



Daniel Blaikie, M.P.

Elmwood-Transcona

Report to Constituents



☎ 204 984 2499 ✉ Daniel.Blaikie@parl.gc.ca

Constituency Office | 210-1100 Concordia Ave | Winnipeg, MB | R2K 4B8

Dear Neighbours,

With Donald Trump in the Whitehouse and Britain leaving the European Union, Canadians are looking to their government for leadership in a world full of challenges for export-based economies like ours.

Unfortunately, Justin Trudeau's Liberals are simply not up to the task. On questions of immigration and the economy, they continue to insist that everything is status quo, even though circumstances are clearly changing.

Already this session, they rushed through the Comprehensive Economic Trade Agreement with Europe. Signing a trade deal with Europe before knowing the terms of Britain's exit from the European Union is foolhardy.

It is almost as bad as bringing back Brian Mulroney to play a key role in Canada's trade negotiations with the United States; then opening negotiations by talking about concessions.

The time has come for Canada to take seriously the very real problems created by the corporate model of globalization. Over the last twenty-five years, multi-national corporations have had a field day.

National governments have signed trade deals that allow good jobs to move off-shore in droves, put downward pressure on corporate tax rates and let international corporations bully governments out of making good policy in the public interest in areas like the environment, health and safety.

Unfortunately, Canada's Liberals and Conservatives have been among the most enthusiastic, uncritical cheerleaders of these kinds of trade deals. They don't seem to care that these deals have put Canadian workers in a race to the bottom with respect to wages, working conditions and environmental standards.

As that race to the bottom pushes more and more workers in Canada and elsewhere out of the middle-class, it is not only understandable, but right, that they should feel angry.

But if we are going to reverse our fortunes, it is important that our anger be directed at the right target. Immigrants to Canada and workers in other countries trying to do the best they can for their families are not the ones to blame. We need to go after the corporate elite that design the system for us to lose, and their Liberal and Conservative cronies, who write that system into law.

The Donald Trumps of the world will never respect a government that is more concerned to simply get a trade deal signed than to get a good deal for their country. Trade is good, but not when you are getting ripped off.

The NDP will push the government to do what they should have done all along: get a deal that's good for Canadian workers, not just the corporate elite.

We'll do that because we believe it's the right thing to do. I invite you to add your voice to ours and all those across Canada who want to see the wealth in this country distributed fairly to each person that lives here.

Yours truly,



Daniel Blaikie, M.P.
Elmwood-Transcona

TABLE OF CONTENTS

National Day of Mourning.....	4
Daniel in the community	5
Affordable Housing Town Hall	7
Tax Fairness; Still Waiting	9
National Health Accord "Negotiations"	11
Daughters of the Vote	12
CPP Reforms Contain Important Flaw.....	13
The Liberal Attack on Pension Security	14
Vimy Ridge Commemoration	16

National Day of Mourning

Every year on April 28 we pay our respects to, and remember, the thousands of workers who have been killed, injured or suffered illness as a result of work-related incidents.

We also honour the many families and friends who have been deeply affected by these tragedies.

This February, Winnipeggers were reminded just how tragic it is when workers do not return safely home at the end of the day. Transit driver Irvine Fraser was killed on-the-job at the end of his route.

Daniel joined Amalgamated Transit Union members and their supporters for a rally at City Hall calling for increased safety measures for transit drivers. Their ideas include: dedicated transit cops and structural changes to buses to allow for shields that protect operators.

The workplace safety issues vary from industry to industry, but we must find a way to address them all so each worker can come home safely at the end of every day.



Daniel playing the bagpipes while leading last year's Labour Day Parade in Winnipeg



Daniel speaks at the Amalgamated Transit Union rally at Winnipeg City Hall, calling for increased safety measures for Transit Operators in light of Irvine Fraser's death

Daniel in the community

When the House is not sitting, you can find Daniel meeting with people all over Elmwood-Transcona at community meetings, festivals and other neighbourhood gatherings.

