Platform 2004

Jack Layton

NDP

New energy.
A positive choice.
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Dear friends,

Elections should be about ideas. And that's what you'll find here: practical, innovative solutions to create jobs and opportunities in a green and prosperous Canada – where no one is left behind.

The ideas in this platform are realistic and achievable, and they'll help make life better for you and your family.

From innovative ways of improving our public health care system... to new education and training opportunities... to simple steps we can take to make life more affordable for families... these are solutions that can make a real difference for people.

And putting good ideas into action is what politics should be about. Throughout my career, both at the local level and working with cities and communities nationwide, I've helped lead ground-breaking initiatives to create new economic opportunities, protect our environment and make our communities better places to live in.

I believe Canadians are looking for new energy and a positive choice in this election – a real alternative to parties that are mired in scandal, out of ideas and too close to big business.

I invite you to have a look at today's NDP and our innovative and practical solutions. With your support, we can make a positive difference for everyday people throughout this country.

Sincerely,

Jack Layton
Leader, Canada's NDP
Canadians want to build for the century ahead with a cohesive, integrated plan that creates jobs, cleans our air and water and invests in ideas that make life better for people.

Canadians overwhelmingly want a government that cares and has the ability to ensure our communities thrive. Canada’s communities need a real deal that improves citizens’ lives and helps businesses prosper. Innovative ideas have created new technology allowing us to discard the old thinking that says we have to choose between jobs and the environment. Innovative ideas for health care let us improve the system we cherish and save money at the same time. Canada has the ideas and the financial freedom to enact them, and it’s time we elected MPs who agree.

Throughout the 1990s, Canadians consistently told Paul Martin, then finance minister, that we wanted to build a country that reflected our values. And long after the deficit was abolished, Martin chose to listen to his corporate friends rather than listen to Canadians and build our country. After a decade of scandal, waste and the wrong choices, it’s time for a change.

It’s time for a vision for Canada based on innovation, enduring values, responsible finances and investing your tax dollars in things that matter. Canada has the resources to build the country we want, and this election is about making the choices that let us put our values into action.

Together, Canadians built a railroad in the 19th century and public health care and public pensions in the 20th century. Together, we can embark on the great project of building the country we want for the 21st century.
Building our municipalities with a real deal

Canada is an increasingly urban nation. Only Australia has a higher percentage of its citizens living in cities. And increasingly, our cities are our economic engines. From Windsor to Whitehorse, from Bathurst to Burnaby, Canada’s communities desperately need a real deal.

In the 21st century, we can’t disconnect problems. Child poverty is related to the lack of affordable housing. Less time with our families is related to urban sprawl and the increased, smog-causing commuting that results. Private water supplies at higher cost to the consumer and toll highways are related to chronic underinvestment in infrastructure.

Jack Layton and Canada’s NDP say it’s time to recognize that Canada’s rural communities, towns and cities are all key to meeting these challenges, helping our businesses prosper and improving the quality of life of our citizens. With a federal government clearly committed to stable, predictable long-term funding, we can work with provinces, territories and municipalities to deliver a real deal.
Jack Layton and Canada’s NDP will build our communities by:

• Sharing half the federal gas tax with municipalities for sustainable transportation: public transit, cycling and pedestrian infrastructure in our cities and freight rail and road investment in rural communities. This transfer should not depend on matching funds from provinces, many of which are fighting deficits directly linked to Paul Martin’s choices while finance minister.

• Re-starting a 10-year national housing program to build 200,000 affordable and co-op housing units (including homes for seniors, people with disabilities and students), renovate 100,000 existing units, and provide rent supplements to 40,000 low-income tenants, many of whom are single mothers who pay a large percentage of their income in rent. This program would also help Canada’s forest communities by stimulating Canadian demand for lumber.

• Including in the housing program tax incentives for developers to renovate and restore buildings in downtown cores, creating new housing stock and rebuilding our city centres and downtowns as an alternative to more urban sprawl.

• Using the large profits generated by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation to underwrite low-interest mortgages for affordable housing and requiring the CMHC to change its mandate to make it easier for community-based housing organizations to get funding.

• Implementing a permanent national infrastructure program so that accountable local governments can own and deliver clean drinking water, waste water reduction, sewage treatment and solid waste reduction strategies to their communities – and create jobs.

• Providing incentives to fund public transit passes for employees by giving tax-exempt status to employer-provided transit benefits.

• Ensuring all municipalities, not just cities, receive a full refund for the GST they pay as well as a portion of the federal gasoline tax targeted for green transportation infrastructure. It is unfair to force cash-strapped municipalities to pay money received from property taxes to a federal government that has a surplus and for gas taxes to be hoarded by Ottawa.

Paul Martin and the Liberals have:

• Abolished the national housing program, which, over its 20-year life, built housing in which 2.2 million Canadians live and, after raising the gas tax supposedly to pay off the deficit, refused to share any of it with municipalities long after the deficit was gone.

• Refused to provide funding for urban transit and for rural transportation infrastructure, even as he collected billions per year in gas taxes as finance minister.
Building value for public pensions, creating jobs and cutting pollution

Under Paul Martin, funds from Canada’s major public pension plan, the CPP, were placed in the hands of his corporate friends and invested in Bay Street stocks on the promise of more security in retirement. In the wake of corporate scandals at Enron and WorldCom, reeling markets, and major industries facing bankruptcy, Canadians understandably feel less secure about investing more and more of their pensions in the roller coaster stock market.

There’s a better use for our public pensions, one that provides a safe return on pension investment, creates jobs for Canadian workers, saves money for Canadian employers and helps Canada reduce our climate-changing and smog-causing emissions. It’s time to start investing CPP funds in programs like a national energy retrofit program.
Jack Layton and Canada's NDP will help municipalities – especially cities - fight smog and create jobs by:

- Starting a national building retrofit program for conservations and energy efficiency, paid for through future energy savings. Participating businesses, institutions, apartment complexes, schools and recreation centres will receive an energy-efficient retrofit funded by a completely secure and guaranteed federal revolving fund leveraged by the Canada Pension Plan, offering low interest loans directly tied to utility bill reductions. Participants repay the loans through their deferred energy cost savings. The net cost of the retrofit to the participant will therefore be zero and they will reap major savings once the loan is paid.

- Helping low-income Canadians pay less for energy by making low-income residences the first phase of a residential energy retrofit program.

- Creating markets for Canada's green energy businesses, particularly solar energy businesses, through the building retrofit program.

- Protecting workers' pensions by requiring broader representation of Canadian workers on the CPP Investment Board and changing the mandate to promote sustainable industrial and community development.

- Putting an ethical screen on our public pension management to avoid investing in companies that engage in the arms trade, pollute, exploit labour or undertake other unscrupulous practices that offend Canadian values.

Paul Martin and the Liberals have:

- Cost Canadian pensioners billions by gambling public pensions on the stock market, funding profits-on-paper for some of our largest corporations instead of using our public pension resources to build the country we want.
Building for the future through education

Around the world, countries are building smart futures with an early head start for their kids – and young adults are starting lives of opportunity without mountains of debt upon graduation. Canada is far behind other nations in ensuring that children and families have access to early childhood education, child care, affordable post-secondary education and lifelong learning opportunities.

It’s time Canada caught up by fuelling an economy and society to meet the future with confidence and ideas.

Jack Layton and Canada’s NDP say it’s time to build the country we want by investing in the brains that will build it.
Jack Layton and Canada’s NDP will support a comprehensive vision for education by:

• Cutting tuition fees, just as NDP governments in British Columbia and Manitoba did, with a national plan to reduce fees by 10 per cent and then freeze them by increasing federal funding for post-secondary education and working with the provinces to make sure it happens.

• Increasing funding for research to halt the privatization of research on campus, allowing science to be examined on its merits, not vetted by the funding corporation.

• Replacing the privately administered Millennium Scholarship Fund, which helps few students, with needs-based grants so that a family’s income isn’t a barrier to a student’s future. The abolition of the program should be phased in to protect students currently receiving Millennium Scholarships.

• Crediting all interest accrued on the Canada Student Loans program against graduates’ income taxes.

• Establishing a national training strategy and support for lifelong learning for workers to address current and anticipated skills shortages.

• Extending tools for lifelong learning and research through initiatives like extending broadband access to all communities by co-operating with provinces, municipalities and the private sector.

• Providing stable, long-term federal funds to create an additional 200,000 high quality, affordable, publicly funded child care spaces within four years.

• Setting out to develop a strategy with provinces and territories to ensure universal, high quality early childhood education and care in every region of Canada within a decade.

• Working with the provinces to establish a Canada Post-Secondary Education Act that, in return for stable, long-term funding, would prevent the creation of private, for-profit colleges and universities.

Paul Martin and the Liberals have:

• Cut more than $4 billion from post-secondary education transfers, directly contributing to a decade in which tuition rose by five times the inflation rate. They also wasted millions of dollars by handing the Canada Student Loans program to the banks.
Building for the future through children and families

Fourteen years ago Parliament unanimously voted for former NDP leader Ed Broadbent’s motion to abolish child poverty by 2000. Today, even more children are living in poverty - 1.1 million. Across Canada, families with young children are paying far more for child care than they save in tax reductions, and the absence of affordable, quality child care prevents many women from working or studying.

But it’s important to remember that poverty is not just about children. The face of poverty is the old, the middle-aged and the young. Overall, the income gap between the richest Canadians and the poorest is getting worse. A growing number of Canadian families have an income of less than $20,000, and the number of children living in families with incomes of less than $20,000 has increased nearly 30 per cent in recent years.

