



News Release

For immediate publication

June 20, 2014

Elections 2014- Is Poverty Reduction a priority for political parties?

Moncton- “Four of the five provincial parties answered the NB Common Front questionnaire on the proposals to reduce poverty. Some said they would include their proposals in their electoral platform.” says Linda McCaustlin, co-chair of the Common Front.

We did not receive any answers from the People’s Alliance of New Brunswick. The Conservative Party did submit a completed questionnaire but every answer given referred to announcements already made and no new initiatives were proposed. The New Democratic Party answered only four of the ten questions. The Liberal Party answered all of our questions but explained that their policies would not necessarily be included in their platform. The Green Party answered all of the questions and said their proposals would be included in their platform

The Questionnaire had ten questions and the following gives an idea of some of the responses.

-On the increase of the minimum wage: the Conservative Party has two positions, one is not to increase the minimum wage until the economic situation is better and the other one is to support the Poverty Plan objective which is to increase the minimum wage to the Atlantic average and index it after. The Liberal will not support an increase of the minimum wage but support its indexation to the cost of living. The NDP would increase it in the next four years but has no specific amount in mind. Finally, only the Green Party would index it right now and put in place the concept of a livable wage.

-On the New Brunswick Drug Plan: the Conservative Party and the NDP support the present system. The Liberal Party would explore the possibility of a Drug Plan with the other Atlantic Provinces and would bring in exemptions for low-income citizens. The Green party would have individuals making less than

\$20,000 or a family of four with a revenue of less than \$50,000 not pay any premium but would pay the required co-payment.

-On returning to the 2008 income tax level for individual, only the Green Party said they would do it and **on increasing corporate taxes**, again, only the Green Party would increase corporate taxes to the Nova Scotia level.

“It is difficult to understand that all political parties don’t know what will be in their election platform when it comes to poverty reduction. It is certainly not the lack of concrete proposals and solutions, because the Common Front and the Poverty Reduction Strategy gave them enough information, so it has to do with ideology or more a question of political will for some political party.” continues Pauline Richard, co-chair.

“We will publish the results of our questionnaire and distribute it as widely as possible. It is very important for citizens, more so those living in poverty, to understand what each political party is proposing or not proposing, as concrete actions to reduce poverty in our province. ” concludes Ms. McCaustlin.

The Questionnaire and a summary of the answers from each political party follows. The complete answers from each political party are available on our website at www.frontnb.ca

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The Common Front for Social Justice is one of the largest democratic and popular organizations in New Brunswick, with close to 75,000 group and individual members. The Common Front brings together individuals as well as local, regional and provincial organizations to work towards the eradication of poverty.

