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Message from

# Lorraine Michael



This election is a historic one for this province. In May of this year, Newfoundlanders and Labradorians voted NDP in record numbers.

It is a pivotal time in the history of our province. More than ever before, we have the opportunity to lay a solid and substantial base for our future. But we have to do it right. We have to dare to be innovative in our thinking, to do things just a little differently, if we want to ensure that our future prosperity is shared by every Newfoundlander and Labradorian.

The New Democratic Party is about – has always been about – people. The people who have built this province, who have contributed so much towards making it the incredible place it is – the people like you, your family, your neighbours and friends who have so often felt abandoned and ignored by governments.

People who work hard, play by the rules, and are struggling to take care of their families need elected representatives who will stand up for them. Our goals and our policies reflect the beliefs and needs of ordinary Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. We have never lost touch with what is important to you and your family.

Our vision for this province is one of long-lasting prosperity for the people who live here. This prosperity will come from fiscally responsible planning, a combination of simple immediate steps and carefully-considered long term goals. We know that prosperity is more than

corporate bottom lines and shareholder profits: for our society to work as it should, it must be fair to all of us.

NDP ideas are good ideas. Our ideas work for people, for businesses, and for governments. Even the current government acknowledges this – most recently, when it brought in the ban on the cosmetic use of pesticides, for which the NDP had been calling for several years. Just a few months ago, the same government adopted another NDP policy and removed the provincial portion of the HST from home heating fuels.

Our ideas are consistent ones. We are the party speaking out for you on home care, offshore safety, and housing all the time – not just at voting time.

*It's time to bring change to the House of Assembly. Together, we can make government work for all of us.*

A handwritten signature in black ink, enclosed in a thin black rectangular border. The signature is cursive and appears to read "J. St. Laurent".

# Five Pledges for the First Year of a New Democrat Administration

*New Democrats, like you, see many things that should be different in our province. We need real change to make things fair for everyone.*

*We recognize, though, that not everything can happen overnight. It is important to use our resources responsibly. New Democrats see how much better life in our province can be, but we recognize that we must maintain a balanced budget.*

*Our pledges are measures that can all be made to happen within a year of the election. Some do not involve costs; for the others, we have consulted with economists and other experts and identified where the money will come from (see section 3 of this document).*

## ***Pledge 1: Meeting the Health Needs of People***

*Nothing is more important to you than your health – unless it is the health of those you love.*

*It's time for a health care system that works for everybody. New Democrats see a province where everyone has reasonable, timely access to professionals, equipment, and treatment. While there are some things that can – and must – be done immediately, we know that the most important step is to take a long, rational look at our entire system, to see how everything fits together, and how our precious health care resources can best be used.*

### ***In the first year after the election, an NDP government would:***

- Set steps in motion for a comprehensive, independent review of the health care system.
- Plan a universal, publicly-funded and administered homecare and long-term care program.
- Provide home support workers with higher wage increases and a training grant.
- Expand the NL Prescription Drug Program by 10% to increase eligibility and reduce co-pays.
- Cover the cost of glucose test strips.
- Speed up the process of establishing Enhanced 911 province-wide.

## ***Pledge 2: Making Life More Affordable Now***

*Most people expect to pay their own way in life. Nobody expects a free ride. But what we pay should be fair.*

*It's time for a province where people who earn less and have less are not unfairly burdened by the basic expenses of living. Life's necessities must be affordable.*

***In the first year after the election, an NDP government would:***

- Reduce drivers' license fees by one-third.
- Begin phase-in of a needs-based grant program to replace provincial student loans.
- Eliminate the "tax on tax" on gasoline and diesel.
- Increase the basic income tax exemption from \$7,989 to \$9,000.
- Reduce small business taxes by 25%.
- Raise income support rates by 5%.
- Provide funding to reduce the ambulance fee for residents from \$115 to \$50.

## ***Pledge 3: Supporting Our Seniors***

*A person who has worked hard to contribute to life in this province should be assured of basic needs in retirement.*

*It's time for us to give our senior citizens and retirees the respect they deserve. New Democrats envision a society where the people who have built our province live safely, knowing they can afford food, housing, health care costs and other necessities.*

### ***In the first year after the election, an NDP government would:***

- Increase home care budgets to immediately hire 100 more workers to meet the most urgent needs.
- Give seniors living in their own homes \$250 per household annually to help with snow clearing.
- Restore funds to the NL Seniors' Resource Centre by \$100,000 for programs.
- Provide one free college or university course annually to residents 60 years and older.

