

# Federal Election 2021

The National Association of Federal Retirees is, and always has been, a non-partisan organization. We advocate strongly on behalf of our members and all Canadian seniors. We do not endorse voting for one candidate or one party over another. We support good policy, regardless of the source, and we push those with weak policy to do better by asking tough questions and building grassroots support for our priorities. For this reason, it is vital that we work to inform all members of Parliament (MPs) and candidates of all political stripes of our members' needs, as they could ultimately be the decision-makers overseeing the policies and programs that impact our members' well-being.

Federal Retirees has a proud 58-year history of strong, smart advocacy campaigns that seek to protect against adverse changes to our members' hard-earned pensions and benefits, and of supporting good policy that improves the lives of all Canadians in their retirement. As we look to a federal election, this campaign will be no different — in fact, we expect it to be our best yet. Nothing impacts MPs and candidates more than hearing from their own constituents. And this is where you — our members — come in. We are counting on members like you to join our efforts and build momentum behind our campaign.

Check out this campaign booklet for more information. As always, please contact [advocacyteam@federalretirees.ca](mailto:advocacyteam@federalretirees.ca) with any questions or to find out how to get more involved.

## ARE YOU IN?

This toolkit includes the items you need to engage in this election:

- Background on four key issues
- Questions to ask your local candidates
- Invitation to join the Reach 338 team

Simply tear out this centrespread, and you're all set!



Have questions? Email us at [advocacyteam@federalretirees.ca](mailto:advocacyteam@federalretirees.ca)



National Association  
of Federal Retirees

Association nationale  
des retraités fédéraux

# #WhatsYourPriority?

Seniors represent the fastest-growing demographic in the country and the government has an important role to play in adapting public policies and systems to the needs of today's growing seniors population, and in future-proofing our policies and systems for tomorrow's seniors. The National Association of Federal Retirees has launched a campaign to ensure these issues are front and centre on the political agenda.

The Association has four key priorities: a national seniors strategy with a focus on principles and standards for long-term care, retirement income security, support for veterans and their families and pharmacare.



## A NATIONAL SENIORS STRATEGY

Canada needs a national seniors strategy that optimizes health, financial security and social inclusion so all Canadians can age with dignity. This strategy must include enforced principles and national standards for long-term care, developed in collaboration with provincial and territorial governments.

## OUR PRIORITIES: A CLOSER LOOK



### IMPLEMENT A NATIONAL SENIORS STRATEGY, WHICH INCLUDES NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR LONG-TERM CARE

By 2030, adults aged 65 or older will number 9.5 million and make up 23 per cent of Canada's population. Older adults represent the fastest-growing segment of the population, but gaps in Canada's health care and social policies are putting barriers in the way of their independence and undermining their role in maintaining vibrant, healthy communities and economies.

A co-ordinated national seniors strategy, with dedicated funding and accountability goals, will meet the evolving needs of older Canadians. Federal Retirees has long called for a national seniors strategy focused on enhancing older Canadians' quality of life through income security, access to affordable and appropriate housing and transportation, age-friendly communities and quality health care, including improved long-term, home and community care.

Enforced principles and national standards for long-term care, developed in collaboration with provincial and territorial governments are crucial components of a national seniors strategy. Long-term care standards must specify conditions and criteria the provinces and territories must meet to receive federal health and social transfer payments, with repercussions for failing to meet the outlined conditions and criteria. This will ensure a standard level of quality care, the availability of equitable and consistent services across the country, and adequate levels of funding for these types of care. It will also ensure greater public accountability of government delivery of long-term and home care.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the unacceptable conditions in many long-term care homes across the country, an issue that experts and advocacy organizations — Federal Retirees included —

have been raising for years. People with serious health conditions have been required to live in deplorable conditions for decades and governments at all levels have done little to address this. Home care can improve health outcomes and reduce costs, but continuously fails to be recognized and properly funded. Canada can no longer ignore the need for a new approach to older adult care.

### Questions for candidates

- How will your party implement a national seniors strategy that addresses health-care infrastructure, caregiver support, home care, long-term care and age-friendly communities?
- How will your party ensure that quality, safe and adequately funded home, community and long-term care options are available to meet the needs of our aging population?
- What will your party do to establish enforced national standards of care for long-term and home care, developed in collaboration with provincial and territorial governments?
- Do you support national standards and funding that is dependent on meeting those standards for long-term and home care?  
**If yes**, what are you/your government/your party doing to push for their implementation?  
**If no, why not?** What is your solution for the issues we know exist with long-term and home care?
- How will your party recognize and support unpaid caregivers who play a vital role in our health-care systems?
- How will your party support health care and personal support professionals to better meet the growing need for geriatric expertise in Canada?



