

Manitoba 2023 General Election Questionnaire

1. Minimum Wage QUESTION:

Unpredictable increases to the provincial minimum wage can hurt the economic stability of retail businesses, and can result in lost jobs, especially amongst less experienced youth. If elected, are you prepared to follow the current legislation that links future increases to the provincial minimum wage to Manitoba's CPI formula, except during high inflation years?

RESPONSE:

Manitoba Liberals recognize that all Manitobans are deserving of fair wages and our goal is to clearly communicate future increases in the minimum wage.

We are taking a number of measures both to make life more affordable to increase assistance to Manitobans while ensuring the same support for locally owned and operated Manitoba businesses.

2. Retail Safety and Crime QUESTION:

Retail employees (and their customers) are on the front line of endless threats to their safety, as a result of prolific and often violent offenders using a range of dangerous weapons and tactics, as well as complex interactions with those dealing with mental health and drug induced behaviours.

We have begun the execution of a coordinated strategy in collaboration with police agencies across the province, together with retailers, community groups and other key stakeholders. If elected, is your government prepared to continue to support the Minister of Justice established Manitoba Retail Crime Round Table, and join other key stakeholders at the table in an effort to ensure a coordinated response to retail safety and crime?

RESPONSE:

We are always willing to work with a broad range of stakeholders so we can get direct information on the problem and be able to work together collaboratively on solutions. We recognize that there have been organized and coordinated retail thefts by crime rings.

It has to be said that under the PC government, more than half of Manitobans feel less safe than they did three years ago. Break and enters increased by almost 25% in 2022, with only 13% of these cases being solved. Two thirds of these cases involved commercial properties.

The alarming rise in retail crime is a concerning trend for retailers across the province. Whether it is shoplifting, vandalizations, or break-ins, the increase in crime has been contributing to a difficult atmosphere to conduct business for many retailers. Manitoba Liberals will support the continuation of the Manitoba Retail Crime Round Table so that businesses can work in partnership with government to develop solutions on how best to tackle crime affecting the retail industry.

While Manitobans have seen crime rates rise across the province, the PC's chose to reduce or eliminate

all means to reduce the risk factors for crime: poverty, mental health, addictions, and the lack of education and training opportunities.

The Manitobans Liberal platform commits to a series of community safety and justice measures to reduce crime and gang involvement, funding safe spaces, recreation centres, and intervention programs, with a particular focus on anti-gang measures designed to divert people, especially youth, away from crime towards a better path.

3. Fiscal Responsibility and Taxes QUESTION:

Manitoba must find the right balance to support economic growth and opportunity through low taxation and strategic investments, while meeting the needs of Manitobans. RCC supports this balanced approach and believes it should not be disrupted. If elected, are you prepared to avoid introducing additional taxes, including raising the provincial sales tax?

RESPONSE:

A Manitoba Liberal government will not raise the provincial sales tax. We will be fiscally responsible, recognizing that Manitoba's critical services – health, education, and infrastructure – all badly need investment after seven years of neglect and a pandemic.

Fair wages and good employment benefits are often the reason people stay employed in their roles – it retains and incentivizes dedicated workers on the job.

4. Retail Job Growth QUESTION:

RCC recently completed a labour market study for the retail sector that has identified significant shortages in the workforce necessary to meet current and future growth expectations.

There are presently an estimated 3,800 retail vacancies across the province, and by 2028 a projected gap of 14,000 additional workers required in a range of store and management roles due to retirements and the sector's anticipated growth. If elected, would your government be prepared to work with RCC on behalf of Manitoba retailers as we investigate, and potentially implement strategies that will help address the sector's labour requirements?

RESPONSE:

Manitoba is facing significant shortages in labour sectors across the province. Of particular importance are job vacancies in the retail sector.

To supplement recruitment efforts, we will look to support retail businesses by strengthening our provincial immigration efforts, particularly targeting key economic streams to help fill desperately needed labour shortages. Part of this effort needs to be encouraging new Canadians to choose Manitoba, and to stay here once they've arrived. We will enhance family reunification for our

Provincial Nominee Program because family settlement is one of the best ways to attract and retain workers to settle in the province.

We will work with RCC and retail stakeholders to ensure that we overcome recruitment challenges within the industry.

5. Leveraging Private Sector QUESTION:

Everyday Manitoba retail stores reliably meet the needs of Manitobans across the province, operating in efficient and innovative ways as part of a highly competitive global industry.

Across Canada most government's see retailers as valued partners, leveraging their front-line access to the public to extend accessibility of health services, bring greater convenience for liquor sales, and in other ways that allow governments to better serve their communities. If elected, would you be prepared to collaborate with Manitoba's private sector retailers to better serve Manitobans, including potentially expanding pharmacy health services, expanding grocery liquor sales, or other potential products and services?

RESPONSE:

As Manitoba Liberals, the focus of our economic growth strategy and services is based on new growth – the creation and development by Manitoban owners and investors of new businesses, services and products. We believe that local ownership matters, and that the key to building wealth in Manitoba is through growing Manitoba's independent private sector, and ensuring that the government provides investments in infrastructure, health, and education, while ensuring we are providing services and being fiscally responsible.

As such, we do not see passing government and public responsibilities to the private sector as a priority. The provision of health as core responsibility of government. While we are willing to work with pharmacists, it should be in the context of working providing wraparound care in a clinical team.

We already have a stable and robust alcohol sales network in Manitoba, and any measures would have to be based on new jobs, not on shifting jobs and sales from one sector to another.

As Manitoba Liberals see it, we need to grow the private sector in Manitoba as we grow entire economy. Shifting business activities from public to private does not achieve that. It amounts to a government award of jobs and business, not an entrepreneurial risk-taking to create new products and services, which is what we want to build our province.

The Manitoba Liberal vision to increase prosperity and building wealth is about growing a stronger economy in Manitoba from the grassroots up, instead of from the top down. Growing independent Manitoba businesses across the province will make us stronger and more self-reliant.



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In terms of partnerships with the private sector, we announced the creation of a politically-independent Manitoba Business Development Bank (MBDB) that will focus on helping Manitoba businesses and farmers build and grow with better access to capital and support. We are taking a different approach to business development in Manitoba – one that is based on real investments in order to make Manitoba ownership a cornerstone of job and wealth creation in the province.