



October 15, 2020

Marilyn Braun-Pollon
Vice-President, Western Canada & Agri-business
Email: mssask@cfib.ca

Dear Marilyn Braun-Pollon:

Thank you for your letter outlining the priorities for the Canadian Federation of Independent Businesses in this election campaign. It is always a pleasure to connect with you to discuss the issues facing small businesses in our province, and I am very thankful that we had the opportunity to discuss some of these issues at our videoconference in September.

Below you can find the answers to the questions in your letter.

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

Saskatchewan's New Democrats are committed to removing the PST from construction labour to put an extra \$200 million into the economy every year, drive investment, and create jobs. This will not just help our struggling construction sector, it will also help the business that provide meals, lodging, and supplies at construction projects.

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?*

This is not a tax measure that we are currently considering.

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

These are not measures that we are currently considering.

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?*

CPP and EI premiums are help pay for retirement and unemployment benefits that thousands of Saskatchewan people rely on. Saskatchewan's New Democrats believe that the current premiums are sufficient and are not in need of increases at this time but will always support measures that are needed to ensure these programs remain sustainable for future generations. Saskatchewan's New Democrats are not supportive of the federal government's carbon price and would not be supportive of measures to increase it.

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

Rushing to balance through tax increases and cuts to health care and education are the wrong approach. Saskatchewan's New Democrats will make needed investments in people now to help drive our recovery and look to return to balance in the second term of a New Democratic government.

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

No. Now is not the time for austerity, now is the time to make investments in healthcare and education to ensure that people have the supports they need.

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

Access to high speed and broadband service is essential in 2020. Far too many rural residents and small business owners have been left without reliable access they need. Saskatchewan's New Democrats are committed to a Rural Reconnect program to expand SaskTel's network of cellular and broadband infrastructure to make sure everyone in Saskatchewan has access to quality service.

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

Yes, I will increase spending on the things that are proven to actually reduce crime: an antipoverty strategy, better housing for vulnerable people, and doubled supports for the province-wide anti-gang strategy. Rates of crime in Saskatchewan are far too high today, and we need to start taking evidence-based steps to reduce the underlying issues that drive crime in our communities.

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

My door will always be open to small businesses who have concerns about duplicated or redundant forms, policies, or requirements. Saskatchewan's New Democrats are interested in working with small businesses to find improvements and eliminate wasteful processes. However, protections that are in place to protect workers, safety, and the environment will not be compromised under a New Democratic government.

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

Saskatchewan's New Democrats know that the best thing the provincial government can do to prepare graduates for the workplace is to ensure that students have safe schools, smaller classes, and additional supports when they are struggling. That is why our party has committed

to increasing funding for education staffing by \$125 million to allow school divisions to hire 1,000 teachers, 750 educational assistants, and 400 caretakers. By reducing class size and getting students the extra help they need, new graduates will be better prepared to succeed at whatever they take on after graduating. We are also committed to removing interest on student loans and restoring funding that was cut by the Sask. Party to NORTEP.

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

No. An NDP government will introduce a \$15/hour minimum wage by the end of our first term. We are also committed to introducing a rebate for small businesses with less than \$200,000 in taxable income in the retail; accommodation and food services; and agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting sectors to help manage the transition to a \$15/hour minimum.

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)*

Improving the quality of life for low income people in our province is a top priority for Saskatchewan's New Democrats. We are committed to introducing an anti-poverty strategy, a housing first plan, a \$15/hour minimum wage, and eliminating predatory lending through a cap on interest rates and a cap on cheque cashing fees.

Thank you again for taking the time to write and for all the work the CFIB is doing on behalf of small businesses during these difficult times.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Meili', written in a cursive style.

Ryan Meili

Leader of Saskatchewan's New Democrats