## ***Pledge 4: Giving Our Children an Early Start***

*We are justifiably proud of our education system. Our dedicated teachers and other employees work with parents and school boards to give our children the best possible start.*

*It's time to take the realities of 21<sup>st</sup> century family life into account. Parents and guardians should be able to work with the assurance that children are enjoying themselves safely. We envision a province where all children – regardless of their family's income – have access to pre-school programs that prepare them for the school system.*

***In the first year after the election, an NDP government would:***

- Begin to introduce full-day kindergarten for five-year-olds with an action plan to design and implement pilot projects across the province.
- Plan for a universal, publicly-funded and administered early learning and child care program, including all-day care at school sites.
- Improve recruitment and retention of early childhood educators with an annual wage increase.

## ***Pledge 5: Getting a Fair Deal for Working People***

*When you work hard to do the best you can for your family, you deserve a government that treats you with respect. Working people need basic protections.*

*It's time to recognize the contributions of workers. It's time to keep them as safe as we can, and to give them the freedom to tell the public when something in their workplace is a threat to public safety.*

***In the first year after the election, an NDP government would:***

- Legislate protection for whistleblowers.
- Develop a multi-year plan for regular increases to the minimum wage.
- Enact anti-scab legislation.
- Pressure Ottawa for an independent offshore safety board.
- Advocate with other provinces to strengthen our public Canada Pension Plan.
- Amend the Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Act and Regulations to include occupational diseases of firefighters.
- Allow workers exposed to asbestos to be compensated for *all* asbestos-related cancers that develop.
- Adopt the recommendations of the Voisey's Bay Industrial Inquiry Commission.

## *The New Democrat Plan for a Healthy Economy*

*When New Democrats talk about a healthy economy, we think about more than the profits of corporations and banks. A truly healthy economy is one where everyone who has been part of building Newfoundland and Labrador shares in the good times.*

*It's time to recognize where the true economic strengths of our province lie. Small businesses and co-operatives have demonstrated, over and over, their importance to ongoing economic health. Their revenues stay in the communities where they are generated.*

### ***Over the next four years, a New Democrat government would:***

- Redirect funds from the Business Attraction Fund to an investment fund for co-ops and small businesses, and a seed capital fund for not-for-profit enterprise.
- Introduce a provincial adjustment fund to assist employees and communities affected by industry downsizing or closures.
- Increase funding for research, training and jobs in green energy production and energy efficiency.
- Partner with industry to expand shipbuilding in the province.
- Assist in forest industry diversification for domestic and export markets.
- Increase primary and value-added production of agrifoods for local and export markets through aid to small-scale production, processing and marketing.
- Strengthen legislation for protection of farmland.
- Increase municipal operating grants.
- Increase funding to the Newfoundland and Labrador Arts Council in order to bring per capita arts spending up to the national average.

## **The New Democrat Plan for Excellence in Education**

*If we cannot properly educate our people, we cannot hope for a prosperous future. In a fast-paced and ever-changing society, we must recognize that educational needs evolve through a person's lifetime -- and that we can never consider education to be finished.*

*We must acknowledge that all our children, regardless of their family's financial circumstances, deserve access to high quality education – from preschool to post-secondary. We must accept that forcing students to graduate with tens of thousands of dollars in debt does nothing to help them contribute to the economy we expect them to be part of.*

*It's time to find real solutions so that education works for everybody.*

### **Over the next four years, a New Democrat government would:**

- Reduce class sizes for Levels 1-3 (senior high school) in consultation with the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association.
- Provide more teachers, student assistants, training and professional development for the delivery of student support services.
- Provide funding for improved teacher allocations to small rural schools.
- Support a province-wide nutritional school breakfast and lunch program.
- Retrofit aging school buildings.
- Reduce public post-secondary tuition fees and move towards free tuition.
- Direct recruitment and funding to increase the participation of under-represented groups in engineering, applied science, technology and trades programs.
- Introduce an Apprenticeship and Co-op Student Training Tax Credit for employers.

- Increase funding for public libraries for technology, collections, library boards and facilities.
- Provide more resources for Adult Basic Education Level I, workplace literacy and English as a Second Language programs.

## *The New Democrat Plan for Protecting Our Environment*

*We are blessed in this province with one of the most pristine environments in the world. We have rich renewable resources which, with responsible stewardship, will contribute to our provincial economy forever. We are falling into the same kinds of environmental mistakes that have been made elsewhere, and the risks and realities of damage are increasing.*

*It's time to find – and legislate – a better balance between encouraging the development we want and preserving the environment we can never replace.*

### ***Over the next four years, a New Democrat government would:***

- Direct more provincial funds to the Waste Management Strategy and ensure community-based decision-making.
- Expand residential energy efficiency programs and create a new program for non-residential buildings.
- Enact legislation to protect shorelands from development.
- Ban the dumping of mine and industrial waste in natural water bodies and environmentally sensitive areas.
- Implement a Protected Areas Strategy to preserve areas representing each of the province's 35 eco-regions.
- Begin consultations towards a provincial land use plan.
- Adopt forest ecosystem management regulations for harvesting and silviculture to maintain biodiversity.