Jack Layton and Canada’s NDP say it’s time to start investing in children and giving their parents some help. It’s time to act.
Jack Layton and Canada’s NDP will invest in the future by:

- Working with provinces and territories and providing stable, long-term federal funds to create an additional 200,000 high quality, publicly funded, affordable child care spaces within four years.
- Increasing the Child Tax Benefit to $4,900 per child and altering the program to permit Canada’s poorest families, who don’t pay tax, to qualify.
- Ensuring all Canadians who make less than $15,000 a year pay no federal income tax.
- Building affordable housing and providing rent supplements to low-income Canadians. Single mothers can’t get their kids off to a good start in life if they’re stuck in a windowless basement or cheap motel room, with ever-increasing amounts of their income going to rent.
- Creating two new national holidays to help parents spend more time with their children, one in February and one in June (August in Quebec), working towards a shorter work week, longer paid holidays and earlier and flexible retirement options, and encouraging job-sharing programs to enable families to spend more time together.
- Restoring a federal role, in partnership with provincial and territorial governments, to ensure that federally transferred funds intended for social assistance meet specific, Canada-wide goals and that federal support (currently through the CHST) is guaranteed to provide secure and stable funding for social assistance and will not be withdrawn or reduced unilaterally.
- Honouring obligations to Aboriginal Canadians, who too often see their children consigned to years of poverty in Third World living conditions.

Paul Martin and the Liberals have:

- Done nothing. In the 1993 Red Book, which Martin wrote, the Liberals committed to creating 50,000 child care spaces in each year following three per cent economic growth to a maximum of 150,000 spaces. In his nine years as finance minister, economic growth exceeded the threshold seven times, yet not one child care space was created.
Building an innovative, public health care system

Throughout the 1990s, Canadians were told the debate over public health care was about money, not ideas. It's time to challenge that with innovative ideas that build a responsive, integrated public health care system that saves money and prepares Canada for a larger, aging population.

When medicare was created, first by the Tommy Douglas government in Saskatchewan and then throughout Canada in the 1960s, the provinces and the federal government shared the cost equally. Today, public health care is more complex – with new diagnostic equipment and procedures, surgeries and treatments and a host of new and expensive drugs – but the federal government’s share has declined to just 16 per cent, contributing enormously to overcrowded emergency rooms and long waiting lists.

Today, we need new ideas and new support grounded in the timeless principles of medicare.

Jack Layton and Canada’s NDP challenge the belief that privatizing health care and ushering in a for-profit or P3 model is inevitable or desirable. Simply because Liberals have refused to respond to technological and demographic trends does not mean Canadians should abandon public health care. It means we should elect MPs who want to protect public health care through innovation, as Roy Romanow’s solutions illustrate.
Jack Layton and Canada’s NDP will reduce costs and help patients by:

- Reducing the cost of drugs with a national bulk-buying program, as Australia uses, to use combined purchasing power to reduce costs for provinces and by examining drug patent legislation to ensure corporate protections do not impinge on accessibility of needed drugs.

- Recognizing that many illnesses are treated through drugs, not hospitals, and phasing out a pharmacare program to help Canadians afford the drugs they need, starting with Canadians with low incomes or those facing massive drug costs because of catastrophic illness. If patients in hospital have their drugs covered, patients who can be treated at home should have their drugs covered, too.

- Outlawing the practice of “evergreening” prescription drugs that delay the availability of cheaper, generic drugs.

- Ending the disgraceful federally-run health care services in First Nations communities, which require new adequate funding and staffing, and by investing in facilities and working with provinces and First Nations on delivering 21st century health care, as well as focusing on “closer to home” health care solutions rather than relying on the MedEvac model used in many First Nations, Inuit and other remote communities.

- Establishing a Royal Commission to examine bold means to protect medicare’s sustainability through reduced drug prices, strengthening public research and examining the creation of a Crown corporation dedicated to providing innovative drugs to Canadians and the world at cost, and by supporting promising young researchers in this area.

- Scrapping the corporate-driven review of the Food and Drugs Act and enforcing a “precautionary principle” approach, ensuring that when there are uncertainties, decisions must err on the side of health and environmental safety.

- Implementing public or non-profit-based home care, based on the successful Manitoba model. Care in hospitals is $9,000 to $16,000 more expensive per patient per year than community-based home care, which plans for an aging population while relieving the burden on families and especially women, who disproportionately care for elderly relatives.

- Aggressively pursuing a major federal plan for the prevention of illness and injury, focusing on good nutrition and physical fitness, a clean and healthy environment, quality housing and attacking poverty.
Jack Layton and Canada’s NDP will help reduce waiting times by:

- Working with provinces and territories to establish more community-based clinics to handle minor medical problems, reducing the expensive reliance on hospital ERs. By using a wide range of health professionals, including nurse practitioners and nutritionists, we can treat small ailments and also work to prevent illnesses through solvent abuse programs, nutrition and safe-sex programs and pre-natal care.

- Implementing Roy Romanow’s solution of fair, predictable federal funding for public health care by ensuring the federal government returns to being a full partner in health care by addressing what has become known as the “Romanow Gap” and paying 25 percent of provincial health care costs within two years. This would let provinces invest in the staffing and operating of more modern diagnostic equipment such as MRIs, deliver more efficient health care, and retain health professionals.

- Working with the provinces and provincial regulatory bodies to recognize foreign qualifications of health professionals.

- Implementing the recommendations of the Canadian Nursing Advisory Committee to address nursing shortages.

- Recognizing and responding to the unique health needs of northern, remote and Aboriginal communities.
Jack Layton and Canada’s NDP will improve and protect health care by:

• Creating a national public health agency, modelled on the Centers for Disease Control in the United States, to provide concerted national response and treatment protocols for public health emergencies such as SARS.

• Giving this agency a specific mandate to study the impact of poverty, air pollution and toxics on public health and deliver annual recommendations for improvement.

• Restoring ParticipAction, the national program that prevented illness by encouraging physical activity, and promoting proven alternative and traditional health practices to keep Canadians healthy and out of the acute care system.

• Copying successful strategies in Europe to outlaw the use of trans-fatty acids in food.

• Restoring independence to Health Canada in monitoring drug safety.

• Ensuring women have access to safe, therapeutic abortion services.

• Strengthening the Canada Health Act to prohibit public money going to private, for-profit hospitals and responding to technological change by deeming diagnostics such as MRIs as medically necessary services, thus protecting them from privatization. We must also vigorously increase enforcement of the Canada Health Act, which will be much more feasible once federal funding is restored to 25 per cent.

• Responding to Roy Romanow’s concerns about the potential effects of global and continental trade deals on Canada’s ability to keep health care public.

• Including Aboriginal leaders in all meetings of federal, provincial and territorial health ministers.

Paul Martin and the Liberals have:

• Enacted the largest ever cuts to public health care, abandoned promises to reduce the patent length of prescription drugs and deleted a clause from the Canada Health Act that protected vital home care services from privatization.
Building trust through commitment and flexibility

Canada is a complex federal state. It's time for government to recognize our diversity and lead through negotiation and commitment, not arbitrary measures that undermine our capacity to build together. We need a flexible federalism that reflects both historical realities and future trends. This blueprint for the future reflects these realities and is based on the principles of mutual respect, negotiation and co-operation to build a Canada that reflects its citizens' values.
Jack Layton and Canada’s NDP will build trust through commitment and flexibility by:

- Embracing flexible federalism, based on respecting provincial jurisdiction and joint ventures with provinces after full consultation and negotiation and recognizing the current fiscal imbalance that strongly favours the federal government.
- Recognizing the fundamental differences that constitute Quebec being a nation within Canada and working with Quebec to obtain common objectives with equitable outcomes, with the option of Quebec opting out of new federal programs with compensation to pursue common objectives and standards in a provincial program.
- Accepting that publicly financed and delivered health care is a fundamental right of Canadian citizenship and ensuring provincial governments, in recognition of the federal government’s new funding and co-operation, protect this right through a stronger Canada Health Act that protects Canadians’ right to public health care.
- Respecting successful programs that may already exist in some provinces (such as pharmacare or affordable, accessible child care) rather than imposing new one-size-fits-all federal programs that can create needless duplication and waste, as well as unnecessary conflict with provincial governments.
- Recognizing the historical fact that the federal government has unilaterally withdrawn funding from provinces, territories and municipalities and basing all future commitments on long-term, predictable funding and negotiation.
- Working with provinces, territories and municipal leaders to enhance municipalities’ role in national affairs in respect of their contribution to our economic and cultural life.
- Recognizing Aboriginal self-governance as a fundamental component of a modern federal state.
Canadians stand on the brink of a transformational choice. Either we embrace the world’s green energy revolution and maintain our status as an energy exporter or we cling to old rhetoric about jobs versus the environment and import this century’s energy from somewhere else. We need an ambitious plan to clean our air and water and protect the environment and human health from toxic chemicals, transforming Canada into a sustainable, clean economy for the 21st century.

Canadians are intelligent. We treasure our country’s great wilderness, its forests, rivers and lakes. However, we know our fresh waters are becoming more polluted and less habitable for fish. We experience increasingly unpredictable and extreme weather. The glaciers are melting and with them the water source for Prairie rivers. Smog is getting worse across southern British Columbia and along the swath from Windsor through to the Atlantic provinces. The Arctic ice cap is melting, and we are concerned about toxins in our air and water.

Canadians are also a global people. We see poverty, pollution and pandemics such as AIDS ravaging humanity and want to help. We live in a land of tranquility, but in an ever-shrinking world in which crises gripping foreign shores will eventually reach our own. We want to act.

Jack Layton and Canada’s NDP know Canadians are ready for change, to address the growing environmental deficit our country and our world faces. We are ready to reassert ourselves on the world stage as a voice for good and to clean up our own back yard for ourselves, our children and for future generations. It’s time to be bold about building the planet we want.
Building the foundation for a green, clean energy future

The world’s oil and coal resources cannot last forever. Do we begin weaning ourselves from our almost complete dependence on fossil fuels and nuclear power in a thoughtful way that respects the communities, workers and businesses affected? Or, do we do nothing and get hit with overnight change that will have drastic effects? Add to this the impact of smog on Canadians’ health and air and the dangers of nuclear power, which are too compelling to be ignored. We need a plan now for clean air and green energy.