## RETIREMENT INCOME SECURITY

Canadians deserve a secure and dignified retirement. The government must prioritize retirement income security by developing strong policies that support and protect pensions and retirement benefits.



## VETERANS' WELL-BEING

Veterans have served Canada and were willing to risk their lives to do so. Now it's Canada's turn to support veterans of the Canadian Armed Forces and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and ensure that they and their families have the well-being, care and benefits they deserve.



## PHARMACARE

All Canadians should have access to the medications they need. A universal, public, comprehensive, accessible and portable national pharmacare program would cut costs and lead to a healthier population. It would also allow for better monitoring of medications and reduce the burden on other parts of the health-care system.



## MAKE RETIREMENT INCOME MORE SECURE

More than two million seniors qualify for the Guaranteed Income Supplement, meaning their annual income is less than \$19,000 a year. Pension plan coverage has declined, with only about 37.1 per cent — or 6.3 million Canadians — covered by any kind of registered retirement plan in 2018. Defined benefit plan coverage has decreased significantly in the private sector, moving from 21.9 per cent in 1997 to 9.2 per cent in 2017. Household savings rates are the lowest they have been in modern memory, and household debt continues to soar. Canadians are increasingly relying on the Canada Pension Plan and Old Age Security to support their retirement.

### Questions for candidates

- What is your party's retirement income security plan for seniors now and for future generations?
- How will you ensure employees and retirees with defined benefit pensions are protected if their employer goes bankrupt?
- How will your party support defined benefit pension plans?
- How will you ensure that pensions will not be adversely affected by future austerity measures?



## ENABLE BETTER WELL-BEING FOR VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES

Transition to civilian life can be especially challenging for those dealing with illness, injury or trauma. The move into the civilian medical system is often marked by difficulty finding family doctors, long waits and incomplete or missing medical records. These challenges can mean that ill or injured veterans are unable to access financial, health and other benefits and services from Veterans Affairs Canada.

As more women enter the military, they continue to suffer injuries and illnesses, and resultant medical releases, at higher than expected rates, making women a growing segment of Veterans Affairs Canada's clients.

### Questions for candidates

- What is your party's plan to ensure that veterans and their loved ones receive the care, tools and support they need at every step of their journey in serving Canada?
- How will your party ensure ill and injured veterans and their caregivers can achieve financial, physical, emotional and social well-being?
- How will your party reach out to some of the most vulnerable veterans, such as those who have lost trust in government?
- How will your party ensure Canada addresses the unique needs of military women and female veterans, and that all veterans have a chance at equitable outcomes?
- The presence of many veterans groups speaks to longstanding difficulties that many veterans have faced in accessing support. How does your party plan to address this history to improve the future, and to help veterans move forward?

## OUR PRIORITIES: A CLOSER LOOK



### PRIORITIZE PHARMACARE

Canada is the only country in the world with a universal health-care system that does not also provide universal prescription drug coverage. As a result, Canadians consistently pay among the highest prices for prescription drugs and 20 per cent of Canadians don't have adequate coverage to meet their needs.

All Canadians should have access to the medications they need, given the important role medication plays in preventing and treating illnesses. A universal public pharmacare program would help Canadians better manage their health, decrease medication costs and improve monitoring of the effectiveness and safety of medications. It would reduce the burden on other parts of the system at a time when it is overloaded, and save the system an estimated \$4 billion to \$11 billion annually.

#### Questions for candidates

- How will your party implement a universal, public, comprehensive, accessible and portable pharmacare program?
- What timeline does your party propose for the implementation of a universal, public pharmacare program?
- How will your party ensure that federal and provincial governments work together effectively to implement universal, public pharmacare?
- How will your party ensure a comprehensive, quality, evidence-based formulary, so that Canadians can access the medications they need to maintain and improve their health?



## JOIN OUR REACH 338 TEAM

**Federal Retirees is building a nationwide network of advocates to advance our mission — to significantly improve the quality and security of retirement for our members and all Canadians. We're calling this network Reach 338 — and our goal is to ensure that our advocacy work reaches all 338 federal ridings.**

Together we can raise awareness about these four priorities and ensure candidates — and MPs — in our communities understand and address them in an election.

And this team will be critical in putting our best foot forward with our next federal government.

**Visit [federalretirees.ca/joinReach338](https://federalretirees.ca/joinReach338) to join the team!**



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