If you need help navigating government programs like Employment Insurance, CPP or Immigration applications, contact Daniel's Constituency Office for assistance.



Daniel speaks with seniors at East Park Lodge about the importance of the Pallister government following through on the Park Manor Personal Care Home expansion.



Daniel caught up on community issues at the Elmwood Community Resource Fair



Daniel and his family enjoyed this year's Elmwood Winter Fun Day.



Daniel met with local students to discuss their research on food security in our community and the need for affordable, healthy food close to home.

Quick Update

NDP National Caucus Chair

Daniel was honoured to be given a greater leadership role within the NDP caucus by his colleagues. He was elected to the position of NDP National Caucus Chair on January 24th, 2017.

Affordable Housing Town Hall

Safe, affordable housing is the cornerstone of a successful life.

The ordinary routine of getting kids to school on time, holding down a job and being able to relax for an hour or two before bed becomes next to impossible if you do not have a safe place to call home.

The Liberals cancelled federal involvement in building affordable housing over twenty years ago. Since then, we have seen a steep decline in the availability of affordable housing.

That means a larger percentage of people's take-home pay is going to paying their rent.

People struggling to get by who do have a place sometimes feel they cannot complain to their landlord about health and safety issues in their suite. They do not want to be labeled a "troublemaker" for fear of being evicted.

Homelessness and unsanitary housing both lead to lower health outcomes, which mean more costly visits to the hospital for those affected.

It also means lower productivity for those fortunate enough to keep a job, worse learning outcomes for children and, in some cases, more preventable interactions with the justice system.

The truth is: Poverty costs us all in the end.

We can pay that cost upfront with investment in things like affordable housing; improve the lives of our neighbours and pay less overall. Or we can pay that cost on the backend through the health and justice systems.

Over the last five years, the NDP in Manitoba began making a dent in the affordable housing deficit in our province. Instead of continuing that work, the Pallister government seems poised to put the brakes on. It's a short-sighted move that will cost more in the long term and cause misery in the short term.

The federal Liberals promised more money for affordable housing in the last election. Their commitment in the latest budget is a modest start. But we need a commitment for long-term, predictable funding before being able to implement a strategy that will actually meet the demand.

Since being elected, I have been working with community organizations in Elmwood-Transcona to learn more about what is required to get community-led housing projects off the ground. As part of that effort, I hosted a town hall about affordable housing on March 13th at the Elmwood-East Kildonan Active Living Centre.



The panelists included: Josh Brandon (SPCW), Nina Condo (ECRC), Jon Courtney (Riverwood Community Church) and Mario Lopes (M.R. Lopes Investments Inc)

The evening was a collaborative effort with the Elmwood Community Resource Centre (ECRC), Chalmers Neighbourhood Renewal Corporation (CNRC) and the Social Planning Council of Winnipeg (SPCW).

The discussion began with an overview of the housing situation in the Chalmers neighbourhood. The numbers tell us that Chalmers is full of hardworking people. They participate in the labour market at a higher rate than the Winnipeg average, but have a lower median income (about \$25,000 per year).

We heard about the hardships created by the combination of low wages and expensive housing.

The stories shared by panelists, as well as a working mother in the crowd, about the struggle to find and keep affordable housing put a compelling, human face to what can sometimes sound like an academic debate.

There was a lot of enthusiasm for addressing the housing needs in our neighbourhoods and across the country. It's a message I'll be delivering loudly and clearly in Ottawa.



Last summer, Daniel helped out on a Habitat for Humanity build in Elmwood. On March 31st, 2017 he was honoured to participate in the key turning ceremony for their new home.

The rich get richer and the poor get poorer. It's Time to close the tax gap.

The Liberals campaigned on a so-called middle class tax cut, but instead gave a multibillion dollar tax break to the top 10% income earners, while more than two thirds of Canadians are getting no break at all.

The Auditor General of Canada warned that we don't even know how much money is lost to loopholes, deductions, exemptions and rebates for the most wealthy Canadians.