Around the world, many governments and businesses choose to manage change, evolving to a sustainable future to protect prosperity. Canada must do likewise. It’s time for a bold plan based on Kyoto’s targets and time frames, using Kyoto as a trigger for transformation and recognizing that, as with calculators and computers, the more new technology is used and sold, the cheaper it becomes.

We need to take the initiative today to make sure we have a green, clean and prosperous tomorrow.
Jack Layton and Canada's NDP will kick start the clean air revolution by:

- Leveraging the federal government's remaining 19 per cent stake in Petro-Canada with a new Crown corporation focusing on conservation and renewable energy and committing Canada to creating jobs through green energy self-sufficiency.

- Putting Canada on track to be a global leader in new environmental technology by using the new Crown corporation to establish innovation centres in solar, tidal, wind and geothermal power across Canada, located near fossil fuel centres to ease in the economic transition to a sustainable economy, and by providing tax incentives for renewable energy businesses to locate in those areas.

- Imposing hefty fines for polluters that match the clean-up costs (the polluter-pay principle).

- Using the new Crown corporation to invest in under-used industrial capacity to re-tool machines and create jobs by building wind turbines in Canada and using a new national infrastructure program to foster markets for wind energy.

- Fully phasing in over four years a tax shifting regime to transform incentive, subsidy and investment programs to focus upon green and co-generated energy, including wind power, solar energy, tidal power, biofuels, and energy efficiency as well as transitional technologies such as combined heat-and-power and community energy systems, rather than those that contribute to climate change such as fossil fuels or that produce toxic residue such as nuclear power. Implementation will be sensitive to and include negotiated adjustments for regional economic impacts, maturity of sectors and establishment of compensating strategies.

- Taking responsibility to fairly negotiate, promulgate and implement the regulations in respect of Crown Share Adjustment Payments (CSAP) for Nova Scotia to ensure that Nova Scotia receives its fair share of resource revenues which has been provided for and established in Federal Legislation.

- Making the necessary changes to ensure the spirit of the Atlantic Accord is achieved in practice and the people of Newfoundland and Labrador are treated fairly.

- Working with Saskatchewan to ensure it is treated on an equitable basis with Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador with respect to energy revenues and equalization.

- Establishing a just transition fund for energy workers and the communities in which they live and providing assistance to coal-dependent provinces to close coal plants.

- Assisting provinces to shift from coal-powered plants through a National Power Strategy that meets Canadian needs in a sustainable manner, providing a means to export cleaner hydro power from Quebec and Manitoba to coal- and nuclear-dependent provinces.

continued overleaf...
• Developing a transition fuel strategy that maintains an adequate domestic supply of natural gas to replace oil and coal by directing the National Energy Board to ensure Canadian energy needs are met before allowing unlimited natural gas exports to the United States.

• Creating the Canadian Climate Exchange, using market economics to generate revenue for green energy and sustainable development by auctioning off emission credits to corporations, with a steady decline of available credits over time. As the price for pollution credits rises, the financial incentive for corporations to pollute will decline, with the auction proceeds funding Canada’s green energy transformation.

• Supporting family farms by expanding incentives for ethanol as a transitional fuel and supplementing farm incomes by importing innovative ideas from states like Iowa, which rents strips of land from farmers for wind turbines.

• Helping northern and remote communities avoid expensive diesel by using Canadian technology and importing innovative ideas from Alaska, which replaces high-cost generators with wind turbines.

• Maintaining the moratorium on oil and gas exploration off the Pacific coast and in the Great Lakes.

• Working to establish a university degree program in green technology to support the education of Canadians to work in this emerging industry.

• Establishing a national building energy-efficient retrofit program to reduce demand for electricity, with funds coming from and profits going to the CPP and by using tax incentives to create housing in city centres to fight the effects of urban sprawl.

• Establishing a commission to recommend innovative federal financial and taxation steps, like shifting current taxes to green taxes or environmental incentives in a revenue neutral framework.

Paul Martin and the Liberals have:

• Been consistently vague on Kyoto and made the environment ministry the target of some of the largest cuts to pay for tax reductions for oil and coal companies. In his corporate life, Martin’s company was the Great Lakes’ largest shipper of coal, which changes the climate and causes smog faster than any other fuel, and he plans on giving away emission credits to corporations for free.
Building green cars and promoting green transportation in Canada

It's time for practical solutions that challenge the myth that workers and environmentalists have opposite goals. In July 2003, Jack Layton joined with Greenpeace and the Canadian Auto Workers to unveil Canada's first green car industrial strategy—one that shows how we can use technology, regulation and the private sector to create jobs by building green cars.

Jack Layton and Canada's NDP will create jobs and clean the environment by:

- Providing tax incentives and funding for research and development into new fuel technology for cars, giving incentives to manufacturers to retain and expand plants in Canada.
- Replacing voluntary emission targets with mandatory emission targets for all manufacturers selling cars in Canada, mirroring California's tough rules.
- Joining with states like California and Massachusetts to set mandatory sales targets for vehicle manufacturers for green cars. By enacting these tough rules, Canada could help create a North American market of almost 80 million people for cleaner cars.
- Providing significant GST rebates on greener cars, with the incentive increasing with the fuel efficiency of the car, and enacting green car purchasing policies for the federal government.
- Sharing half the federal gas tax with municipalities to support sustainable transportation with public transit, cycling and pedestrian infrastructure in urban areas and freight rail and rural roads in rural communities.

Paul Martin and the Liberals have:

- Delivered ten budgets that provided no incentive to make or buy green cars, nor help for urban transit.
Building a sustainable future through Kyoto’s targets and timelines

Polluters say environmental rules cost jobs. They used that argument against unleaded gasoline, against the world’s fight to outlaw ozone-depleting chemicals and against Canada’s effort to stop acid rain. They were proven wrong three times. It’s time to stop listening to polluters and their friends and move ahead on the targets and timelines contained in the Kyoto Protocol on climate change.

Jack Layton and Canada’s NDP know Kyoto is a modest first step, and that its emission-reduction targets are not enough. But if we adhere to its targets and timelines, it will trigger the chain reaction of change that will achieve far larger emission cuts.

Jack Layton and Canada’s NDP will implement Kyoto and clean our air by:

- Aggressively funding investment in public transit, rail and renewable energy.
- Establishing a national energy-efficiency building retrofit program to reduce energy costs, cut pollution and create jobs.
- Establishing an east-west power grid to export cleaner hydro power from Quebec and Manitoba to coal-dependent provinces.
- Implementing mandatory vehicle emission targets and incentives for the purchase of greener cars.
- Supporting improvements in Via Rail’s passenger rail system with a long-term objective of high-speed rail in the Quebec City to Windsor corridor and other corridors where it can be cost-effective.
- Supporting only those carbon sink projects that improve local biodiversity, create local economic development and do not divert funds from permanent solutions such as energy efficiency and green power.

Paul Martin and the Liberals have:

- Ignored the Red Book promise that committed Canada, by 2000, to cut emissions by 20 per cent from 1988 levels. On the contrary, Canada’s emissions have gone up 18 per cent since 1988.
Building a future with clean water

Canadian families are concerned about the quality of the water they drink. We want action to improve the infrastructure that delivers water and to prevent toxic chemicals from even entering our water. It’s time to recognize lax rules for corporate polluters, decaying infrastructure and increasingly large farms aren’t sustainable and to implement innovative ideas to protect Canada’s clean water resources.
Jack Layton and Canada’s NDP will protect clean water by:

- Making clean drinking water systems and sustainable waste water treatment a priority of the infrastructure component of the new deal for municipalities, as well as a top priority for rural, Aboriginal and remote communities.
- Providing increased support to family farms to help foster sustainable farming, in contrast to large factory farms and the inevitable challenges to clean water that result.
- Supporting farmers as they try to reduce their dependence on pesticides and antibiotics and supporting municipalities in legal battles with chemical corporations after attempting to limit pesticide use in their community.
- Implementing a ban on the bulk export of Canadian fresh water, as Manitoba has done.
- Creating national guidelines for clean drinking water and using existing federal authority to require full federal environmental assessments on transborder projects, such as the proposed dump in Northern Ontario or incinerator in New Brunswick, which will affect water safety.
- Introducing a far more comprehensive Water Stewardship Act to protect our most valuable natural resource.
- Creating a department of water stewardship, like Manitoba’s, to pull together all federal water issues (12 ministries currently have jurisdiction), develop common standards, invest in infrastructure and work with provinces and territories to ensure co-operation on water quality and quantity issues.
- Taking an aggressive stand on cross-border water issues by using the powers of the International Joint Commission to protect Canadians against threats like the Devils Lake diversion and deal with Canadian corporate polluters, like those involved in befouling the St. Clair River.
- Creating a Canadian Centre for Environmental Heath to promote research on human and ecological health.
- Overhauling the Canadian Environmental Protection Act to reverse the current focus on voluntary action and replace it with mandatory pollution prevention measures for corporations and institutions.

Paul Martin and the Liberals have:

- Consistently refused to help communities provide clean water for their citizens, choosing instead to bring in the largest tax cuts in history for corporate Canada.
Building a future without toxics

The sad fact is that when the Liberals took office in 1993 they promised to clean up North America's largest toxic waste dump, Cape Breton's Sydney Tar Ponds. After a decade in office, not a spoonful of toxic waste has been removed.

With flame retardants now showing up in the breast milk of Inuit women in the Arctic and the government having yet to complete tests on existing toxics – let alone new toxics – there is no time to waste.

