

Saskatchewan Green Party Response

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To: CFIB_SK <MS.Saskatchewan@cfib.ca>

Subject: CFIB Survey for political parties 2020; Sask Green Party response

Hi Marilyn,

Hoping these answers from the Sask Green Party can be included in your survey responses from the Parties. We got your email late from our volunteer so here goes:

SASKATCHEWAN ELECTION 2020: Party Leaders' Survey on Small Business Priorities
Deliver needed small business tax relief to help economic recovery:

We know there is no economic recovery without a small business recovery. However, the recovery has been slow for most small businesses. In Saskatchewan, while 79 per cent of small businesses are fully open and 46 per cent are fully staffed, only 29 per cent of small firms are making normal sales. The majority of small business owners (67%) in the province believe it is very important for the next government to provide tax relief to help small businesses recover, even if it delays balancing the budget.

1. What is your plan to deliver immediate provincial tax relief for small businesses to help speed up Saskatchewan's economic recovery?

Before providing any tax relief for any businesses, our Sask Green Party government would have to open the budgetary books and resolve the overspending of the previous government. We would immediately work to ensure provincial supports for small businesses who are struggling to help get through this temporary period of economic turbulence. Long term we would work collectively with small business owners to help create thriving sustainability in their businesses.

2. Will you introduce a plan to reduce Saskatchewan's small business corporate income tax rate from 2% to 0% on the first \$600,000 of annual business income?

Again, a Sask Green Party government would have to assess how badly the previous government has mismanaged our provincial finances first. However, our Green Party government certainly is open to this suggestion to help small businesses thrive in Saskatchewan.

3. Do you support giving municipalities new taxation powers (e.g. local fuel, income or sales taxes)?

This is an interesting idea. The Sask Green Party has advocated for Participatory Budgets. This idea could be presented as part of those discussions if we were blessed with forming government after October 26th.

4. Will you oppose any federal government measures to continue increasing Canada Pension Plan (CPP) premiums, Employment Insurance premiums and carbon tax rates over the next four years?

Our Sask Green Party government would want to be less reactionary and overtly hostile to the federal government. While maintaining respectful relations, our government would also stand up

for our great province by suggesting ways we can work in collaboration in bettering the lives of all citizens across Canada and especially in Saskatchewan.

Spend sustainably

Small businesses understand the need to have larger than normal deficits to deal with COVID-19, but do not want to see unsustainable spending outside of that. Small business owners work hard to operate within their means and they expect their governments to do the same. In fact, the majority (67%) of Saskatchewan small business owners say it is a priority for the next provincial government to balance its budget without raising taxes.

5. What is your plan to balance the budget and when will this happen?

Excellent question! The Sask Green Party was the only political party in 2016 to raise the alarm bells on how the current provincial government was overspending and ignoring its own legislation forbidding deficit budgets (unless in times of extraordinary circumstances). After the 2016 election, the SaskParty government removed its own anti-deficit legislation and continued borrowing more and more money. In affect, burdening our province and its citizens with over \$23 billion in DEBT. This is more than what happened under the Grant Devine government. So yes, our Sask Green Party government will balance the budget. How soon depends on cleaning up the mess from the current provincial government.

6. Will you commit to limit annual spending increases to rate of GDP growth?

Again, our Sask Green Party government will do everything possible to support small businesses and our citizens through this difficult period and beyond. We will need to assess how bad our provincial finances are before we can commit to any specific spending limits or increases.

Strategic investments:

COVID-19 has amplified the need for strategic investments to be made to help Saskatchewan businesses recover and to grow our economy. Small business owners need better technological infrastructure to connect their business with staff and customers regardless of where they live. In fact, almost 60 per cent of the province's small business owners agree that their business needs better internet service in their area.

Furthermore, a strong majority (89%) of Saskatchewan small businesses agree the provincial government should increase spending on crime prevention across Saskatchewan.

7. What is your plan to improve access to high speed internet across Saskatchewan?

Immediately upon forming government after October 26th, our Premier Naomi Hunter would contact Elon Musk (Tesla Industries) and ask for his help in testing his ideas of getting high speed Internet across all of Saskatchewan using his array of satellites. Together with our Crown Corporation titan SaskTel, our Sask Green Party government would finally assure equalized internet service for all of Saskatchewan.

8. Will you increase annual spending on crime prevention across the province?

The Sask Green Party has a newer and proven model of crime prevention: Guaranteed Livable Income

By eliminating poverty and creating thousands of jobs through a Green Economic Recovery, our Sask Green Party government would be able to lower crime rates dramatically. Our Sask Green Party government would also look to ensure effective spending on crime prevention and more

importantly work collectively with all Saskatchewan communities to ensure better safety and the well being of all of our citizens.

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Reduce red tape for small businesses

As all levels of government shift their focus to help businesses recover, red tape reduction has never been more important or necessary. Red tape is a huge cost to small businesses. In fact, CFIB estimates that it costs Canadian businesses approximately \$36 billion per year to comply with regulations from all levels of government in 2017 – about \$10 billion of that is red tape (about \$340 million in Saskatchewan alone).

9. What is your plan to reduce red tape for small businesses?

Employment & training

Many businesses are still struggling to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, and nearly all are adapting to new ways of doing business. This means they need to help their staff develop new skills or onboard new staff with different training.

10. What is your plan to better prepare graduates to meet the needs of small businesses?

Our Sask Green Party government would work collaboratively with small businesses to design coop programs that give students free work training and future job opportunities upon graduation.

11. Will you commit to not increase Saskatchewan's minimum wage to \$15.00 per hour?

Having the lowest minimum wage in Canada does little to stimulate the Saskatchewan economy. By moving up our minimum wage to a livable amount, this would not only ensure the worker is able to survive, the small businesses will also prosper due to more spending power from every citizen. This also can happen by implementing a Guaranteed Livable Income.

12. What is your plan to help the province's low-income earners? (e.g. introduce an income tax credit for low-income earners such as no PIT paid under \$25,000 on a graduated basis)

Our Green Party government would not only look at this option but more importantly we would implement a Guaranteed Livable Income so that the basic needs of every Saskatchewan citizen is looked after. This would also create a more sustainable economy that can better withstand economic and social shocks that occasionally happen. A more resilient and thriving Saskatchewan is what the Sask Green Party is aiming to build.

Thanks for offering our Sask Green Party a chance to answer these questions.
All the Best,

Victor Lau
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Sask Green Party