## The New Democrat Plan for First Nations and Aboriginal Well-Being

*New Democrats know the importance of recognizing the cultural heritage of all our people. We must embrace the uniqueness of aboriginal groups and move further to redress past unfairness.*

*It's time to take more positive steps to ensure that aboriginal people in this province have equality on terms that are meaningful to them.*

***Over the next four years, a New Democrat government would:***

- Raise public awareness of the reality of the lives of aboriginal people in the province and their contribution to its history and culture.
- Formally recognize the Mi'kmaq as having aboriginal and treaty rights equivalent to the rest of the Mi'kmaq in the Maritimes.
- Review policies in social work, health care and education pertaining to aboriginal people.
- Increase and improve government programs that promote community healing and social mental health in aboriginal communities.

## The New Democrat Plan for Healthy and Sustainable Fisheries

*The industry that created and nurtured Newfoundland and Labrador for centuries has been allowed by successive provincial and federal governments to deteriorate over the years. This neglect of the fishery has had a profound and negative effect on the people who live in our rural communities. A healthy fisheries industry would go a long way to revitalizing rural Newfoundland and Labrador.*

*It's time to take a practical approach to rebuilding and re-energizing this vital resource. It makes sense for so many reasons – employment, food security, and environmental stewardship among them. We must not be afraid to ask questions. We must be prepared to accept difficult answers.*

### **Over the next four years, a New Democrat government would:**

- Resurrect and expand the 2011 MOU
- Agree to cost-share fleet rationalization for those fleets that are looking to downsize and have developed viable plans.
- Research the impact of aquaculture on the wild fishery and the coastline.
- Work with federal New Democrats towards a judicial inquiry on the future of the Newfoundland and Labrador fishery.
- Develop an adjustment plan for plant workers affected by permanently closed fish plants.
- Pursue custodial management of Newfoundland and Labrador fisheries.
- Establish a seafood marketing council to conduct market research, launch marketing campaigns and support the formation of NL seafood marketing consortia.
- Expand marine ecosystem research.

## *The New Democrat Plan for Strengthening Health Care*

*Universal health care is fundamental to the very definition of what it is to be Canadian.*

*If we are to continue to enjoy access to this essential need, we must be innovative. We must start to embrace new models of delivery, and improve the ones we have, and we must do this in a logical, reasoned manner.*

*We must also recognize that our geography dictates special considerations.*

*It's time to do whatever we can to ensure that residents of rural areas have access to the best health care possible.*

### ***Over the next four years, a New Democrat government would:***

- Conduct a comprehensive, independent review of the health care system.
- Reduce ER wait times through on-site clinics, increased staffing, community health centres and long-term care/home care.
- Continue to expand the NL Prescription Drug Program and work with the other provinces to put a national pharmacare program in place.
- Strengthen addictions counseling and treatment programs in all areas of the province.
- Expand primary health care programs across the province.
- Address shortages of specialists in the province.
- Ensure full utilization of nurse practitioners and midwives in public health care.
- Increase incentives for doctors to work in under-serviced areas.
- Standardize ambulance services by creating a publicly funded and administered provincial ambulance system.

## The New Democrat Plan for **Healthy Homes and Housing**

*The United Nations recognizes shelter as a basic human right. Why, then, are so many Newfoundlanders and Labradorians inadequately housed? The lack of affordable housing is a major issue for people everywhere in the province.*

*It's time for this province to be a place where everyone has access to safe, clean housing. We must encourage development of the type of housing that the people of Newfoundland and Labrador need. We need a real government commitment to developing the various forms of affordable housing, and we must involve other levels of government and the people who actually build the housing.*

### **Over the next four years, a New Democrat government would:**

- Establish a Housing Division within government responsible for housing policy and planning.
- Build a minimum of 50 new social housing units annually to reduce the wait list.
- Establish a permanent program in the new Housing Division that will fund non-profits, municipalities and developers to build affordable rental units for low- to moderate-income households.
- Designate a percentage of affordable and social housing units for seniors, people with disabilities or complex needs, and those experiencing discrimination.
- Strengthen the Residential Tenancies Act through a consultative process.
- Improve inspection system for rental housing conditions across the province.