Countries are taking action against some of the world's most toxic chemicals, but Canada is lagging far behind. It's time we caught up by cleaning up Canada's dangerous toxic hot spots and taking a proactive, innovative approach to preventing toxic pollution.

**Jack Layton and Canada's NDP will fight toxics by:**

- Creating jobs and working proactively to prevent further pollution – funded by applying the polluter-pay principle and requiring corporations and public bodies responsible for toxic waste to pay for the clean-up.
- Banning all imports of toxic waste.
- Shifting the burden of proof onto chemical companies, requiring them to produce scientific evidence of a chemical's safety before it enters our environment.
- Serving notice to renegotiate NAFTA to respect environmental treaties. NAFTA has been used twice to force Canada to accept toxics: by overturning a Canadian ban on a toxic gasoline additive banned in the US and by forcing Canada to accept the import of toxic waste in contravention of an international treaty.
- Overhauling the Canadian Environmental Protection Act to reverse the current focus on voluntary action and replace it with mandatory pollution prevention measures for corporations and institutions.

**Paul Martin and the Liberals have:**

- Promised repeatedly to clean up the Sydney Tar Ponds, North America's largest toxic waste dump. But after nine years as finance minister, not a spoonful of toxics has been removed, despite the largest federal surpluses in history.
Building respect for Canada’s biodiversity

Canadian species at risk began 2004 without the protection of an endangered species law, despite the Liberals’ promise during three consecutive elections. Canada’s forest industry still relies too much on exporting jobs and logs instead of creating wood-based processing jobs here. And regulations on approving new biotechnology crops remain desperately weak, allowing genetically altered crops into our environment without long-term knowledge of their effects on biodiversity or human health.

It’s time to stop taking Canada’s rich heritage of plant and animal life for granted and work to protect our biodiversity for generations to come. We need to respect our environment and maintain a priceless resource that may contain answers to humanity’s greatest challenges.

Jack Layton and Canada’s NDP will respect biodiversity by:

- Honouring Canada’s obligations to future generations by strengthening our support for national parks and reducing the fees they charge.
- Implementing an endangered species law that protects habitats of species at risk and gives scientists, not politicians, responsibility for determining whether a species is at risk.
- Placing a moratorium on all new genetically engineered crops, particularly wheat, to protect Canadian markets overseas and changing current regulations so that biotech corporations must prove new technology is environmentally safe before it is used.
- Respecting Canadians’ right to know what they eat by implementing mandatory labelling for genetically engineered food, like that already in place in much of Europe, Asia and Australia.
- Working with forest communities, workers and businesses to develop value-added wood product industries to create jobs and reduce Canada’s unsustainable reliance on exporting logs for processing in the US and overseas and by working with provinces to end clear cut logging in old growth forests and move to sustainable forest practices.
- Recognizing that current fish farm practices are unsustainable and urging provinces to impose a moratorium on current operations, phase them out, and replace them with closed-containment fish farming.

Paul Martin and the Liberals have:

- Avoided taking a stand on the mandatory labelling of genetically engineered food.
Building a more equal world

Canadians want to take our place on the world stage, building a more equal world. As one of the world's richest nations, it's time for Canada to make our contribution to building a fairer, more secure world. It's time to do our part in addressing the challenges of population growth, poverty, pollution and pandemics.

Jack Layton and Canada's NDP will build a more equal world by:

- Increasing Canada's international development aid to 0.7 per cent of GDP by 2015.
- Working to cancel foreign debt developing countries owe to Canada while strongly encouraging democracy and human rights in those countries that are severely wanting.
- Working with like-minded governments and legislators to implement the Tobin Tax on currency speculation, as approved by Parliament, by placing a miniscule tax on currency speculation transactions to generate investment capital in health, education and sustainable electricity projects in the developing world.
- Ending Canada's long-standing objection to adopting a key G8 report that shows how sustainable development is possible for developing nations through pollution-free renewable energy.
• Working with progressive legislators in other countries to replace undemocratic, corporate-driven trade deals like NAFTA and the WTO with agreements based on the principles of fair and equitable trade, which respect fair wages and working conditions, human rights, the environment and communities’ right to develop in accordance with their values.

• Working to re-establish Canadian legislators’ primacy to enact national and provincial policies, which has been eroded in recent years by trade deals like NAFTA and the WTO.

• Strengthening the Special Economic Measures Act to enable Canada to implement economic sanctions on Canadian companies that contribute to serious human rights violations overseas.

• Amending the State Immunity Act to enable Canadians to sue foreign governments for torture, war crimes and crimes against humanity.

• Ensuring Canada plays a leading role with like-minded nations in working for peace and justice in the Middle East within a framework of respect for UN resolutions and international law, including the right of both Israelis and Palestinians to live in peaceful co-existence in viable, independent states, negotiated, agreed-upon borders, no settlements remaining in the Palestinian state, an end to the Israeli occupation of Palestinian land, an end to all killings of innocent civilians, and an international peacekeeping presence.

• Supporting Canada’s continued involvement in multilateral organizations such as La Francophonie and the Commonwealth.

• Adopting legislation that allows criminal prosecution of Canadian-based corporations guilty of human rights violations overseas, mirroring legislation that allows prosecution of Canadian citizens for child sex offences committed overseas.

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**Paul Martin and the Liberals have:**

- Cut almost $3 billion from foreign aid, driving Canada’s contribution to international development from 0.44 per cent of GDP to 0.29 per cent.
Building a world that fights AIDS

Every Canadian is moved by the human tragedy of AIDS decimating many developing countries, particularly in Africa. We want a concerted, cohesive and ambitious plan to address one of humanity’s most wrenching and urgent crises. It’s time for Canada to take a leadership role by putting our values into action, shown by the leadership of Stephen Lewis, former Ontario NDP Leader and now United Nations AIDS Envoy.

Jack Layton and Canada’s NDP will fight AIDS by:

- Ensuring cheaper, generic drugs are available to Africa and the developing world for AIDS and all life-threatening illnesses, such as cancer, malaria and tuberculosis, and by reducing the length of patents for prescription drugs in Canada.

- Honouring Canada’s commitment to the Global Fund for AIDS relief by tripling existing funding.

- Working through the United Nations to reform the International Monetary Fund and World Bank to eliminate the drastic lending conditions that cut health and education investment in developing nations, which often result in cuts to AIDS treatment and prevention programs.

Paul Martin has:

- Been a key player at the IMF and World Bank, which are directly linked to significant reductions in the developing world’s ability to prevent and treat HIV/AIDS.
Respecting Who We Are

Jack Layton and Canada's NDP know our country's changed. The places we call home and the faces we see in our communities are evolving, and Canada must evolve to reflect our new urban and diverse realities. To build the country we want, we need to respect who we are.

Respecting women's equality

Canadian women have not seen the advances in equality that the Liberals promised. Economic equality is still a distant goal. Unemployment and a growing part-time work ghetto for women undermine their economic independence. Access to affordable, high quality child care is still a major barrier to working, studying or balancing work and family. At least one in four Canadian women will be assaulted some time during her life. It's time to respect women's equality and develop strategies to support women in balancing work and family.

continued overleaf...
Jack Layton and Canada's NDP are working for solutions to turn the rhetoric of women's equality into reality by:

- Introducing proactive and effective pay equity laws, including timely, efficient, non-bureaucratic ways to help workers and employers resolve disputes and funding for education, training, information and enforcement.

- Working towards applying pay equity law to all employers in the federal sector regardless of size and to all employees regardless of employment status (full-time, part-time, temporary, casual, contract).

- Working with provinces and territories to provide stable, long-term federal funds to create an additional 200,000 high quality, affordable, publicly funded child care spaces within four years.

- Implementing public or non-profit-based home care throughout Canada, based on the successful model in Manitoba. Care in hospitals is $9,000 to $16,000 more expensive per patient per year than community-based home care, which plans for an aging population while relieving the burden on families, especially on women, who disproportionately care for elderly relatives.

- Ensuring women have access to safe, therapeutic abortion services.

- Providing stable funding for women's centres and educational programs designed to combat sexism and violence against women.

- Dedicating some of the recent increases in Sport Canada funding to increasing access to programs for women.

- Reflecting changes in the workplace and helping women qualify for maternity benefits by extending coverage to dependent contract workers and eliminating the limits on maternity or parental leave that are based on use of sickness benefits.

- Easing EI eligibility requirements to factor in a worker's years in the workforce, a measure that would help more women qualify and reflect a worker's true attachment to the workforce.

- Improving access to the CPP/QPP for women by expanding the current "drop-out" provision for child care to include other unpaid care, such as that for senior family members.

- Removing the GST from family essentials, starting with children's clothing and medicine, school supplies, books, magazines, women's hygiene products, and medical equipment.

- Holding a referendum on whether to change the voting system to one based on proportional representation, similar to systems in Germany and New Zealand that respect voters' choices, protect local representation and require broad levels of support for a party to qualify for seats in Parliament.
Respecting Aboriginal realities

Increasingly, Aboriginal Canadians – First Nations, Métis, Inuit – are taking a prominent place in all sectors of society, including business, government and politics, the arts, media, science and academe. It is a welcome development. However, for too many Aboriginal Canadians, life resembles Third World conditions.

Decade after decade of promises have yet to build the communities that Canada’s first peoples deserve and that foster Aboriginal talent to help build the country we want. It’s time for a genuine commitment to the inherent right of self-government. It’s time for a genuine commitment to Aboriginal Canadians, both on reserve and in urban settings.

