

FEDERAL ELECTION: URGENT ACTION NEEDED TO PROTECT WORKERS FROM THE TRADE WAR

APRIL 3, 2025



A snap federal election called in Canada will be held on April 28th and there has been one thing on the minds of Canadian workers: how will our elected representatives respond to the trade-war initiated by the United States?

Many of the solutions they put forward by the major political parties reflect the same business-as-usual corporate policies which have been eroding the living standards of working people for decades. By repackaging the same pro-corporate policies as trade war solutions, politicians do a disservice to the working people who built this country, and, ultimately, de facto accede to the demands of the U.S. and big business.

The two parties leading the race, the Liberals and the Conservatives, are both advancing agendas which focus on the needs of businesses first to address the crisis, while only offering bread crumbs to working people. In order to prevent a recession and save jobs, swift action must be taken to protect Canadian industries, but actions which lead to intensifying austerity will only protect profits, not workers.

In particular, both parties insist on: tax cuts for big business and high-income earners; deregulation of industry (through the removal of environmental and health and safety protections, and a reduction in inter-provincial trade regulations); and market-based solutions to crises in the housing market and in our public service. Worse still, they advocate openly for an agenda of austerity that will greatly reduce the living standards of working people.

Working Canadians are rightly alarmed by the threats we face, and are making decisions to protect them and their families by looking for politicians who will stand up to U.S. aggression. **But that does not mean we must settle for an austerity agenda.** There is still time during this election to mobilize for solutions to the crisis which will serve all working people, and the path to do it is by confronting all political parties with a worker-centred platform.

There are **7 urgent priorities**, in-line with the principles laid out in our March statement, which working people must continue to push for:

1. **Expand Employment Insurance** – Reinstatement and expansion of the simplified EI program that existed between 2020 and 2022 thereby protecting workers affected by the trade war for the full duration of their displacement.
2. **“Made in Canada” matters** – Change public procurement policies to favour Canadian-made goods to help offset the impact of lower U.S. purchasing of Canadian goods and stimulate domestic manufacturing in the long run.
3. **Bring in price and rent controls** – Cap prices on food staples and essential goods to stop corporate price gouging, and use rent controls for federally-funded home building. This will protect family budgets and make life more affordable.
4. **Build truly affordable housing** – Prioritize and reinstate programs to build public, co-operative, and other non-market housing. This will bring down the cost of housing and tackle the housing crisis.
5. **Fix our broken tax system and stop subsidizing fossil fuel corporations** – Restructure corporate taxes to fund affordable housing, hospitals, health care - including dental and Pharmacare, \$10-a-day childcare, and the other public services Canadians count on.

6. **Build public infrastructure** – Instead of dismantling interprovincial trade rules that protect workers and public services, invest in public transit, green energy, rail, ports, cross-Canada highways, and public institutions.
7. **Status for all** – End the two-tiered citizenship and employment regime, which exploits workers and intensifies the big-business race to the bottom. Counter the reckless scapegoating of immigrants, foreign students, refugees, and others, which hides big business' role in the crisis.

Right now, working people feel like there are only two paths ahead of them but it's not the case. There is still an opportunity to open up a path which puts working people and their needs first. By pushing our immediate demands during every neighbourhood debate, every time a campaign calls us on the phone, and each time a candidate comes to our door to ask for our vote, we can still move the needle.

Importantly, we have seen before how continued and persistent organizing, educating, and mobilizing can win gains for working people even after elections. By taking action now, we begin to build the infrastructure for the necessary fightback to come.

The Labour Council resolves to:

1. Urge affiliates to send leaders to the Heads of Unions Summit on April 5th.
2. Encourage affiliates to use the CLC's Workers Together election materials and join canvasses.
3. Ask Delegates to push these immediate demands during on all parties during the election.
4. Urge all unions to work together after the election to fight for these solutions in the wake of the election's outcome and ongoing trade war, and to join Labour Council actions designed to build momentum for a fightback campaign.

Toronto & York Region Labour Council

895 Don Mills Road
Tower Two, Ste. 730
Don Mills, ON
M3C 1W3

 (416) 441-3663

 (416) 445-8405

 labourcouncil.ca

  @labourcouncil