



JAGMEET SINGH

DÉPUTÉ | MP, BURNABY SOUTH | BURNABY-SUD

Ottawa March 13th, 2019

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
Canada
K1A0A6

Hon Bill Morneau
Minister of Finance
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau and Minister Morneau,

With only a few months left until Canadians hand down their appraisal of your government, the coming budget offers a last opportunity for you to prioritize the needs of Canadians.

The wealthy and the powerful have so successfully lobbied your government in the last three years, that the gap between Canada's wealthiest and the rest of Canadians is growing. While billionaires in Canada have increased their wealth by \$20 billion over the last year, Canadian families are burdened with record family debt loads and many indigenous communities don't even have access to drinkable water, safe and affordable housing, and healthy schools.

Canadians are struggling with an unprecedented housing crisis, rising out-of-pocket health care costs, and a critical lack of affordable, high quality child care. Canadians pay more for prescription drugs, internet and cell phone services than citizens of most countries in the world. Almost half of our citizens are only two hundred dollars away from not being able to pay their monthly bills. This financial insecurity keeps Canadians up at night.

**JAGMEET SINGH**

DÉPUTÉ | MP, BURNABY SOUTH | BURNABY-SUD

The last three budgets have failed. By refusing to fix the mess that Conservatives created, we've seen your liberal government make the wrong choices over and over:

- Choosing to stand with Sears shareholders instead of protecting the workers from having \$730 million worth of their pension stolen.
- Choosing to give KPMG an amnesty from prosecution after KPMG's clients offshore tax sham that cost Canadians \$130 million.
- Choosing to protect the profits of big pharmaceutical and insurance companies instead of reducing drugs cost for everyone.
- Choosing to bail out SNC-Lavalin and Kinder Morgan instead of fighting for steel and aluminum workers, GM workers and dairy producers.
- Choosing to give big polluters and heavy emitters a free ride by forcing small business and Canadians to pay for the impact of climate change.
- Choosing to protect rich CEOs stock options, loopholes and offshore tax havens that benefits Liberal insiders, costing ordinary Canadians more than \$16 billion a year.

Those choices result in a system rigged to work in favour of the richest people and the biggest corporations, while Canadians pay the price.

Canadians are working harder and not getting further ahead. They fear for their future, and their kids' future.

Some politicians want to take advantage of that fear and uncertainty to divide us. They are not blaming the people responsible, but our neighbors, our co-workers and members of our community. The real reason people are experiencing fear and uncertainty, is because the basic things they count on are no longer there for them. It's because governments like yours make choices that benefit the wealthy instead of workers and their families.



JAGMEET SINGH

DÉPUTÉ | MP, BURNABY SOUTH | BURNABY-SUD

Budget 2019 can be different. You can make different choices for different results for Canadians. You can give a break to Canadians families, now. In Budget 2019, we will be looking for the following priorities.

1- Universal single-payer pharmacare system and prescription drug coverage for all

Nearly two million Canadians can't afford to fill their prescriptions. For many people that means more trips to the doctor or the hospital – hurting their health and costing more in the long run. It's estimated that hundreds of premature deaths occur each year among working-age Canadians unable to afford their prescription medicines. Let's have the courage to build a universal single-payer pharmacare system together instead of protecting the profits of big pharmaceutical and insurance companies. A single-payer system is the best way to make sure that we're using purchasing power to get the lowest prices for drug, saving Canada's precious health care dollars. Do not introduce a patchwork system that "fills the gaps". Take this opportunity to cover everyone equally, strengthen our public healthcare system, and save people out of pocket costs at the same time. In Canada, it should only take a health card, not a credit card, to stay healthy.

2- Tackling tax havens, loopholes for the richest CEOs, and shady transactions

It's alarming and unacceptable that 1.2 million children live in poverty in Canada. More than one-third of these children need food banks to feed themselves. The next eighth months can be the start of an economy that works better for more people, and not just those at the top. We need to have the courage to stand up and make everyone do their part. The wealthiest and rich corporations have had it too good for too long. Let's close the stock option loophole. It's past time to eliminate this multi-million dollar tax loophole currently enjoyed by an estimated 8,000 very high-income CEOs, and restrict it only to start-ups. It's time to end abusive transactions; you need to require companies to prove the economic reason for paper transactions, aside from simply dodging taxes. It's time to put an end to "shell companies" that serve only to hide money offshore.

We recommend you introduce a mandatory conversion of all bearer shares to a registered instrument. This type of share allows for complete anonymity of ownership and transfer, and is therefore vulnerable to being used as an easy method to evade taxes and launder money. It's time to strengthen the ownership requirement by eliminating bearer shares and replacing them with normal registered instruments.



