understaffing has been affecting our health services long before COVID-19: Emergency Departments are regularly over-capacity; ambulances and paramedics wait with patients for treatment; and Emergency Departments throughout Nova Scotia are forced to close regularly. Many of these issues can be traced back directly to chronic understaffing. What is your plan to fill longstanding full-time vacancies?**

Under a PC Government, we recognize that every region needs a clinical health services plan. This plan would outline what staffing should look like in each region, overlapping staffing with the needs of each community. For example, based on the current demands and the waitlist, how many orthopaedic surgeons are needed in a given area?. A full assessment needs to be done comparing the current resources to the needs and demands, recognizing that each area will have different needs.

- 5. Have you ever had to worry about not having a place to live? Many Nova Scotians were experiencing the threat of evictions and uncontrolled rent increases of 20%, 40% and 90%. This meant vulnerable people faced the choice of going without food or medications and potential homelessness.**

**Government recently capped increases at two per cent per year, retroactive to September, 2020. The cap will remain in place until February 1, 2022, or whenever the COVID-19 State of Emergency is lifted. The issue of affordable housing existed before COVID-19 and will last well after.**

**As Premier, what would your government do to address this issue on a permanent basis?**

We have a housing crisis in this province and more people will increase the need for more housing and press the system even further. The answer to the housing crisis is more housing. Before housing can be built, the necessary land must be secured. The first direction the PC government will give to Nova Scotia Lands is to work with Housing Nova Scotia to develop a full inventory of lands owned and identify areas that could be used for housing. The inventory must be submitted to the Minister within three months of coming into government so that the province can manage and keep track of the land it owns in a comprehensive accounting manner. This will also allow work to get underway immediately in determining the best uses of those lands. The Nova Scotia Affordable Housing Commission Report highlighted the damage caused by rent control, the lack of supply and burdens on developers who are already subjected to higher market prices on materials and a labour shortage of people who can do this work. Too many people were struggling pre-COVID and certainly, COVID-19 has made things much more challenging for too many of our friends and neighbours. Any situation involving housing and rent is certainly amongst the most stressful. However, policymakers need to understand the ramifications of any rent control decisions.

6. If elected, will you commit to implementing a living wage? For reference: <https://www.policyalternatives.ca/publications/reports/living-wages-nova-scotia-and-new-brunswick-2020>. Why or why not?

A PC government recognizes the importance of raising wages for Nova Scotians. At the same time, the lack of support small businesses have received means that there must be a balanced approach. That's why the PC Party has introduced groundbreaking initiatives; one of which is the Better Pay Cheque Guarantee program that allows a company to redirect 50% of their corporate taxes directly to the wages of workers who are not in the top 20% earners, as well as expanding their workforce.

7. **NSGEU has over 1,100 members working in Nova Scotia Liquor Corporation facilities throughout Nova Scotia. NSGEU members pride themselves on practicing the highest standards of customer service and social responsibility. These jobs are very important to many communities, especially in more rural areas. What is your plan for the NSLC and alcohol/cannabis sales in our province? As Premier, where would you stand on privatizing the NSLC?**

As previously mentioned to your leadership, A PC government does not see privatizing NSLC as a priority. We are interested in making sure local produce is attainable for all, but our focus is on the healthcare system that has suffered because the previous government has looked the other way too many times.

8. **Poverty is a major issue throughout Nova Scotia and Nova Scotia's levels of child poverty have been trending in the wrong direction. What is your plan to reverse this trend and ensure that no Nova Scotian children go hungry?**

In addition to the Better Pay Cheque Guarantee and the MOST program in order to put more money in the pockets of parents, we know that interventions exist outside of targeting wallets. While the Canada Food Guide is taught in schools, many move on from school without knowing the basics of nutrition and healthy cooking. These are skills, if taught at a young age, that can guide them throughout the life course. Coupled with the skills taught in our proposed personal finance course, people can learn the skills to purchase healthy foods. It doesn't have to be more expensive.