Jack Layton and Canada’s NDP will work with Aboriginal Canadians by:

- Convening a First Ministers’ conference to discuss the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, shelved by the federal government for the past eight years. Representatives of Aboriginal peoples would attend the conference as full partners.

continued overleaf...
• Settling land claims to foster economic development in on-reserve communities and encouraging working partnerships between the business community and Aboriginal people.
• Training 10,000 Aboriginal professionals in health, education and social services.
• Establishing an Independent Land Claims Commission to decide on specific claims, increasing federal government investment in First Nations community infrastructure, and undertaking financial reforms to give First Nations enhanced access to capital for community economic development.
• Making Aboriginal communities priorities in new housing and infrastructure programs, finally honouring the federal government’s obligations to bring Aboriginal living standards from the Third World to the first.
• Ending the disgraceful federally-run health care in First Nations communities by providing adequate funding, staffing, and investment in facilities and working with provinces, territories and First Nations to deliver 21st century health care.
• Expanding on the proven success of traditional Aboriginal justice in the criminal justice system and increasing funding for Aboriginal language protection.
• Respecting the 1988 Joint Task Force report that recommends an independent, effective system to resolve land claim disputes.
• Abandoning any appeal of court decisions on Indian residential schools and negotiating fair settlements with victims of abuse, unless such a move absolves churches of responsibility for their part in this regrettable part of Canadian history.
• Creating Aboriginal seats in Parliament, just as New Zealand has, to ensure Canada’s first peoples’ voices are always present in national debate.
• Ending low-level NATO flight-testing over Innu lands.
• Opposing any re-introduction of the flawed First Nations Governance Act and instead modernizing Aboriginal governance in consultation with Aboriginal communities based on the principles of self-governance.
• Developing a national strategy to address the needs of urban Aboriginal people.
• Recognizing the unique needs of First Nations communities for clean water and health care.
• Including Aboriginal leaders at national health ministers’ meetings and First Ministers’ meetings.

**Paul Martin and the Liberals have:**

• Chosen to implement the largest corporate tax reductions in history, even as Aboriginal communities, solely under federal jurisdiction, live in squalor.
Respecting a diverse Canada

Canadian faces are changing, and our society and economy are stronger as a result. When the world sees Canada, it sees a model of diversity living in peace. But for too many Canadians, our world image is undermined by domestic reality.

Too many families are kept apart and too many talented Canadians are consigned to work far below their level of expertise as Canada's immigration system fails to reflect modern realities. With communities in need of family doctors and our environment in need of solutions, physicians and engineers shouldn’t be driving cabs. They should be helping to build the country we want.

It’s time for Canada to expand our economic and cultural view to allow prosperity even during poor economic times in the United States. In a global world, we need global ties to the best the world can provide.

Jack Layton and Canada's NDP will build diversity by:

• Allowing immigration levels to rise to the equivalent of one per cent of the population.

• Enacting a once-in-a-lifetime provision to enable Canadian citizens and permanent residents to sponsor one relative to help reunite families and investigating how to amend current immigration laws and practices to make family reunification real.

continued overleaf...
• Working with provinces and territories to respect foreign qualifications of professionals.

• Improving the immigration and refugee system to make it speedier, fairer and more accountable.

• Putting resources in place to end lengthy delays in processing applications from some overseas posts such as Beijing and Delhi.

• Working with provinces and territories to help attract and retain immigrants to maintain labour force and population objectives.

• Amending the current immigration laws, which currently bar most immigrants that would have been admitted during the Trudeau era.

• Eliminating Paul Martin’s head tax on immigrants, effectively regulating and enforcing tighter rules on private immigration consultants and their fees.

• Freezing immigration fees to prevent gouging those who seek to make Canada their home and allowing immigration fees to be used as credit towards education and skills training in Canada.

• Allowing people without status who already call Canada home the opportunity to apply for legal status, in the context of humanitarian and compassionate relaxation of the rules.

**Paul Martin and the Liberals have:**

• Failed to keep their promise of allowing immigration to rise to one per cent of the population and, as finance minister, enacted massive fee increases for immigrant families.
Respecting equality

Canadians believe deeply in equality of races, of religions and of people. We collectively suffer when one of us is denied economic opportunity or civil rights based on ethnicity, disability or sexual orientation.

Yet too often, platitudes paper over a government record starkly at odds with the values Canadians hold. Wage discrimination still occurs so that people doing the same work do not receive equal pay. Peaceful protest is dangerously close to being criminalized. Canada’s Arab and Muslim communities are subjects of dangerous stereotypes. Anti-Semitism is on the rise. And, after a decade of fighting lesbian and gay equality in the courts, Parliament has yet to commit to full equality for same-sex couples. It’s time to put our values into action.

Jack Layton and Canada’s NDP will respect equality by:

• Working with the provincial and territorial governments to set up a single income support mechanism for persons with disabilities, including a system of national disability supports.

continued overleaf...
• Developing a labour market strategy for persons with disabilities that includes a plan for increased participation in the federal government workforce and expanded measures to help other employers to make workplaces accessible and accommodate persons with disabilities.

• Expanding the Special Opportunities Grant Program to recognize the extra costs associated with one’s disability and the costs of accommodations for training, post-secondary education and job opportunities.

• Making the disability tax credit and medical expenses tax credit fully refundable.

• Establishing an independent commissioner who reports directly to Parliament to monitor federal departments’ compliance to all policies for persons with disabilities and who advises ministers about the effects on persons with disabilities of upcoming legislation or regulations.

• Recognizing the equality of loving adult partnerships by extending civil marriage equality to same-sex couples, while respecting each religion’s right to determine its own definition of marriage.

• Replacing the Anti-Terrorism Act with legislation that respects peaceful protest, freedom of the press and civil liberties.

• Introducing legislation that would ban racial profiling from federal departments and jurisdictions.

• Abandoning Paul Martin’s appeal of the court decision extending retroactive CPP survivor benefits for same-sex couples.

• Following the lead of the Northwest Territories and amending the Canada Human Rights Act to ensure a person cannot be discriminated against because of gender identity.

• Working with American authorities to ensure the Canadian passport is respected and that Canadian citizens are treated equally at our international borders and by refusing to share intelligence until we receive these assurances, as recommended by the Canadian Civil Liberties Association.

Paul Martin and the Liberals have:

• Undermined equality for lesbian and gay couples by moving towards a vague “civil union” legal option to get around court rulings in Ontario and British Columbia and by eliminating civil marriage forever for both same-sex and opposite-sex couples.
Respecting Canadians' democratic choices

It's time for Parliament to accurately reflect Canadians' choices. It's time for Canada to catch up to the world by changing our voting system to use proportional representation. Throughout the industrialized world, Canada is one of only two democracies that have yet to use some form of proportional representation.

We can elect a Parliament that reflects the votes of Canadians, that requires parties to have broad, national support, and in which more women take their rightful place. Canadians consistently make clear choices at the ballot box. But due to an obsolete voting system, those choices are consistently ignored by arrogant majority governments elected by a minority of Canadians. It's time to change the system so that politicians like Paul Martin can never again receive mandates based on ideas, only to abandon them once in office. It's time to get tough on the sleaze and scandals that undermine Canadians' faith in our democratic system.

continued overleaf...
Jack Layton and Canada’s NDP will respect your vote by:

- Holding a referendum on whether to change the voting system to one based on proportional representation, similar to systems in Germany and New Zealand that respect voters’ choices, protect local representation and require broad levels of support for a party to qualify for seats in Parliament.

- Getting tough on sleaze by having an independent ethics counsellor, toughening conflict-of-interest guidelines and cracking down on expense accounts.

- Implementing Parliamentary review of senior appointments to bodies such as Crown corporations, agencies, and boards.

- Ensuring so-called “third parties” report publicly on funds they received for election advertising and other campaign expenses.

- Cracking down on unaccountable election slush funds.

- Abolishing the unelected, unaccountable and undemocratic Senate.

- Creating Aboriginal seats in Parliament, just as New Zealand has, to ensure Canada’s first peoples’ voices are always present in national debate.

- Supporting and working with the Council of the Federation, established by Canada’s premiers, to improve federal-provincial-territorial relations.

- Strengthening freedom of information and personal privacy laws and enacting effective whistleblower laws to protect public servants who shine light on wrongdoing and waste in government.

- Lowering the voting age to 16.

Paul Martin and the Liberals have:

- Opposed giving you a say in whether you want to change the voting system you use. In 2003, he voted against an NDP motion for a referendum on changing Canada’s voting system.
Respecting what makes us Canadian

Canadian artists are taking their place on the world stage but still need help at home. Through our arts and stories, we share in the richness of our land. We enrich it further by supporting a flourishing creative environment, a source of inspiration and balance for many Canadians in our fast-paced world.

Canadian amateur sports, too, play a vital role in our national fabric. They help foster vibrant communities and are a component of effective public health and youth programs. It’s time to improve access to amateur sport in our communities.

Jack Layton and Canada’s NDP will support Canadian culture by:

• Supporting Canadian visual and performing artists and writers through project-based grants and tax credits.
• Increasing and stabilizing funding for the CBC and Radio-Canada, recognizing the importance of public broadcasting in a large country in a larger world.
• Supporting the licensing of international, multilingual television on Canadian cable to allow Canadians greater insight into the world around us.
• Protecting domestic ownership of cable and telecommunications companies.
• Ensuring a diversity of voices in Canadian media by preventing further mergers and acquisitions that provide media owners with greater than a 20 per cent market share in a national, regional or local market.
• Implementing the recommendations of the Heritage Committee Report to support distinctly Canadian media industries.
• Dedicating some of the recent increases in Sport Canada funding to increase access to programs for women, persons with disabilities and Aboriginal Canadians.
• Recognizing municipalities are the backbone of amateur sport and dedicating infrastructure funding to help build and run community recreational facilities, with priority for facilities serving youth and seniors.
• Ordering the CRTC to enforce responsibility in the cable TV industry, get a handle on fee hikes, deal with the reduction of community access programming and rebalance regulations to put viewers’ interests first.

Paul Martin and the Liberals have:

• Enacted some of the deepest cuts in history to the CBC and Radio-Canada.
Canadians feel their country slipping away as our society becomes more integrated with the United States and we lose the capacity to build the country we want. Co-operating with our neighbour and closest ally on issues of mutual concern is possible without sacrificing our right to protect our priorities, culture and independence.