## The New Democrat Plan for Labrador

*Labrador is home to rich resources and vibrant cultures. The natural riches of Labrador play a huge part in projections for a healthy provincial economy, but the people who live there deal with skyrocketing housing, food and freight costs.*

*It's time to take the last necessary steps to recognize the unique needs of the people who live in Labrador, and do whatever we can to help them meet the special challenges posed by geography and climate.*

### **Over the next four years, a New Democrat government would:**

- Increase the medical transportation budget for Labrador.
- Address the housing crisis in Labrador with rent supplements, new social housing units and incentives to build affordable rental housing.
- Guarantee funding to improve provincial roads and highways across Labrador.
- Ensure that all communities have access to high-speed internet.
- Accelerate the development of green power in isolated Labrador communities.
- Ensure that development of Labrador's resources, including Gull Island and Muskrat Falls, is economically viable, environmentally sustainable, and beneficial for the people of the province, especially the people of Labrador.
- Increase the presence of Memorial University in Labrador.

## The New Democrat Plan for Inclusion of **Newcomers**

*Our society continues to thrive and grow, and we welcome people from all over the world to Newfoundland and Labrador. Their skills and experiences help fuel our economy; their cultures enhance our own traditions.*

*It's time for a province that truly welcomes newcomers. We must recognize and eliminate the barriers and challenges that might slow their full involvement in our society.*

### **Over the next four years, a New Democrat government would:**

- Include more New Canadians in the creation of the immigration policy and programs that affect them.
- Work with professions and trades to allow more New Canadians to become eligible to work in the province.
- Provide immigrant- and refugee-serving organizations with access to annual funding.
- Encourage immigrant- and refugee-serving organizations and agencies to employ newcomers.
- Expand English as a Second Language programs in communities and schools.
- Ensure that all employment programs are inclusive of newcomers.
- Introduce a new immigrant small business loan guarantee program to help newcomers obtain credit from Canadian financial institutions.

## *The New Democrat Plan for People with Disabilities*

*A government must always be aware of disability issues and ensure that all government programs and activities accommodate people of all ability levels. New Democrats endorse the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of People with Disabilities and recognize that we must work to eliminate the remaining barriers to full participation.*

*It's time for a province where people of all activity levels can contribute, knowing their challenges are understood and their talents appreciated.*

### ***Over the next four years, a New Democrat government would:***

- Increase the number of affordable, accessible apartments.
- Raise the Income Support rates for people with disabilities by 5%.
- Establish inclusive programs to enable people with disabilities to fully participate in social, educational and work opportunities.
- Accommodate more people in employment programs for people with disabilities, and offer more information and incentives to employers.
- Fund community-based transportation initiatives for people with disabilities.
- Amend the Buildings Accessibility Act to remove the exemption from accessibility requirements for public buildings existing before 1982, provide resources for institutions, agencies and community organizations to comply.
- Commission a report to determine the need for a school for the Deaf, including the role the school played as a social and cultural centre for Deaf adults.

## The New Democrat Plan for **Renewing Democracy**

*It's a rare week that goes by without a news story or opinion piece about the current government's lack of transparency. Many people in our province feel their voice makes no difference and don't bother to vote at all. Do we lament this sad state of affairs or do we change it?*

*New Democrats envision a province where people feel part of the governing process. If every citizen feels engaged, if people know they can ask questions and get honest, timely answers, and if all of our society's diverse groups are represented in both elected and appointed officials, we'll be well on our way to a thriving democracy.*

*It's time to make our system of government work for everyone.*

### **Over the next four years, a New Democrat government would:**

- Increase the minimum number of days the House of Assembly must sit each year to at least 60.
- Change information and privacy legislation to strengthen access to information and privacy protection.
- Ensure transparency and public consultation on all major new legislation.
- Add Civics to the junior high school Social Studies curriculum.
- Conduct a review to assess the need for electoral reform.
- Give all-party Standing Committees of the House of Assembly the resources to examine proposed legislation and other matters of government policy, in a democratic manner inviting public participation.
- Amend the Human Rights Act to include “gender identity” as a prohibited grounds of discrimination.