Studies have demonstrated that hands-on cooking education has a very positive impact on behaviours and attitudes toward healthy eating, such as increased consumption of fruits and vegetables, improved food safety behaviours, higher frequency of cooking, increased nutrition knowledge, higher self-efficacy, and less money spent on food. Findings suggest cooking programs positively influence children's food-related preferences, attitudes, self-efficacy, dietary intakes, and behaviors. A PC government will make it a priority to educate students about healthy eating and cooking. We will be guided by programs like the one being offered by the YMCA of Southwest Nova Scotia and those through SchoolsPlus. The goal is to teach the appropriate skills and a love of food to students in grades 9 through 12.

- 9. Prior to the election the Nova Scotia Government signed an initial agreement to eventually provide \$10 a day childcare in Nova Scotia. This is going to require a significant infusion of resources. If elected Premier will your government honour this agreement?**

**This agreement will also require a commitment to ensuring enough people are available to staff the new childcare spaces and facilities. We have seen how low pay has driven people from sectors like early childhood education. If elected Premier, what is your commitment to ensure training and proper salaries will be accessible to attract and keep people in the sector?**

A PC government is dedicated to working with the federal government to make sure this happens. This work will inform the decisions and requirements to make this old Liberal promise a reality. Our commitments will need to be informed by stakeholders in the sector for there to be a true success in moving this forward.

- 10. In what ways does your party platform ensure that decolonization is incorporated into its proposals? How will your party commit to addressing the legacy of colonialism? In what ways is your party prioritizing the social policy solutions found in the 94 Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, including Jordan's Principle, and in the 231 Calls for Justice from the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls?**

The PC Party is guided by community leaders and our own Standing Committee on Diversity in order to inform our actions on topics just like this. We committed to working with all stakeholders and enacting measurable actions upon forming a government. The PC Party is also committed to curriculum reform and ensuring this movement towards cultural competency is reflected in Personal Development that teachers and staff receive. A link to our press release on the commitment to a diversity curriculum can be found here:

[https://www.pcparty.ns.ca/houston\\_pcs\\_present\\_plan\\_for\\_diversity\\_in\\_education](https://www.pcparty.ns.ca/houston_pcs_present_plan_for_diversity_in_education)

Additionally, the PC Party is committed to working with the Federal Government on the actionable items under provincial jurisdiction.

- 11. Please briefly describe your plans as Premier to help all Nova Scotians through your Covid-19 recovery plan.**

Our recovery plan through COVID-19 will be directed by Public Health's recommendations. Economically, we know that government can't do it alone. In addition to our previously discussed Better Paycheque Guarantee and MOST program, a PC government is dedicated to working with local businesses. We are implementing government policy that actually encourages buying local.

Under Nova Scotia Loyal Program, when you buy verified local food and other products, you get 10% back in points. You can redeem these funds when paying for government services, or at any crown corporation. These include fees for renewing your license or making a purchase at the NSLC.

**12. The civil service has undergone a sizeable reduction since 2010. During that same time frame there has also been reductions in departmental spending.**

**This reduction in workforce and spending has happened at the same time Nova Scotians are experiencing fewer services offered in our provincial parks, trying to manage less supervision in our correctional facilities and reeling from not having nearly enough employees to look after children in provincial care.**

**Given the growing problems resulting from understaffing in our provincial civil service, how would your Party ensure our civil service is expanded to a level such that our provincial employees feel their work is valued by their elected government?**

The importance of the work in civil services has been put in the spotlight with the impacts of COVID-19. The cuts of the previous two governments many years ago are felt today; we know that there is a large bill to pay where neglect has become the status quo. Under a PC government, we know that corners cannot be cut in these sectors. The Liberal Party claims to balance the budget within a year, but at the cost of continuing to cut the corners that got us in the positions you describe above.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Tara Miller', written in a cursive style.

Tara Miller  
Campaign Co-Chair  
PC Party of Nova Scotia