Protecting Canadian Sovereignty

It's time for Canada to reassert independent policies that respect both Canadian values and our American friends. Jean Chrétien was correct to listen to Canadians and stay out of Bush's Iraq War.

Jack Layton and Canada's NDP will protect Canadian sovereignty by:

- Ensuring Parliament votes before committing troops overseas and by comparing all military options with their compliance to international law and availability of peaceful alternatives.
- Ensuring that if a decision is made not to enter into war, Canadian Armed Forces personnel do not serve in or command other nations' militaries, as is the case in the Iraq War.
- Placing a priority on peacekeeping and peacemaking operations conducted under UN auspices.
- Serving notice to renegotiate NAFTA to remove Chapter 11 to protect Canada's mixed economy, in which public enterprises and public services play a vital role, and by working with progressive legislators in other countries toward new trade agreements that are not corporate-driven.

continued overleaf.
- Working to strengthen the United Nations and regional security bodies such as the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), as an alternative to the US-dominated bodies of NATO and NORAD, particularly in light of NATO's refusal to renounce the first use of nuclear weapons and the likely location of Star Wars-NMD coordination at NORAD headquarters.

- Serving notice that agreements permitting US soldiers to enter Canada automatically in times of emergency are cancelled and changed to requiring the express permission of Parliament.

- Creating a new agency to promote fair elections and democratic processes among emerging democracies.

Paul Martin has:

- Sent mixed signals about his stance on George Bush's Iraq War and appointed an open supporter of the war, David Pratt, as defence minister.
Protecting Canada's right to determine economic solutions

Canadians are a trading and global people, unafraid to compete in the world and supportive of international institutions and rules that bring our world closer. New Democrats are traders too, and consistently embrace multilateral approaches to solving global challenges. But current trade agreements aren't working for Canadian businesses, workers or communities, and proposed trade agreements provide too many rights for global corporations at the expense of national democracy and existing environmental, social and labour treaties.

It's time for a new approach to trade, one taking root in many countries in the Americas and Europe. We can generate prosperity and interaction in the world in a sustainable manner that lets communities make decisions in their interests, protects our environment and raises living conditions in the developing world by promoting fair wages and working conditions and small, community-based businesses. Jack Layton and Canada's NDP support this model of fair trade, an emerging solution in the wake of recent failures at the World Trade Organization (WTO) and proposed Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA).

Jack Layton and Canada's NDP would work for fair trade by:

- Recognizing that current trade deals like NAFTA aren't working for many Canadian businesses, communities and workers. Access to markets is too often denied and Canadian industries, in particular softwood lumber, agriculture, auto and steel, are too often penalized by the US for playing by the rules.

continued overleaf...
• Serving notice of NAFTA renegotiation to provide guaranteed, managed access for Canadian industries to the United States and to ensure NAFTA does not supersede existing environmental, cultural or labour treaties.

• Refusing to sign any agreement that contains investor state mechanisms, which let corporations overturn democratic decisions, and serving notice to renegotiate NAFTA, starting with the removal of Chapter 11. The powers contained in Chapter 11 have already prevented Canada from banning toxic chemicals.

• Working with progressive legislators and organizations in the United States and Mexico to achieve these reforms.

• Working with like-minded countries throughout the world to negotiate a fair trade agreement that respects existing environmental, social and labour treaties.

Paul Martin and the Liberals have:

• Consistently supported trade agreements that permit corporations to overturn democratic decisions and that are increasingly opposed by governments of developing countries, despite their Liberal Red Book promise to renegotiate NAFTA.
Protecting Canadian jobs from attack

Too many Canadian industries are under concerted attack from other governments, which is harming businesses, communities and workers that play by trade rules. Current strategies are not defending Canadian interests. Even with a string of trade rulings in Canada's favour, softwood lumber exports are still punished with punitive duties.

It's time to act in a concerted manner with our labour partners, who democratically represent Canadian workers, to defend Canadian industries, creating and protecting jobs by reasserting Canada's right to sovereign economic development.

Jack Layton and Canada's NDP would defend jobs by:

- Getting tough on steel dumping and creating a level playing field for Canadian steel by making retroactive dumping duties the norm, not the exception.
- Ensuring those affected by a weak steel policy have a voice by changing the composition of the Canadian Trade Tribunal to equal representation from steel workers, businesses and steel-based communities.
- Establishing a level playing field within North America to attract and retain auto plants, including a temporary fund for research and development incentives for vehicles built in Canada.
- Bringing organized labour to the table, rather than the sidelines as the Liberals did, in a National Forum on the Economy with government, business, and community organizations to have meaningful input on government economic and fiscal policy.
- Establishing a task force of government, business, labour and non-governmental organizations to focus on solutions for key industries such as resource extraction and manufacturing, which are facing changing times.
- Creating disincentives for "sales-only" auto operations by working towards implementing tax measures that encourage making vehicles here.
- Extending tools for lifelong learning, research, skills training, medical diagnostics and opportunity throughout the country through initiatives like extending broadband access to all communities by co-operating with provinces, municipalities and the private sector - including in remote communities.

continued overleaf...
• Recognizing that the Employment Insurance fund belongs to Canadian workers, not the government, and making sure all appropriate benefits flow.

• Working with the auto sector, both business and workers, to create a dynamic Canadian auto policy that levels the playing field with our trading partners and reinvigorates the industry, which has fallen from fourth largest in the world in 1999 to seventh.

• Linking resource-based exports to increase bargaining power with the United States. As a major energy exporter to the US, Canada should use that leverage to ensure fair treatment for all resource industries, particularly softwood lumber.

• Defending Canadian interests in negotiations with the United States for a new softwood lumber trade agreement by being prepared to respond to punitive tariffs on Canadian forest exports with retaliatory trade measures on energy exports, ensuring no agreement is signed that imposes US-style forest policies on Canada, and by offering economic support for forest workers affected by the trade dispute.

• Implementing federal laws to outlaw replacement workers in strikes or lockouts in areas of federal jurisdiction.

• Reinstating a watchdog agency to monitor, and control when necessary, the level of foreign investment in key Canadian industries and by stopping attempts to weaken foreign ownership restrictions in telecommunications.

• Increasing the federal minimum wage by raising it annually, tied to the rate of economic growth.

• Working proactively to protect Canada's film and television industry.

• Working with forest communities, workers and businesses to develop value-added wood product industries to create jobs and reduce Canada's unsustainable reliance on exporting raw logs for development overseas.

Paul Martin has:

• Failed to act, despite being the minister responsible for tariffs and tax policies for nine years in which Canadian industries were under concerted attack.
Protecting the family farm through a food system approach

After the worst financial distress in the history of Canadian agriculture, our farmers and ranchers need federal help desperately. Farmers have endured sharply reduced incomes and weather-related and other disasters. They have suffered from federal government failure to level the playing field against European export subsidies and American domestic supports. As a result, many of our farm families have been forced off the land.

It's time for a new approach. We need to keep our hard-working, innovative farm families on the land and competitive by ensuring adequate returns for their efforts and investments and by encouraging much more value-added production. At the same time, we need to ensure the produce and products that feed Canadians as well as people around the globe are safe, nutritious and environmentally sound.

It's time for a food system approach to help Canada's farmers in the marketplace and for positioning Canadian agricultural products as safe, environmentally sound products. A food system approach can combine farmers' and ranchers' desire for economic support and environmental sustainability with consumers' desire for safe, ecologically sensitive products.

Jack Layton and Canada's NDP will protect family farms by:

- Establishing stable safety net programs to protect family farms from unexpected drops in income caused by natural disasters and adverse trade rules.
- Recognizing the devastating impact of American domestic support and European export subsidies and increasing funding for Canadian farm families until a level playing field can be re-established internationally.

continued overleaf...
• Ensuring that federal help to farmers as a result of trade decisions does not depend on relief from cash-strapped provincial governments.

• Promoting an agriculture policy that preserves what Canadian farmers have created to protect themselves, including the Canadian Wheat Board and supply management in dairy and poultry.

• Working toward sustainable agriculture outcomes that will help reduce input costs for pesticides, herbicides and fuel, which are largely paid by Canadian farmers to multinational corporations.

• Improving food safety through better identification, increased testing and more public inspection to make Canadian-produced food the most trusted in the world.

• Immediately banning all animal-to-animal feed.

• Enacting a moratorium on genetically modified wheat to protect Canadian export markets and supporting mandatory labelling of GM food at home.

• Recognizing the danger that climate change presents to farm families’ income and aggressively reducing Canada’s greenhouse gas emissions.

• Providing incentives to increase value-added processing and packing plants to create jobs for people living in rural Canada.

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**Paul Martin and the Liberals have:**

• Enacted the deepest cuts to farm support programs in Canadian history.
Protecting Canadian unemployed workers

Over the last decade, Canada's employment insurance program has become unfair, unresponsive and outdated. Fewer than one-in-three unemployed or pregnant workers qualify for the insurance program to which they paid premiums, and many unemployed workers who are retraining are not eligible for benefits. It's time to modernize EI to help laid-off workers and accurately reflect the work realities of many women.

**Jack Layton and Canada's NDP will modernize EI by:**

- Allowing retraining to occur while on benefits, helping unemployed workers gain the skills to find new work.
- Reflecting changes in the workplace and helping women qualify for maternity benefits by extending coverage to dependent contract workers and eliminating the limits on maternity or parental leave that are based on use of sickness benefits.
- Easing eligibility requirements to factor in a worker's years in the workforce, a measure that would help more women qualify and reflect a worker's true attachment to the workforce.
- Reducing the hours required to qualify for EI to 350 and restoring benefits to two-thirds of eligible salary to provide a greater buffer between the loss of a pay cheque and poverty.
- Creating more opportunities for unemployed workers to make the transition to work, including skills updating and finding new applications for existing skills.
- Eliminating the two-week waiting period for EI and eliminating counting severance or vacation pay as income for EI purposes.
- Assisting older workers by extending EI benefits for unemployed workers aged 45 or older with more than 10 years in the labour force.
- Making the EI account a separate trust fund, not part of the government's general revenues where premiums are spent on corporate tax cuts instead of insurance for the people who are paying the premiums.