JAGMEET SINGH

DÉPUTÉ | MP, BURNABY SOUTH | BURNABY-SUD

Finally, it's time to put an end to tax havens once and for all. All those measures would help to recoup more than \$16 billion a year that you could use to make life more affordable for regular folks, instead of more affordable for billionaires.

3- Fight to secure a livable environment now and for generations to come

We need you to join our fight to secure a livable environment for us all now and for generations to come. This cannot happen without firm targets to reduce carbon pollution—and a real plan to meet those targets.

Plastic pollution has huge costs for our economy, our environment and our communities. We're calling on you to put the health of people and the environment first by calling for a ban on single-use plastics by 2022, as part of a broader Waste Reduction Strategy. The federal government must take concrete steps to reduce Canada's waste in the future, by working with all levels of government to require strong, enforceable Extended Producer Responsibility legislation that holds companies responsible for the entire lifecycle of their plastic products and packaging, while reducing clean-up costs for our communities.

It's time to aggressively invest in solutions for green energy projects, which deliver sustainable returns to our economy and offer good quality jobs for Canadians. We still believe that to lead on climate change we can't spend billions of dollars on pipelines. Your decision to overpay for the purchase of the Trans Mountain pipeline was wrong and we're calling on you to halt the expansion before even more public money is wasted. We are also calling on you to stop the exemption that you gave to biggest polluters concerning the price on carbon, it is simply not fair to give a break to them when all Canadians are doing their share.

4- An affordable place to call home for everyone

Everyone should be able to live in affordable, quality housing but for too many families, this kind of housing is increasingly out of reach thanks to skyrocketing rents, demo-victions and ballooning home prices. Affecting 235,000 Canadians every year, homelessness is a growing epidemic; there is an historic opportunity for parliamentarians to develop a national plan to end homelessness. Your Liberal government voted against our plans to bring immediate relief to Canadians caught in the housing crisis. Instead you cynically inflated housing numbers to your "rhetorical advantage", as Liberal MP Adam

**JAGMEET SINGH**

DÉPUTÉ | MP, BURNABY SOUTH | BURNABY-SUD

Vaughan recently admitted. Our calls for immediate relief for Canadians may have been rejected, but this will not deter us, the stakes are too important.

The majority of renters want to own a home, yet too many feel this is out of reach. It's time to re-introduce 30-year terms to CMHC insured mortgages on entry-level homes for first-time home buyers. This will allow for smaller monthly payments, freeing up funds to help make ends meet for young families. We also need to step up with immediate help for families that are struggling to stay in their homes today. That's why we are calling on the government to step in to provide financial help to low-income renters right now, and to make that help available to more families that need it. Families at the breaking point can't wait until 2020 for help. In this budget, you should also commit to build half a million affordable units and fast-tracking funding for non-profit, social and co-op housing. Canadians cannot wait, you need to have the courage to take these actions now.

5- Committing to Indigenous Communities

We need your government to take responsibility for the public health emergency in too many indigenous communities, caused by the housing crisis. As Prime Minister, you must immediately change course and ensure proper funding is allocated to end long-term drinking water advisories, invest in housing and education. Any children with health issues should receive services as soon as possible, respecting Jordan's Principle.

Indigenous communities are disproportionately and adversely impacted by the lack of adequate and affordable housing whether on or off reserve. It is unacceptable that Indigenous communities are yet again being asked to wait for a plan. We call on you to develop and fund a housing strategy for Indigenous people, by Indigenous people. Although the funding component is important, it's also important that Indigenous peoples be directly involved in developing and governing the strategy. Article 21 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples recognizes the right to housing and affirms that States must take effective measures to ensure the sustained improvement of housing.

Beyond housing, your government has introduced two important legislations but without funding these remain incomplete. The Indigenous languages bill only commits to consultation with the "objective" of funding. We want stable, statutory funding, and the bill falls short in that regard. We know that language experts made recommendations that are not reflected in the bill: most importantly for immediate core funding before communities lose more language keepers and teachers.

CHEF DU NOUVEAU PARTI DÉMOCRATIQUE DU CANADA



LEADER OF THE NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF CANADA

JAGMEET SINGH

DÉPUTÉ | MP, BURNABY SOUTH | BURNABY-SUD

With respect to your government's child welfare legislation, that must be followed with genuine respect and support for Indigenous jurisdiction over child welfare services, and ensure that support is backed by funding with the goal of keeping families together and healthy, and dramatically reducing the number of Indigenous children in care.

Better choices are possible. We think Canadians deserve governments on their side, governments that are willing to stand up for them against rich interests and powerful friends. In the last election, you promised Canadians hope. To tackle the very real problems that Canadians face will require courage to do more.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jagmeet Singh". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Jagmeet Singh, Leader of Canada's NDP

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peter Julian". The signature is cursive and somewhat stylized.

Peter Julian, NDP Finance Critic