## *The New Democrat Plan for Sustainable Rural Communities*

*Rural Newfoundland must be more than a backdrop for tourism ads. Our rural communities are pretty -- but they are also real places, where real people live in the 21st century. New Democrats consider the needs of today's residents, and balance that with preserving a truly unique culture.*

*It's time to recognize that a community is more than a collection of pretty buildings. It is the people who live there. We cannot celebrate our rural heritage without offering basic supports to the people who live in our rural communities today.*

### ***Over the next four years, a New Democrat government would:***

- Strengthen incentives to attract new graduates in education, health care and selected trades to work in rural communities.
- Ensure that all communities have access to high-speed internet.
- Provide more assistance for municipal water and sewer installation and maintenance, and support research and development in technologies suitable to the province's unique conditions.
- Increase the presence of government services in rural communities.
- Upgrade the electricity grid to accept locally-produced electricity and help communities develop green energy sources.
- Accelerate the development of green power in isolated remote communities.
- Protect, support and promote heritage facilities in rural communities.
- Assist rural communities to develop local agriculture.

## The New Democrat Plan for **Women**

*New Democrats see a society where all citizens are truly equal participants. We must remain vigilant in pursuit of women's equality, equity, and inclusion.*

*While women's equality-seeking organizations must continue to play an important role in advising government, New Democrats recognize how important it is for them to be independent, and free to represent women in the province without fear of losing funding for speaking out.*

*It's time to work towards real equality.*

### **Over the next four years, a New Democrat government would:**

- Seek the advice, welcome the advocacy, and resource the work, of grassroots equality-seeking women's groups.
- Increase funding to women's organizations that deliver equality and anti-violence services.
- Monitor and enforce employment equity hiring targets for all resource projects.
- Develop strategies and targets to ensure equal representation of women in all publicly-funded agencies, boards and institutions.
- Establish a committee of the House of Assembly to study the issue of representation of women in the House and report on ways in which the electoral system could encourage gender equality.
- Recommend to the federal government the appointment of the first woman to the post of Lieutenant Governor.

## The NDP Fiscal Plan

The policies in this document reflect our vision for a prosperous Newfoundland and Labrador. We know that with intelligent choices and proper stewardship, together we can build a better, fairer province.

But we are also realistic. Here's how the NDP 2011 Platform shapes up from a financial point of view.

Our Pledges are the five key components of the Platform. They are measures that will make life better for people in this province, and they can all be achieved within a year of the election. The accompanying chart tells you both what the costs of these pledges are (where there are costs attached) and how we plan to pay for them.

We see the remainder of the platform as being equally important. It is made up of goals that we believe we can reach in the second, third, and fourth year after this election.

However, our first priority is to balance the province's budget in each year of the next government's term.

We would achieve this goal by introducing a 3% surtax on petroleum royalties and reallocating one per cent of the provincial budget through efficiencies and reassignments.

Four more years of the same tired status quo is not what the people of this province need. Irresponsible promises are not a credible alternative.

***Our Platform is realistic, practical and committed to making life better for the ordinary families of Newfoundland and Labrador.***

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**NDP First Year Pledges 2012-2013**

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**REVENUE**

**PROVINCIAL SOURCES:**

|  |                 |
|--|-----------------|
| Efficiencies from provincial budget (One per cent of program spending) | \$74,000,000.00 |
| Three per cent petroleum royalty surcharge                             | \$68,000,000.00 |

|                       |                         |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>REVENUE TOTAL:</b> | <b>\$142,000,000.00</b> |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|

**EXPENSES**

**PLEDGE 1**

|   |                 |
|---|-----------------|
| Home support worker wage increase and training grant      | \$12,750,000.00 |
| Expansion of NL drug prescription program by ten per cent | \$13,000,000.00 |
| Coverage of glucose tests strips                          | \$2,000,000.00  |

**PLEDGE 2**

|   |                 |
|---|-----------------|
| Driver's fee reduction by one third             | \$2,600,000.00  |
| Post Secondary Education needs based grants     | \$4,700,000.00  |
| Elimination of gasoline "tax on tax"            | \$35,000,000.00 |
| Increase basic income tax exemption             | \$21,900,000.00 |
| Reduction of small business tax by one per cent | \$4,000,000.00  |
| Increase income support rates                   | \$11,400,000.00 |
| Reduction of ambulance fees                     | \$4,200,000.00  |

**PLEDGE 3**

|   |                |
|---|----------------|
| Hire 100 more full time home care workers                   | \$2,900,000.00 |
| Provide up to \$250 per household for seniors snow clearing | \$8,000,000.00 |
| Increase funding for Seniors Resource Centre                | \$100,000.00   |
| Free college or university course for seniors               | \$400,000.00   |

**PLEDGE 4**

|  |                 |
|--|-----------------|
| Recruitment and retention of early childhood educators | \$5,000,000.00  |
| Ten per cent contingency                               | \$14,050,000.00 |

|                       |                         |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Expenses Total</b> | <b>\$142,000,000.00</b> |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|