

2017 Leadership Candidates' Survey on Saskatchewan Small Business Issues

Dear Leadership Candidate:

As you know, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CFIB) represents independent business owners in all industries and regions across Canada. With 109,000 members, including 5,250 in Saskatchewan, we continue to work toward the development of public policy that not only promotes the growth and prosperity of small business, but also strengthens the entrepreneurial spirit of our communities.

As a non-partisan organization, CFIB will not be endorsing specific candidates. Instead, we are respectfully asking you and all other leadership candidates to complete ***CFIB's 2017 Leadership Candidates' Survey on Saskatchewan Small Business Issues***. This survey reflects policies that are important to small business owners across the province, and your responses will ensure our members have a better understanding of your policy platform.

For each question, please provide your comments explaining your position on small business issues. You can insert your answers into this document or attach a separate one. Your responses will be posted, unedited, on CFIB's Saskatchewan website and will be shared with our members and all media outlets. We will also encourage our 5,250 members to view your responses and additional comments in our monthly e-newsletter that will be sent to them the week of November 27th.

We request you submit your responses to the survey by end of day Friday, November 24, 2017 to mssask@cfib.ca.

We believe our ***Leadership Candidates' Survey on Saskatchewan Small Business Issues*** is an excellent opportunity for you to outline your plan and policies to make Saskatchewan more competitive.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation and participation. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact our office at (306) 757-0000.

We wish you all the best with your campaign.

Sincerely,



Marilyn Braun-Pollon

Vice President, Prairie & Agri-business
Canadian Federation of Independent Business

Getting back to balance

Just like families and small business owners, it is essential the provincial government live within its means. CFIB's 2018 Pre-Budget survey recently asked our members what the provincial government should do to balance its budget. Results from 458 Saskatchewan small business members revealed 76 per cent support the reduction of existing spending (e.g. reduce the size/cost of government through workforce attrition etc), followed by 50 per cent who support refraining from spending on new initiatives and another 35 per cent who support increasing revenue through other non-tax measures (e.g. user fees). Only 7 per cent support increasing provincial taxes to collect additional revenue.

1. What is your plan to balance the budget and by when?

2. Will you commit to further reduce the size/cost of Executive government, Crown Corporations and non front-line components of Third Party entities (e.g. through workforce attrition)?

3. CFIB's report entitled, *Wage Watch: A Comparison of Public-sector and Private-sector Wages*, is a detailed analysis of the 2011 National Household Survey data on full-time earnings by occupation. The report shows that Saskatchewan public sector employees are paid eight per cent more than similarly employed individuals in the private sector. Factor in non-wage benefits – like pensions – and provincial employees in Saskatchewan make 20.4 per cent more than their counterparts in the private sector.

Will you commit to narrow the wages/benefits disparity (20.4%) between Saskatchewan public and private sector employees?

4. CFIB's report "*The Cost of Banking Sick Days in the Public Sector*", reveals Quebec & Saskatchewan are the only provinces that allow unlimited sick day banking for their employees. The practice of government employees "banking" sick days is costing the Saskatchewan government \$113 million in banked sick day liability as of 2013-2014. Employees working for the Government of Saskatchewan have the ability to bank sick days without limit, but employees cannot receive any payment for unused days once they leave. Currently, provincial government employees in the core public sector cannot bank sick days in British Columbia, Alberta, Ontario, and Nova Scotia. These governments use short-term disability plans instead of traditional sick leave plans.

Will you commit to eliminate the banking of sick days in the public sector and introduce affordable short-term disability plans for public sector workers to better align sick leave provisions with those of the private sector?

Red Tape Reduction

As part of CFIB's *Red Tape Awareness Week*, we publish an annual provincial report card. Saskatchewan maintained a grade of "B" in 2017 for its commitment to make it easier to do business and reduce red tape for Saskatchewan entrepreneurs.

5. What is your plan to further reduce red tape for small business?
6. Will you commit to introduce a *Red Tape Web-Portal* (which would be a permanent website where businesses could submit their red tape questions & concerns on an ongoing basis)?

Competitive Tax Environment

7. Will you commit to reinstate the commission paid to businesses for the collection and remittance of the Provincial Sales Tax (PST)?
8. Will you commit to remove the PST from insurance premiums?
9. Within the context of a balanced budget, will you commit to introduce a plan to reduce Saskatchewan's small business corporate income tax rate on the first \$600,000 of business income from 2% to 0%?
10. Within the context of a balanced budget, will you commit to reduce the PST?
11. Do you support increased taxation powers to municipalities (e.g. fuel, income or sales taxes)?

Balanced Labour Laws

Ensuring Saskatchewan labour laws support employers and employees equally is important for Saskatchewan small business owners.

12. Do you support increasing Saskatchewan's minimum wage from \$10.96 to \$15.00 per hour?
13. Will you introduce measures to mitigate the impact of Saskatchewan's annually indexed minimum wage (e.g. training wage and/or a gratuity wage for workers who earn tips)?