



2023 Prince Edward Island Provincial Election CFIB Leaders Survey

Small businesses are the backbone of the economy in Prince Edward Island (PEI). As the province approaches the upcoming election, it's important to understand the priorities and plans of the political leaders when it comes to supporting small businesses. This survey is designed to gather the opinions of the political leaders and to learn more about their stance on important issues that affect small businesses in PEI.

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

New Democrats see small businesses as vital to our Island's economy and major contributors to the vibrance and wellbeing of our communities. Our vision includes investment in the growth of local business, the creation of green jobs, "buy local" policies and support to individual entrepreneurs and families. We also recognize the essential role of high-speed internet and cellular service in the success of small businesses.

Our key plans for small businesses include:

- A *Grow, Feed and Buy PEI* program
- Improving the government procurement process to increase contract opportunities for local companies
- Establishing a PEI Retirement Pension Plan with benefits indexed to inflation
- A universal system of affordable, accessible child care
- Working with the federal government to create universal pharmacare and dental care programs
- Completing an Island-wide high-speed fibre Internet network

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

Islanders are proud of our local businesses, and we want to support and incentivize the concept of "buy local." Our *Buy PEI* program will help local producers and processors market their products by re-establishing a strong, recognizable *Buy PEI* brand and supporting industry-led *Buy PEI* marketing activities.

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

New Democrats believe in progressive taxation. In our view, those who profit the most from economic growth – high income earners and large corporations – should pay their fair share back to the people and communities of our province. Small businesses, on the other hand, represent ordinary people who are trying to make ends meet amid rising living costs. We



therefore see no need to raise taxes on small businesses. Instead, New Democrats are offering a package of investments that will ease the burden of inflation on entrepreneurs and families while stimulating small business growth.

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?

New Democrats believe that everyone benefits from clear and fair labour laws. When the health and safety of workers is protected, businesses benefit from increased stability and productivity. There are gaps in our province's employment standards with respect to equitable hiring, benefits, sick days and accommodation of disabilities; we are committed to addressing these.

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

Our Party wants to create enabling conditions for small businesses and entrepreneurs on Prince Edward Island. We envision a Department of Business that is responsive to the changing needs of small businesses, supports entrepreneurship through loans and grants, makes opportunities accessible, and consults with businesses in the development of regulations.

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

The COVID-19 pandemic has shown how vital it is for workers to be able to stay home when they're sick. Paid sick days not only help contain the spread of infectious diseases, they provide stability for businesses by reducing illness in the workplace. New Democrats support 10 legislated paid sick days for Islanders.

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

Prince Edward Island is facing some big challenges – climate change, an aging population, an affordable housing crisis. Meeting these challenges requires an unprecedented investment in our province's workforce. Our plan starts with making community college tuition free, empowering a generation of skilled tradespeople. We will work with trade unions to assist in the creation of trade colleges and training institutions. And we'll ease the restrictions qualified immigrant workers face in obtaining the credentials to work on PEI.

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



The Confederation Bridge toll is a prohibitive cost to many Islanders who travel outside the province. PEI should bring in subsidies to make the toll affordable for lower-income people.

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

Our plan includes a comprehensive package to address the cost of living that will help small businesses, individuals and families. We are committed to providing relief on electricity bills, fuel and food, and creating affordable public transit. By investing in social programs like universal pharmacare, dental care and child care, we can put more money in the pockets of small business owners and employees alike. These investments, along with a PEI Retirement Pension Plan, will provide long-term security for employers while reducing the cost of employee benefits.

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

New Democrats and mainstream economists agree that you can't have a working economy without decent wages. People need money in their pockets to cover the basics and support the small businesses that help our province thrive. Prince Edward Island's current minimum wage is lagging behind inflation; our proposal is to increase minimum wage to \$17/hour while working towards a Guaranteed Livable Basic Income. We will work with small businesses to ensure a smooth transition when wages increase.