

Questions for the 2024 Provincial Election

We are called to love our neighbour as ourselves and to be stewards of Creation. This has guided the development of questions that you may wish to ask candidates seeking to be your MLA. The background gives you some facts that may help ask questions or evaluate answers.

Poverty and Housing

Nova Scotia's poverty rate for 2022 is the highest in Canada at 13.1% of individuals. Rates range from 10.4% for people 65 years of age and older to 31.5% for single parent families and 36.1% for people not in families.

Halifax's living wage was estimated to be \$28.30/hr (Nova Scotia Office, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives). Currently Nova Scotia's minimum wage is \$15.20/hr.

The standard monthly NS Basic Need Assistance Rates (AKA social assistance) for people who own or rent range from \$704 for a single adult to \$1,428 for a family of 2 adults with children. People who are homeless or in shelter/transition houses get \$390 per person. According to CMHC, the average one-bedroom rental in Dartmouth South \$1,159.

The By-The-Name-List (individuals who have identified themselves to service organizations as actively homeless) has 1,335 people on the list in HRM for October 30, 2024.

What do you and your party identify as the top two priorities for addressing poverty and how do you plan to address them on the short and medium terms.

Deeply affordable housing (i.e. rent geared to income) is both a supply and a demand problem, especially for families. How does your party plan to deal with the ongoing lack of deeply affordable housing, that includes units suitable for families, and the immediate issue of homelessness?

Health Care

As of October 4, 2024, there were 145,114 people on the need-a-family practice registry. According to Public Account for the 2023-24 fiscal year Nova Scotia expenditures through the Department of Health and Wellness were \$5.789 billion, 35% of all consolidated expenditures (does not include capital expenditures).

Worldwide, health care is in a crisis with widespread shortages of health care workers. We need to be realistic about what a small province can do in the short to medium term. What are your party's realistic goals for health care and how do you plan to achieve them?

How does your party propose to improve mental health services in Nova Scotia?

Stewardship of Fiscal Resources

Nova Scotia's net debt was \$15.24 billion as of March 31, 2020 and \$18.52 billion on March 31, 2024. Capital expenditures and deficits add to the debt. Nova Scotia's fiscal update of September 27, 2024 projects a deficit of \$654 million, \$186.6 million higher than the March budget.

Governing is about choices. Nova Scotia's revenue is insufficient to cover all our urgent needs (infrastructure, housing, healthcare) and a growing debt not only represent an issue for future generations but growing debt repayment in current budgets. How would your program address the range of issues facing the province while being fiscally responsible?

Citizens expect governments to use their resources efficiently, which generally calls for all levels of government to work together. However, we often see conflict between different levels. How will you and your party approach collaboration between government levels?

Protecting the vulnerable

Police reported data for 2023 shows Nova Scotia women reported 522 intimate partner violence incidents per 100,000 people, compared to 147 for males. In data from 2018, 31.5% of Nova Scotia women surveyed reported that since the age of 15, they had been a victim of physical and/or sexual assault committed by an intimate partner. It was 19.5% for men.

In 2022, Nova Scotia had the second highest rate of hate crimes in Canada at 11.1 incidents per 100,000 people

An epidemic of intimate partner violence which predominately affects women has been declared in Nova Scotia. What does your party intend to do to improve the situation of women in our society?

How will you and your party take action against intolerance, racism and expressions of hate?

Reconciliation with Indigenous people

Recognizing that the principal relationship between the Crown and indigenous peoples resides with the federal government, what does your party identify as the top two priorities that the Nova Scotia government can take to achieve reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Nova Scotia and how does your party plan to address them?

Stewardship of Our World

The Canadian Net-Zero Emissions Accountability Act has set a 2030 emissions target of GHG emissions 40-45 per cent below 2005 levels by 2030 and a net zero goal by 2050. In 2022, Nova Scotia emissions were 35% lower than 2005 emissions.

What is your party's plan to get to net zero by 2050?

Personal Priorities

To be in government is to be faced with many complex problems that require difficult choices. Personally, what are your top two priorities?

Sources: https://novascotia.ca/finance/statistics/archive_news.asp?id=19865&dg=,2&df=,3&dto=,5e&dti=12;
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