**Paul Martin and the Liberals have:**

- Taken $45 billion from the EI fund to balance the federal budget and implemented draconian qualifying rules that prevent two-in-three unemployed workers from collecting the insurance for which they paid premiums.
Protecting Canadian pensions

After watching many pension plans lose value on the stock market and with many pension plans under funded as a result of stock-induced contribution holidays and corporate greed, many workers are increasingly concerned about their retirement security. It’s time to protect pensions and Canadians’ retirement by using those funds in safe, innovative ways and by increasing the number of Canadians contributing to the CPP through creating jobs and toughening the rules for private pensions.

Jack Layton and Canada’s NDP will protect pensions by:

• Establishing a federal pension insurance program, similar to the one in the US, which is funded by small employer contributions from corporations under federal jurisdiction such as banks, airlines and telecommunications corporations. This program would serve as a catalyst for an interprovincial program to cover all workers.
• Making employees and their pension plans the preferred creditors in the event of corporate bankruptcies.
• Making it illegal to underfund private pensions.
• Creating jobs, providing stable returns for the CPP and launching a national retrofit program of buildings for energy efficiency.
• Protecting pensioners and shareholders by limiting the tax deductibility of corporate executive salaries to $300,000 and requiring that stock options be fully expensed in corporate accounting.
• Putting an ethical screen on CPP investment funds to prevent directing investments of public money into firms that pollute, exploit labour, trade in arms, or engage in other unscrupulous practices that offend Canadian values.
• Providing a legislative framework for joint trusteeship of pension funds.
• Directing public savings in the CPP into investments in sustainable technologies and industries to support national and community economic development.

Jack Layton and Canada’s NDP will help seniors retire in dignity by:

• Supporting a mandatory federal retirement age of 65.
• Improving access to the CPP/QPP for women by expanding the current “drop-out” provision for child care to include other unpaid care giving, such as that for senior family members.
• Reviewing the adequacy of Canada’s pension system to develop more effective ways for enhancing income security for seniors.

Paul Martin and the Liberals have:

• Tried to eliminate the OAS and replace it with a means tested program, and stole $30 billion from the Public Service Pension Fund to balance the books.
Protecting Canadian security through peace

As the Cold War fades into memory and new security challenges emerge, it's time for Canada's security policy to evolve. Buying a lot of expensive military hardware would make big arms manufacturers happy, but it won't do a lot to help a humanitarian middle power such as Canada foster human security. Instead, Canada should assert our role in the world by working as an effective, trained peacekeeper and peacemaker with the equipment to do that job and by helping alleviate the problems that trigger crises.

Around the world organizations like Europe's Organization for Security and Co-operation are emerging that recognize the links between human rights, development and security. Increasing our co-operation, information-sharing and economic ties to more middle-sized industrial democracies and to developing nations may well help combat terrorism and rogue states as much as maintaining our traditional alliances. These new routes need to be developed vigorously. Jack Layton and Canada's NDP say it's time to recognize the world is changing and that the new world requires an investment in people, including Canadian Armed Forces personnel, not trillion-dollar weapons systems for space.

**Jack Layton and Canada's NDP will protect Canadian security by:**

- Increasing foreign aid and taking action to reduce poverty, pollution and pandemics in the world. Huge gulf between rich and poor and looming environmental catastrophes caused by climate change are humanity's biggest security threat.
- Establishing a Royal Commission to conduct a full, thorough review of Canada's role as a middle, humanitarian power in a post-Cold War world.
- Making peacekeeping and peacemaking operations under UN auspices the priority for Canadian Armed Forces operations overseas and working with similar nations to co-operate in organizations that take a holistic approach to security issues.
- Supporting safe helicopters for the Canadian Armed Forces.
- Separating the Coast Guard from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, with increased funding to enforce international and national rules, but also to prevent drug interdiction and illegal immigration, and to keep up the fisheries patrol and marine and environmental protection.
• Increasing the salaries and improving housing for members of the Canadian Armed Forces.

• Working with other nations to develop replacements, based on the principle of cohesive human security and organizations like the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), to NATO and NORAD to reflect all security challenges in a post-Cold War world.

• Cancelling offensive, expensive and unnecessary weapons systems for the Canadian Armed Forces, reducing the DND bureaucracy, and reallocating savings to invest in reserve and regular personnel and better training and equipment so that they can carry out Canada's vital peacekeeping and peacemaking roles.

• Ensuring Canada plays a leading role with like-minded nations in working for peace and justice in the Middle East within a framework of respect for UN resolutions and international law, including the right of both Israelis and Palestinians to live in peaceful co-existence in viable, independent states, negotiated, agreed-upon borders, no settlements remaining in the Palestinian state, an end to the Israeli occupation of Palestinian land, an end to all killings of innocent civilians, and an international peacekeeping presence.

• Opposing the introduction of a national identity card, which endangers the privacy rights of every Canadian.

• Scrapping the draconian Anti-Terrorism Act, which has already impeded media freedom in Canada, and replacing it with legislation that respects civil liberties, ethnic communities and freedom of the press.

• Introducing legislation to ban racial profiling from federal departments and jurisdictions.

• Working with the United States to ensure effective border security that enables the movement of people and goods.

• Increasing security provisions at remote airports.

• Continuing work in multilateral arms reduction treaties to reduce and eventually eliminate chemical, biological and nuclear weapons, which are safe in no one’s hands.

• Launching a full review of Canadian national defence to determine what armed forces for Canada in the 21st century should be and what resources are needed, balancing our traditional peacekeeping and peacemaking focus with the need to have a truly independent foreign policy.

• Firmly opposing any Canadian participation in the grossly expensive Star Wars missile defence scheme, which will result in the weaponizing of space and does nothing to protect us from terrorism, and promoting the proposed Space Preservation Treaty.

Paul Martin has:

• Made participation in Star Wars missile defence a priority and voted for the draconian security law that triggered a raid on a journalist’s home and office despite warnings from the NDP, unions, the media and civil rights organizations of the law’s inevitable consequences.
Protecting Canadians from crime

Across Canada and around the world, statistics clearly show the better an economy is and the fewer desperate people there are, the lower the crime rate. This makes job creation, investing in children and fighting poverty the best anti-crime plan available. But some crimes are not crimes of desperation, and we must vigorously respond to all violent crime and take action against the constant threat of organized crime.

Jack Layton and Canada’s NDP will fight crime by:

- Addressing the underlying causes of crime by aggressively fighting poverty and investing in children and municipalities.
- Making sentences and bail and release conditions tougher for repeat violent offenders under federal jurisdiction.
- Developing a Victims’ Bill of Rights to ensure victims of crime are treated equally and fairly.

continued overleaf...
• Reinstating a national ports police to combat organized crime and smuggling in our port communities.

• Strengthening laws to combat organized crime and anti-gang laws, including better support for “megatrials” to prevent cases from falling apart, long delays and jury harassment.

• Protecting Canada’s children from sexual predators by supporting an effective national sex offender registry of people convicted of violent sexual crimes or sexual crimes against minors and by following the Manitoba example of posting pictures and details about sex offenders on a national web site to help citizens protect themselves.

• Banning the sale of all assault rifles and automatic weapons and prohibiting their import. Citizens in rural and remote areas and recreational hunters aren’t using these weapons, which have no place in civilian societies.

• Strengthening border controls and penalties for illegally importing guns into Canada.

• Introducing a non-punitive rule-based approach to adult marijuana use with a major emphasis on prevention, education and health promotion, while seeing that provinces have the resources to prevent and detect impaired driving more effectively.

• Launching a major anti-drug and anti-alcohol education program aimed at youth. It works for tobacco and will work for drugs and alcohol, too.

• Working to expand the harm-reduction model for hard drugs used successfully in Vancouver, which uses controlled injection sites to help addicts get off drugs and crime.

• Ensuring transparency and accountability in corporate accounting by bringing Canadian regulations in line with the American regulations introduced after the Enron and WorldCom scandals.

Paul Martin has:

• Watched the United States fight corporate accounting crime after the Enron scandal while refusing to bring Canadian corporate standards to the same level.
Clear Choices On How To Get There

For a decade, Canadians have been told we have no choices, that we must abandon building the country and planet we want because we lack the fiscal freedom to do so. It's time for honesty about the clear choices facing us about how to invest our financial capacity. Jack Layton and Canada's NDP believe it's time to invest in innovation, not squander another decade of resources on corporate tax cuts and debt reduction for debt reduction's sake. In short, we need a plan for today's Canadian families, not more corporate tax breaks.

Clear choices for consumers

Around the world, meaningful regulation and innovative consumer involvement are protecting consumers from corporate greed. It's time Canadian consumers received similar protection.

Jack Layton and Canada's NDP respect private enterprise but also recognize that competition alone does not ensure cheaper prices and properly functioning markets, particularly in fields dominated by a small number of large corporations, like credit cards. It's time to give consumers a helping hand through common sense regulation and new ideas contained in a Consumers Bill of Rights.

Jack Layton and Canada's NDP will implement a Consumers Bill of Rights that will protect you by:

- Regulating credit card interest rates to five points above the prime-lending rate, as opposed to the 10 to 20 point gap that many credit cards have.
- Requiring federally regulated agencies such as banks, telephone and cable corporations to fund citizen oversight committees to monitor fees and rates. Currently four US states do this, including Illinois and California, where citizen utility boards and their monitoring have saved consumers millions.

continued overleaf.
• Requiring chartered banks to maintain, rather than abandon, branches in Canada’s rural and small towns, as well as in poor, inner city neighbourhoods.

