



# NDP Responds

Note: We have yet to release our full platform but here are the answers to date outlining our commitments.

Richard Elliott  
Executive Director  
Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network  
1240 Bay Street, Suite 600  
Toronto, ON M5R 2A7  
[info@aidslaw.ca](mailto:info@aidslaw.ca)

Dear Mr. Elliott,

Thank you for your letter of August 17, 2015 inviting the New Democratic Party's response to questions from the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network. Please find our responses below:

**Question 1: Fully funding a renewed strategy on HIV and AIDS**

***Will your party commit to collaborating with leading HIV organizations in Canada to envision a new, fully funded strategy to end HIV and AIDS in this country and globally?***

New Democrats and many other Canadians were scandalized by the Harper government's undercutting of HIV/AIDS funding in 2007 and its ongoing refusal to meet previously-agreed to commitments. Crucial community-based program funding has still not reached its originally targeted amount. It is time to reset our programming and funding strategy for HIV/AIDS at home and abroad. A New Democratic government will work collaboratively with HIV and AIDS organizations on this important initiative.

**Question 2: Saving lives through supervised consumption services**

***Given the Supreme Court of Canada's clear direction, and the overwhelming evidence that supervised consumption services save lives, will your party work to repeal Bill C-2 and facilitate access to life-saving supervised consumption services in Canada?***

NDP MP Libby Davies, a long-time advocate for supervised consumption services as an effective harm reduction tool, championed the fight against Bill C-2 in Parliament. An NDP government is committed to reversing the negative impact of a range of Harper legislation that is lacking a scientific evidence base.

**Question 3: Protecting prisoners' health to protect public health**

***Given the overwhelming evidence supporting the effectiveness of prison needle and syringe programs, and their benefit in protecting the health of prisoners, prison staff and public health more generally, will your party support their implementation in Canada's federal prisons?***

New Democrats believe that harm reduction does not stop at the prison gate. And protecting the health and lives of prisoners, prison staff and, in the longer term, the public-at-large by eliminating the transfer of infectious diseases is a question of harm reduction and should be dealt with as such. In this respect, all the proven, scientifically-based benefits of needle and syringe programs apply inside prisons as

much as in the community. An NDP government will support the implementation of such programs. Denying these programs constitutes a needless risk to human health and is bad public policy.

**Question 4: Protecting the health and human rights of sex workers**

***In keeping with the Supreme Court of Canada's ruling that sex workers are entitled to health and human rights, will your party support the repeal of Bill C-36, and will your party meet with sex workers to discuss ensuring their rights, safety and dignity?***

Stephen Harper's disrespect for Canada's Supreme Court has been one of the more offensive characteristics of his years in power. The New Democratic Party believes that Bill C-36 provides another example of the Harper government's attempt to circumvent the letter and spirit of a Court decision. C-36 was deeply flawed and failed to meet the Supreme Court's standard. It will not improve women's safety.

At Committee, witnesses expressed almost universal disapproval of the government's decision to criminalize women involved in prostitution, despite the Bedford ruling. The bill should have been sent to the Supreme Court for review. A New Democratic government will engage with sex workers and others to build a comprehensive strategy to better protect and support women.

**Question 5: Protecting and promoting the human rights of LGBTI people**

***Will your party support full legal protection in Canadian law against discrimination and hate crimes based on gender identity or expression? Given Canada's influential role on the world stage, will your party endorse the Dignity Initiative's Call to Action and work to implement its recommendations?***

NDP MP Randall Garrison successfully steered his bill (C-279) to add gender identity to Canada's anti-discrimination list through the House of Commons. Incredibly, Senators stalled it and prevented its passage. The bill would have included gender identity as a prohibited ground of discrimination in the Canadian Human Rights Act and would have changed the Criminal Code to include gender identity as a distinguishing characteristic protected under section 318 and as an aggravating circumstance to be taken into consideration under section 718.2 at the time of sentencing. As government, we will pursue these changes.

A New Democratic government will be in the forefront of international action to end the appalling human rights violations endured by many LGBTI communities around the world as per the Montreal and Yogyakarta Declaration on Human Rights. The NDP supports the Dignity Initiative's effort to spur such urgently needed international pressure through its Call to Action. We will incorporate these shared objectives into our foreign policy changes, while continuing our efforts to improve human rights at home.

**Question 6: Ensuring equitable access to affordable medicines**

***Will your party support the reforms previously before Parliament in Bill C-398 to fix Canada's Access to Medicines Regime, so that we can get low-cost, generic medicines to people in need? With respect to the Trans-Pacific Partnership, will your party refuse to sign and ratify any agreement that includes any intellectual property standards exceeding those already adopted at the World Trade Organization?***

The NDP is behind the reforms to Canada's drug regulation regime embodied in Bill C-398, as evidenced by individual NDP MPs having sponsored this initiative in successive Parliaments. It is vital to get low-cost medications to those who need them wherever they live in the world. An NDP government will remove bureaucratic red tape and enable Canadian pharmaceutical companies to export generic versions of life-saving medicine for people suffering from HIV/AIDS, TB, malaria and other diseases in the developing world.

While the TPP presents an important opportunity to build stronger, sustainable trade linkages with Asia and with Asian-Pacific countries, health advocates, such as yourself, have raised red flags about its potential impact on intellectual property standards and other important areas.

Unfortunately, the Conservatives' approach to these negotiations has been marked by secrecy and the absence of meaningful public consultations. An NDP government will closely scrutinize the text of any proposed trade deal.

Thank you for the opportunity to answers these important questions.

Canada's New Democrats