But a recent report from the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA) showed that the five most regressive loopholes alone account

for over \$10 billion in lost government revenue.

The employee stock option loophole accounts for nearly \$1 billion lost to the wealthiest Canadians. The Liberals campaigned on a promise to close this tax break for CEOs, but backtracked after they formed government.

New Democrats are fighting every day for a fairer, more inclusive Canada. And we'll keep fighting so that Ottawa works for everyone, not just the wealthy and the well-connected.

Daniel recently called out the Liberals in the House for failing to keep their promise to close the CEO stock option loophole.

House of Commons, March 7, 2017
Mr. Daniel Blaikie
(Elmwood-Transcona, NDP)

“ It is important to speak truth to power. It is something the Liberals promised to do, but when the Bay Street lobbyists came and the decision point came and they actually had to do the deed... the Liberals could not do it. They just could not do it.

The Liberals just want to fit in so badly with the rich and powerful, when they should be trying to fit in with ordinary working Canadians who go to work every day and pay their taxes, and who want to be part of a country that assesses a fair rate on everyone and does not say, “Because you make a lot of money, you are off the hook. ”

The CRA aggressively chases working Canadians, but rich tax cheats get off free



Last spring, reports leaked showing that the Canadian government is allowing the wealthiest Canadians to avoid paying their fair share of taxes.

The CBC reported that the CRA offered amnesty to “high net worth” clients of accounting firms such as KPMG, protecting them from legal action, penalties and fines. (Canada Revenue offered amnesty to wealthy KPMG clients in offshore tax ‘sham’, March 8, 2016, cbc.ca)

Working Canadians do not hire well-connected accounting firms to cheat on their taxes. They pay their

fair share for the public infrastructure and services that we all use.

It is not ok for someone to cheat because they are rich, whether it is legal or not. Shell companies and sweetheart tax treaties with countries like Barbados do not make it ok.

Rich Canadians use our public infrastructure and services, and they can most afford to pay.

It adds insult to injury when we hear that CRA officials are treated to private, exclusive dinners at the Rideau club by accounting giants that are under investigation for tax evasion and exploitation. (5 years of tax industry parties and receptions with CRA staff, April 18, 2016, cbc.ca)

The Liberals say they want fairness for the middleclass, but we won’t get it if they are not willing to stand up to their wealthy and well-connected friends.

On March 2, 2017 the NDP introduced an opposition day motion that called on the government to end the unfair aggressive tax avoidance schemes used by the wealthiest Canadians. This is the motion:

The government loses tens of billions of dollars annually to tax loopholes, deductions, and exemptions that mostly benefit the wealthy and estimates suggest that tax evasion through the use of offshore tax havens costs the government more than \$7 billion dollars annually, the House call on the government to: (a) address tax measures that primarily benefit the wealthy, including keeping its promise to cap the stock option deduction loophole; and (b) take aggressive action to tackle tax havens including (i) tightening rules for shell companies, (ii) renegotiating tax treaties that let companies repatriate profits from tax havens to Canada tax-free, (iii) ending penalty-free amnesty deals for individuals suspected of tax evasion.

Trudeau Abandoned Health Accord

In the last election, the Liberals made a clear commitment to sit down with the Premiers and hammer out a new, national deal for healthcare.

LIBERALS PROMISED A NEW HEALTH ACCORD

“ Despite our health care system’s value and importance, it has been more than a decade since a Canadian Prime Minister sat down with provincial and territorial Premiers to strengthen the program...

We will restart that important conversation and provide the collaborative federal leadership that has been missing during the Harper decade.

We will negotiate a new Health Accord with provinces and territories, including a long-term agreement on funding. ”

Liberal Party 2015 Platform, page 9 (emphasis added)

They also promised to flow money immediately to bolster home care services across Canada.