• Cracking down on cheque-cashing companies that are moving into the poor neighbourhoods abandoned by the banks. Including their exorbitant fees, these corporations charge more than 60 per cent interest, exceeding the Criminal Code limit.

• Respecting consumers’ right to know what they eat by having mandatory labelling of genetically engineered food, as is in place throughout much of Europe, Asia and Australia.

• Toughening up government processes to catch government corruption and waste and introducing independent means to police the system to keep out partisan corporate cronyism.

• Establishing a do-not-call list for telemarketers and imposing tough sanctions on telemarketers who violate the list.

Paul Martin has:

• Served as finance minister during a period in which interest rates neared record lows, yet he permitted credit card interest rates to remain at their previous rate. The gap between the prime rate and most credit cards is now 14.5 points.
Clear choices for creating jobs and a brighter economic future for today’s families

Canadians want to build security for the family and create opportunities for young people in their community. It’s time for a comprehensive industrial strategy that recognizes the importance of community economic development, revitalized manufacturing, agricultural and resource industries, and the promise of creating jobs through smart investment in new, sustainable technologies.

Jack Layton and Canada’s NDP will foster job growth by:

- Embarking on ambitious investment strategies to create jobs through improving care for children and seniors, developing renewable energy, retrofitting buildings for energy efficiency and implementing a real deal for municipalities.
- Recognizing the proven success of community economic development, making co-operative ventures with business, labour and community groups a priority, and extending the concept of community economic development to fisheries.
- Levelling the playing field for small businesses by creating better access to federal government procurement opportunities and by holding a federal review of the availability and escalating costs of property and casualty insurance.
- Creating a fair taxation system for small businesses.
- Indexing the GST exemption threshold for small and home businesses to the rate of inflation.
- Cutting red tape for small businesses that deal with the federal government by, for example, working with all levels of government to develop one-stop shopping.
- Reviewing and reworking existing federal programs to improve small business access to venture capital.
- Creating an economic development subcommittee of the federal cabinet to develop better strategies to foster regional and sectoral economic growth and by establishing a National Forum on the Economy, which would bring together key representatives of business, labour and community organizations to work with government on economic development solutions in established sectors like resource extraction and processing, manufacturing, agriculture and food as well as in emerging and cutting edge sectors like information and communications technology, biotechnology, environmental technology, entertainment and ecotourism.
- Revamping the mandate of the Business Development Bank of Canada to support community economic development and by changing legislation to help democratic financial institutions like credit unions and caisses-populaires increase their market share.

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• Immediately conducting a full public review of the privatization of the fishery, in particular the increasing corporate control of fish quotas.

• Ensuring that fishery goals of conservation and sustainability are achieved through community-based, co-management of fish resources.

• Ensuring that aquaculture is developed in a responsible manner that protects adjacent waters and communities to the highest environmental standards.

• Standing up for an independent, small business, east coast inshore fishery.

• Advocating for custodial management of the fish stocks on the nose and tail and the Flemish Cap of the Grand Banks.

• Decentralizing the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and increasing staff in regional offices.

• Helping coastal communities with a national shipbuilding policy to enable Canadian shipbuilders to compete against their subsidized international counterparts.

• Giving new strategic support to Canada's cultural and tourism sectors, which are increasingly vital to the economy and to the quality of life in our communities.

• Working with Canada’s airports to reduce the often-exorbitant rent paid to the federal government, which impedes local economic development, particularly in smaller centres.

• Challenging the enormous US subsidies to the auto, agriculture and softwood lumber industries far more vigorously than the Liberals have and by developing an effective plan to save these industries before outrageous American policies destroy them.

• Implementing a public Canadian border authority to manage, plan and deliver effective solutions to border issues, including enhanced local community representation and multi-modal transportation options such as road, rail, air and water ferry services.

• Establishing a national training strategy and supporting lifelong learning strategies for workers to address current and anticipated skills shortages.

• Providing a legal framework for joint trusteeship of pension funds to assist using these funds to invest in job creation through community economic development.

• Combining the six ministries responsible for various infrastructure and regional development portfolios into a single Department of Canadian Development and Infrastructure – not to reduce focus in any area but to streamline processes and trim bureaucracy.

• Supporting a new, fairer equalization program for the provinces, as supported by all the provinces.

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Paul Martin and the Liberals have:

• Spent more than $100 billion on tax cuts skewed towards corporations and the well-to-do, while claiming Canada lacked the fiscal freedom to invest in innovative ideas that create jobs in our communities and protect the environment.
Clear choices on fair taxes

Most Canadian families know record tax cuts haven't always made their lives easier. What's saved in taxes is too often more than lost in child care costs, higher tuition, user fees, increased utility bills, insurance or higher rent. In the wake of emergencies such as September 11, the mad cow scare, ice storms, forest fires or SARS, society's capacity to respond and help far outweighed the individual advantage a small tax cut could bring. It's time for an honest debate about the balance between fair, affordable taxes and vital public services.

Jack Layton and Canada's NDP will work for tax fairness by:

- Guaranteeing full indexing of tax brackets and credits, so that Canadians don't receive hidden tax increases as wages and salaries rise.
- Ensuring all Canadians who make less than $15,000 a year pay no federal income tax.
- Removing the GST from family essentials, starting with children's clothing and medicine, school supplies, books, magazines, women's hygiene products, and medical equipment.

continued overleaf...
• Increasing the Child Tax Benefit to $4,900 per child and altering the program to permit Canada's poorest families, who don't pay tax, to qualify.

• Making the disability tax credit and medical expenses tax credit fully refundable.

• Abolishing the security fees applied to air travel.

• Implementing a US-style inheritance tax on inheritances of more than $1 million, exempting in-family transfers of small businesses and family farms.

• Treating income from capital gains the same as all employment income while retaining exemptions for the sale of principal residences and profits from family farms and small businesses.

• Reversing corporate tax reductions, recognizing that Canadian corporate taxes are now well below US corporate tax levels.

• Imposing hefty fines for polluters that match the clean-up costs (the polluter-pay principle).

• Freezing EI premium rates at current levels, a measure that will especially help small businesses, which employ more than half of all Canadians.

• Cancelling all tax treaties with tax havens like Barbados. Canadian corporations should not be permitted to establish shell companies in tax havens and then bring profits home tax-free like Paul Martin did with his Canada Steamship Lines.

• Ending the practice of letting corporations deduct fines for environmental infractions or unsafe workplaces from their taxes.

• Closing corporate and very high income tax loopholes like the one that let a prominent Canadian family move $2 billion out of Canada through trust accounts and never pay a cent of income tax on the transaction.

Paul Martin has:

• Made his priorities clear in his corporate life. As president of Canada Steamship Lines, Martin, then finance minister, avoided Canadian taxes by setting up business in tax havens like Liberia and Barbados and flying foreign flags on his ships, which also helped him avoid Canadian environmental standards and Canadian wages.
Clear choices on debt reduction

When Canada embarked on reducing its deficit, the government told us the resulting freedom would help us build the country we wanted. Instead, the resulting freedom was squandered on record corporate tax cuts. Now, with Canada being the only G8 country in surplus, those who oppose building the country we want are determined to make debt reduction the new priority.

Jack Layton and Canada’s NDP say it’s time for honesty about our fiscal situation. Over the last decade, the Liberals were off their budgetary estimates by a staggering $80 billion, denying Canadians a debate about clear choices and investing in our priorities. During that period, Canada’s debt was reduced by almost $60 billion and our debt-to-GDP ratio was reduced to 42 per cent, a reasonably low level (the US is at 35 per cent and rising). The ratio will continue to decline as long as Canada’s budgets are balanced and the GDP grows. Like a family’s mortgage or corporate debt, the key factor is the size of the debt relative to GDP or income.

Jack Layton and Canada’s NDP support annual balanced budgets. Over the last 20 years, NDP provincial and territorial governments are less likely to have run deficits than governments of any other party. But debt reduction for debt reduction’s sake doesn’t help us build the country we want, and it’s time to put Canadians’ values into action instead of squandering another opportunity to invest in innovation to meet our economic, social and environmental challenges.

Jack Layton and Canada’s NDP will give Canadians clear choices on debt reduction by:

- Implementing annual balanced budgets – exempting years of extreme revenue shortfalls and disasters and acts of God – and reducing the debt-to-GDP ratio by maximizing the benefits of a growing economy and strong borrowing and debt management measures.

continued on next page...
• Allowing a debate over what should be done with any unforeseen surplus instead of retroactively applying all of it against the national debt.

• Making investing in and building the country and planet we want a top priority.

• Opposing large-scale corporate tax reductions which, as we saw with Ontario's Conservative government, British Columbia's Liberal government and George Bush's Republican government, cause large deficits and massive cuts to vital public services.

• Encouraging the Bank of Canada to promote a lower interest rate, which results in a more stable economy, a lower dollar and a better environment for key export industries and tourism.

• Bringing some of Canada's national debt under the control of the Bank of Canada, as it used to be, and paying the interest to ourselves as opposed to chartered banks.

**Paul Martin has:**

• Consistently enjoyed "larger than expected" surpluses throughout his time as finance minister, all of which were applied without any debate regarding priorities to the national debt.
8 commitments

1. Create opportunities and jobs in a green and prosperous economy.
2. Improve public health care with universal, cost-free prescription.
3. Invest in cities and communities through clean spaces, housing and transit.
4. Expand access to post-secondary education.
5. Make life more affordable and secure, starting with proactive economic management and eliminating deficits.
6. Strengthen Canada's independent voice for peace, human rights and fair trade in the world order.
7. Restore integrity and accountability in government.
8. Balance the budget.

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