



February 12, 2018

Marilyn Braun-Pollon
Vice President, Prairie & Agri-business
Canadian Federation of Independent Business
Email: mssask@cfib.ca

Dear Marilyn Braun-Pollon:

Thank you for your letter and for your questions submitted on behalf of the members of the Canadian Federation of Independent Business. The answers to your questions follow below:

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

I've been an advocate of balanced budgets for many years, and fiscal responsibility is an essential component of my plan. However, so much remains unknown about what the state of our province's finances will look like in 2020 to be able to answer this question. The Sask. Party has struggled to balance the budget during the best times, it's very important for me that we lay out a fiscally responsible way.

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)?

I will not be making cuts to public services or our Crown Corporations. I am committed to increasing investment in healthcare, education, and supports for the vulnerable to make sure every citizen of our province has access to the high-quality services they should be able to count on.

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

I have no interest in attacking the livelihoods of public sector workers. Small businesses aren't made better off when the public-sector employees who go to their stores and restaurants have their wages cut. I've heard from so many small business owners who have told me that they've seen a serious decrease in sales and revenue driven by the Sask. Party's cuts and rollbacks in the Crowns and in government. I will not be making this problem even worse by cutting the wages of public servants.

4. *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?*

Bankable sick days represent a paper liability on the books of the government, but they don't actually cost taxpayers anything because – as noted in your letter – they are not paid out when the employee leaves the public service. When workers are sick, they should be able to stay home and rest-up and I'm glad that the current sick leave system gives public sector employees the ability to do that. These types of benefits have all been negotiated through collective bargaining and I would honour those agreements.

5. *What is your plan to further reduce red tape for small business?*

I would be happy to work with the CFIB, labour groups, and anyone else with a stake in creating a strong and inclusive economy to reduce red tape that holds our businesses and our workers back from reaching their full potential. Obviously, there is an important role for government to play in ensuring there are safe and fair rules for everyone to follow, but where regulations are redundant, ineffective, and causing nothing but headaches for the drivers of the economy, I would be very interested in working collaboratively to remove red tape.

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)?*

I would be open to creating an online interface where businesses, workers, and members of the public could submit their questions and concerns with red tape.

7. *Will you commit to reinstate the commission paid to businesses for the collection and remittance of the Provincial Sales Tax (PST)?*

Yes. Removing the commission represented a tiny savings for government, but it made a big difference for small businesses struggling to make ends meet. Businesses incur a cost collecting PST on behalf of the government, and it's only fair that government should help to cover the cost associated with that collection.

8. *Will you commit to remove the PST from insurance premiums?*

Yes, I have committed to scrapping PST on 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%?*

I'm interested in exploring how the provincial government can best support small businesses in our province. I've been an advocate for a reduction in taxes for small businesses in the past, and I would work to reduce taxation for small businesses under \$500,000 when our fiscal situation improves.

10. *Within the context of a balanced budget, will you commit to reduce the PST?*

The Sask. Party increase to the PST forces Saskatchewan people to pay the price for the Sask. Party's decade-long run of bad management and missed opportunities. That's not fair, and I would work to reverse their punitive increase to the PST and scrap the measures that broadened it to include kids' clothes, insurance, construction labour, and restaurant meals.

11. Do you support increased taxation powers to municipalities (e.g. fuel, income or sales taxes)?

No. Saskatchewan people are already struggling to make ends meet as a result of the Sask. Party's fee hikes, tax increases, and power bills. The provincial government needs to be a full partner with municipalities that is open to dialogue and certainly needs to provide more funding and support for municipalities to build infrastructure and provide the services we all count on.

12. Do you support increasing Saskatchewan's minimum wage from \$10.96 to \$15.00 per hour?

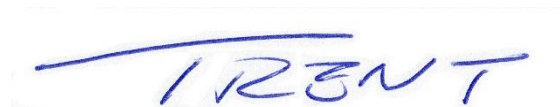
Yes. Workers all across our province are struggling to make ends meet, and by phasing in a \$15/hour minimum wage, low-wage workers will have improved income security to help drive our economy. In fact, many studies show that the increase in purchasing power that comes from a higher minimum wage helps to boost sales in small businesses and increase economic growth.

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)?

I have no interest in introducing a two-tiered minimum wage. Everyone who works full time – whether they are a new worker or receive tips – deserves to be paid a fair wage that allows them to make a decent living.

Thanks again for your questionnaire, and thank you for your continued advocacy on behalf of independent businesses in Saskatchewan.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "TRENT". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style with a horizontal line above the letters.

Trent Wotherspoon
Saskatchewan NDP Leadership Candidate