LIBERALS PROMISED IMMEDIATE HOME CARE FUNDING

“ As an immediate commitment, we will invest \$3 billion, over the next four years, to deliver more and better home care services for all Canadians. ”

Liberal Party 2015 Platform, page 9 (emphasis added)

Once elected though, the Liberals adopted the same, reduced funding plan they criticized when it was proposed by Stephen Harper. Prime Minister Trudeau refused to sit down with the Premiers to discuss a new Health Accord, even though they made a unanimous request.

To make matters worse, the Liberals did not immediately flow money for home care. Instead, used the money they promised for home care as a stick to get provinces on board with the reduced funding model.

Once they committed to a “divide and conquer” strategy, the Liberals started cutting separate side deals with each province. Shamefully, the deal with Saskatchewan included permitting a two-tier MRI system. Undermining the Canada Health Act

is no way to strengthen Medicare.

But Brian Pallister is showing that the Conservatives can’t be trusted with the keys to our health system either. Even before talks on a national deal fell apart, Pallister had announced over \$1 billion in cuts to health capital projects in Manitoba. We have to hope that Park Manor will not fall victim to this short-sighted move by the Manitoba Conservatives.

Once all hope for a national deal was lost, Pallister continued to hold out and attack the federal government in the media instead of rolling up his sleeves to make a deal. It seems like all along he was working to blame someone for cuts he was going to make anyway, instead of looking for new money to invest in health services.

Daughters of the Vote



Daniel was pleased to meet up with Shania on Parliament Hill

In celebration of one hundred years since women got the right to vote in Canada, a women's organization called Equal Voice brought 338 young women to Ottawa, one for each riding in the country, in an initiative they called "Daughters of the Vote".

Shania Pruden was Elmwood-Transcona's Daughter of the Vote.

On March 8th, International Women's Day, these women took their seat in the House of Commons, made speeches, heard from all the party leaders and some even got to ask questions of the Prime Minister, including Shania.

Shania also testified before the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women. I would like to share some excerpts from her presentation:

House of Commons, March 8, 2017

Ms. Shania Pruden

Standing Committee on the Status of Women

// Thank you. Good morning. My name is Shania Pruden. I am representing Elmwood — Transcona from Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Did you know that according to the Native Women's Association that indigenous women are almost three times more likely to be murdered by a stranger than a non-indigenous woman? It's very difficult to take that in because it brings fear to many indigenous Canadians, including me...

I get scared to walk home from my bus stop at night, but also when I'm in public, my self-esteem disappears... Something that I've never told many people is the reason why I dress the way I do; the reason why I act the way I do. It's because I feel braver and more secure. If I was to dress more like a girl, people would know I'm a girl and I'd most likely be harassed for it. If I dress more like a boy, people wouldn't bug me... Why should I have to do that just to live free from harm?...

"Indigenous or not, women are women and strongly agree that violence against women has to stop and it's not fair that women have to live in fear. When we work together, we can help end violence against women once and for all. //

CPP Reforms Contain Important Flaw

A mistake in Ottawa's new CPP law will penalize women and people living with disabilities

Women and people living with disabilities will be penalized under the planned expansion of Canada Pension Plan benefits if the Liberals don't fix serious omissions in proposed legislation.

In the 1970s, the federal government introduced a drop-out provision as an important measure to protect the pension benefits of parents who stay home to raise children. This provision exists in the current CPP so that parents, mostly women, are not penalized for time taken out of the workforce to raise children.

Women already receive lower average CPP benefits than men, and if this problem isn't fixed

it will only make it harder for retired women to get by.

The Liberal bill also fails to replicate a similar existing drop-out provision for people that have received CPP disability benefits.

Canadians living with disabilities already face major financial challenges when compared with other Canadians. They must not be overlooked. This gap needs to be fixed so that the most vulnerable people will not be unfairly disadvantaged by the new expanded CPP benefits.

New Democrats are fighting to protect working families and the most vulnerable, and calling on the Liberals to recognize their mistake and take action to fix it.

