



March 24, 2023

Frédéric Gionet  
Senior Policy Analyst, Legislative Affairs, Atlantic  
Canadian Federation of Independent Business

**RE: PEI Election 2023 – CFIB Leaders Survey**

Dear Mr. Gionet:

Thank you for your enquiry regarding the Liberal Party's support for entrepreneurs and small businesses.

The Liberal Party is dedicated to supporting and growing business throughout Prince Edward Island. We know that small businesses have experienced many challenges in recent years. One of the biggest challenges is the labour shortage. Our healthcare first policy will help businesses attract and retain talent.

Beyond the healthcare and labour shortage solutions, our platform includes more detailed programs and policies that will enable Island businesses to prosper under a Liberal Government. We have identified how these policies address the particular questions posed by your organization.

1. How will your government prioritize small businesses in its policy decisions?

Small businesses are the backbone of Prince Edward Island. It is the government's responsibility to ensure entrepreneurs have the legislative, the labour and the financial support they need to create a vibrant and diverse business community.

The status quo is not good enough. A Liberal Government will grow the small business community in Prince Edward Island by ensuring its policies and legislation balances the interests of small business owners. This includes financial support and working with and receiving input from entrepreneurs before legislative actions are taken.

The Liberal Party knows Island entrepreneurs need government to support increasing the labour supply in Prince Edward Island. Increasing the labour supply requires a holistic approach. The Liberal platform not only addresses the immigration and skilled trades needs but also the incentives for people to move to Prince Edward Island such as healthcare.



2. What steps will your government take to encourage Islanders to shop locally?

Creating thriving local businesses with diverse offerings is critical to encouraging Islanders to shop locally. Local businesses that have suffered due to the COVID-19 pandemic need to know that the government will support their growth.

A Liberal Government will implement a low-interest loan and start-up grant program for the tourism sector. Tourism operators have faced significant struggles in the last four years. By investing in this industry, a Liberal Government will ensure local businesses remain competitive.

3. What policies will your government put in place to further reduce the tax burden on small businesses?

The growth of our Island's core industries and emerging sectors will provide a sustainable economy for all Islanders. A Liberal Government will incentivize the growth of small businesses throughout Prince Edward Island through a number of targeted tax credits.

There are over 100 active clean energy or information technology companies in Prince Edward Island. These industries have demonstrated strong growth potential over the last decade. A Liberal Government will continue to support these industries through an enhanced tax rebate program to continue to attract investments to Prince Edward Island.

The cannabis industry is a developing industry. Many Islanders are employed in and invest in this industry. To remain competitive and sustainable, the Liberal Government will undertake a review of the excise tax on cannabis in Prince Edward Island.

The aerospace and advanced manufacturing sector in Prince Edward Island creates good-paying and stable careers for over 900 people. A Liberal Government would support the development of this industry with an enhanced aerospace and defence tax rebate program to attract more investment in this industry.

4. How will your government ensure that the realities of small businesses are reflected in employment standards to ensure fair balance and reasonable flexibility between employers and employees?

Following the scheduled minimum wage increase for 2023, a Liberal government would conduct a review of the annual minimum wage process and develop a long-term



strategy to create a transparent, fair, and predictable process that takes private wage trends into account.

5. What is your plan to reduce government red tape for small businesses and citizens?

Under the previous Liberal Government, a red tape reduction review was completed. The results of this review were applauded by CFIB at the time as a way to help businesses without spending much money.

A Liberal Government will undertake a further red tape reduction review in an effort to trim areas that are constricting business growth and development

6. Will your government introduce mandated employer paid sick leave for employees?

Currently, the Employment Act is under a comprehensive review and a report is due late in 2023. This report, among other items, will examine this issue.

A great deal of consultation with stakeholders across the spectrum of the PEI business community has made submissions to this initiative. The findings of this report will provide options for Government to consider.

A Liberal Government would weight these options, against the further financial burden additional sick leave would place on many small businesses who are enduring a labour shortage and continue to recover after several years of pandemic restriction.

The Liberal party commits to awaiting the findings of the Comprehensive Review and assessing them through a current economic condition lens..

7. What will be your government's plan to address skills shortages?

The Liberal Party's plan to address skills shortages encompasses a variety of sectors, including healthcare. Attracting more healthcare workers and improving the healthcare system in Prince Edward Island will make our province a more attractive location for immigration for other skilled workers.

A Liberal government would re-evaluate the provincial income tax model to better align with our Atlantic counterparts to ensure Prince Edward Island is competitive in attracting labour to our province. Incentivizing and developing innovative strategies to attract immigration to Prince Edward Island is the most effective way to address the skills shortages throughout various sectors in Prince Edward Island.



A Liberal government would also enhance exposure to skilled trades and career-related training opportunities at the high school level.

8. What is your position on eliminating the tolls on the Confederation Bridge?

We support Senator Percy Downe's proposal to eliminate the toll of the Confederation Bridge. We are open to any negotiation with the Federal Government to lower or eliminate this toll.

9. What is your government's plan to reduce the cost of doing business in PEI ?

A Liberal Government will reduce the cost of doing business in Prince Edward Island through the tax incentives and loan offerings discussed above. However, more will be done to reduce specific costs, such as entering the lobster industry.

In recent years, high prices and strong catches have increased the cost of lobster licenses. Some licenses are now out of reach of younger Islanders. A Liberal Government would revise the Fishers Low Interest Loan program to help young fishers better access financing for these licenses.

10. Is there anything else you would like to tell business owners about your plans for the province?

Our childcare plan will help small business owners. Ensuring affordable and accessible childcare in Island communities will enable more workforce participation. Business owners can focus on their businesses during the day knowing that their children are cared for.

We invite you to reach out with any follow-up questions you may have.

Thank you for providing me the opportunity to comment.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sharon Cameron". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sharon Cameron  
Leader, Liberal Party of Prince Edward Island