House of Commons, November 28, 2016

Mr. Daniel Blaikie

(Elmwood-Transcona, NDP)

“ Fairness in the CPP is an important principle and it is one of the reasons that we in the NDP have been disappointed that certain provisions instituted by previous Liberal governments, previous Trudeau governments for that matter, in order to ensure fairness for the CPP, are not present in this round of increases for the CPP.

I am speaking in particular about dropout provisions for women...[and] people with disabilities who also may have to take time out of the workforce and do not want those years counted toward their overall benefit because they did not earn very much in those years, obviously, if they were not working to their full potential.

That is a principle of fairness that traditionally had been recognized by Liberals, and it has been unfortunate to see that the current Liberals refuse to recognize that principle of fairness in the CPP. ”

Bill C-27: The Liberal Attack on Pension Security

Hundreds of thousands of Canadians across the country have spent decades paying into a pension fund in good faith on a promise that they would receive a specific, regular payment out of the fund during their retirement. They built their lifetime financial plan based on that promise... and they don't have the option of starting all over again.

The Liberal's Bill C-27 would permit employers to pressure their workers and retirees out of their defined-benefit pension plan into a 'target-benefit' plan. A defined-benefit plan requires increased contributions by the employer if the plan's investments are underperforming, whereas the target-benefit plan allows the employer to be legally absolved of any responsibility to meet that amount owed to your pension fund.

In other words, all the risk of bad investment gets loaded onto the pensioner and the company is left totally off the hook.

While the pensioner's consent would be required to transition the plan, we know employers have tools at their disposal to push people toward the outcome they want. For instance, they could use the carrot of a one-time lump-sum

payment to those who transition, or they could raise fears about the solvency of the defined-benefit plan to scare people out of it.

Bill C-27 will let employers wipe billions of dollars in pension liability off their books, while pensioners who thought they were set for life are left wondering if they have enough saved up to pay the bills. Once the precedent is set, provincial governments may decide to take the same route. Pension promises must be honoured.

The Prime Minister understood that during the campaign. At that time, he said: "[Defined Benefit Plans] which have already been paid for by employees and pensioners, should not be retroactively changed into [Target Benefit Plans]." Unfortunately, he seems to have forgotten his promise.

New Democrats, along with many in the labour movement and groups are working for the rights of seniors and retirees, are fighting to have the government withdraw this legislation rather than follow the Conservatives' example.

This proposal has no mandate and no sense. Let the government know you would like to see it withdrawn.

C-27 Community Consultation Campaign

From January to March I met with nine federally regulated pensioner crown corporations who's pension plans could be impacted by Bill C-27. I also wrote back to over 70 constituents emails and phone calls over the three months and spoke with pension experts and labour leaders on the consequences of Bill C-27.



Met with my brothers from IBEW 435 on January 17, 2017



Good meeting with UNIFOR 4000 to discuss the need to stop Bill C-27 on March 1, 2017



Met with Via Rail Pensioner Canada Association on January 11, 2017 to talk about their concerns on Bill C-27

100th Anniversary of Vimy Ridge



Daniel was honoured to attend the first No Stone Left Alone ceremony in the Transcona Cemetery

April 9th, 2017 marked the 100th Anniversary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge, a truly important day in Canadian history.

That was the day when all four divisions of the Canadian Expeditionary Force fought together for the first time. They successfully stormed what has been called “the strongest natural fortress on the Western front”; a feat repeated French and British attacks had failed to accomplish.

Since then, that battle has come to be seen as a defining day for Canada’s identity; the day Canada became a nation.

Canadians from coast to coast to coast, who had been separated by geography and history prior to

the war, fought together and won a reputation for Canada on the international scene. The victory gave Canadians a sense of independence as a country that was reinforced when Canada got a seat at the peace conference in Versailles.

It may have been the first time that Canadians fought together, but it would not be the last. In the Second World War, Korea, the Gulf War, the former Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, and many peacekeeping operations, Canadians have served with distinction; carrying on a tradition that began so long ago on Easter Monday, 1917.



Daniel and Janelle attended the Yellow Ribbon Gala to support the Winnipeg Military Family Resource Centre