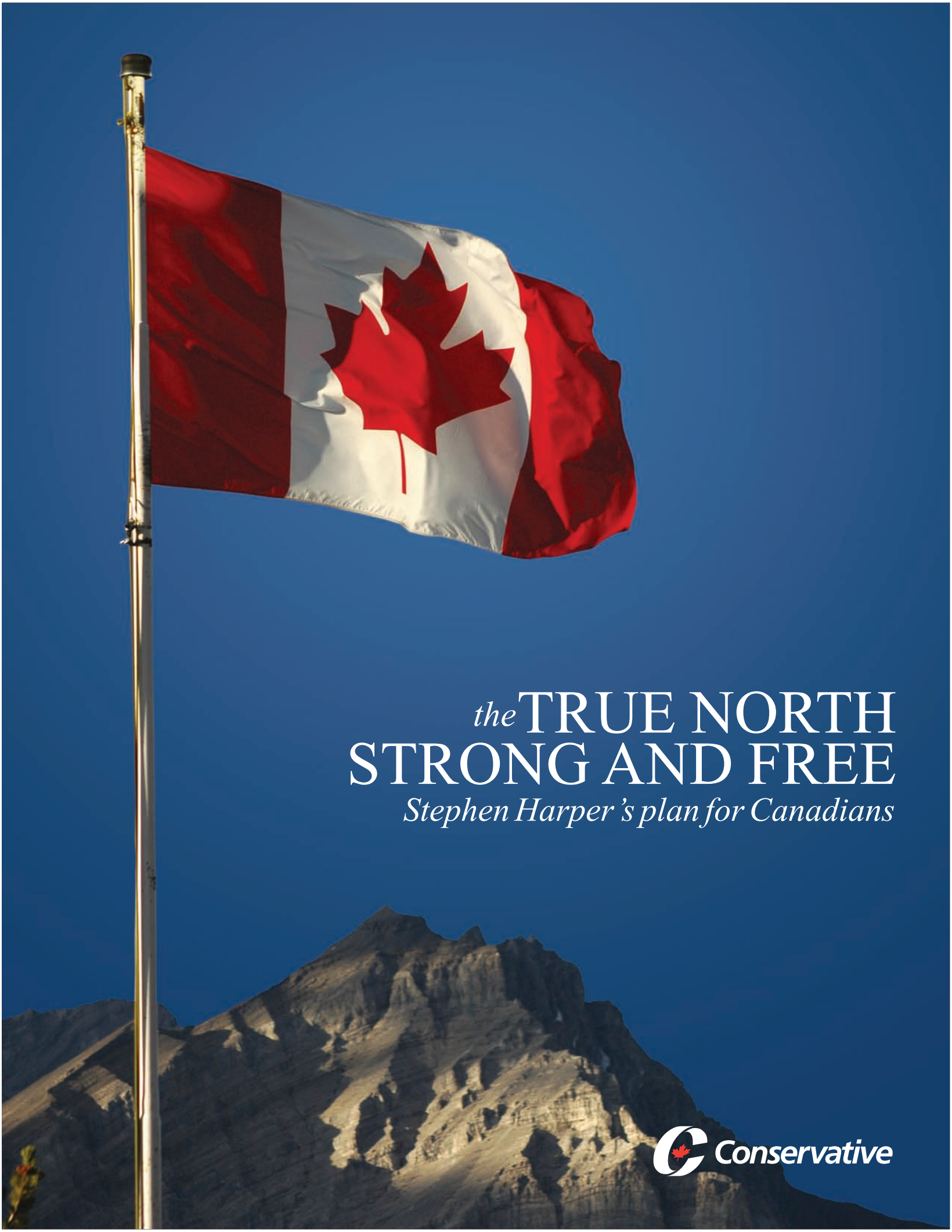
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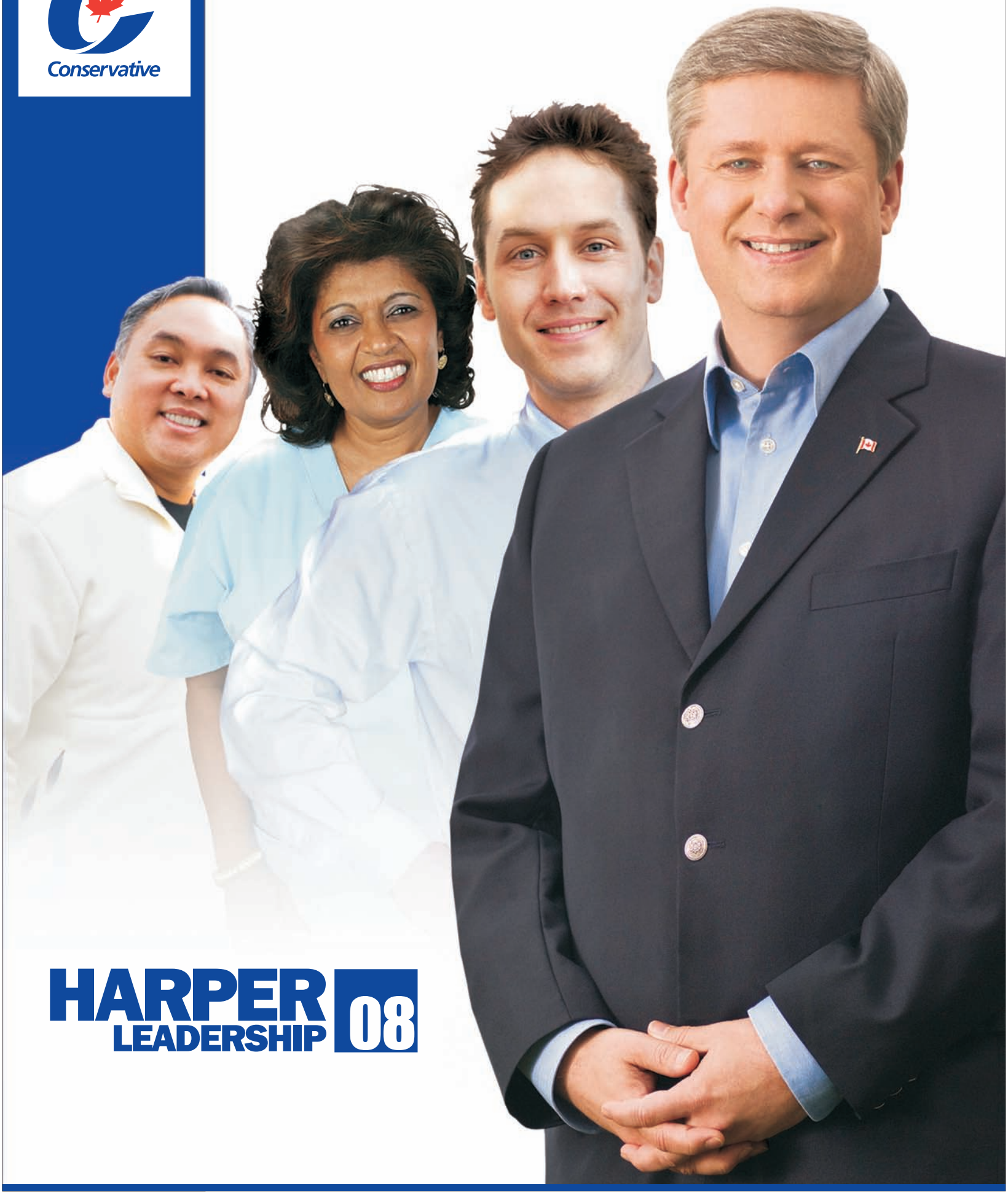

HARPER LEADERSHIP 08

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Stephen Harper's plan for Canadians

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What This Election is About

In a time of global economic uncertainty, Canada needs a strong and steady leader at the helm. For the past two and a half years, Prime Minister Stephen Harper has provided that leadership by managing the economy with prudence and discipline and by providing Canadian families and businesses with practical help that's making a real difference.

Canada has witnessed the net creation of more than 800,000 new jobs, while the Harper Government has lowered taxes for the typical family by more than $3,000 a year and relieved our children of nearly $40 billion in national debt. People who work hard, pay their taxes and play by the rules are getting ahead.

The Harper Government has taken bold action to make Canada a safer place for families too. Our tough-on-crime approach has resulted in tougher penalties for serious drug crimes and drug-impaired driving, and better protections from gangs, dangerous offenders and sexual predators.

National unity is stronger than it has been in forty years. And Canada is, once again, taking our proper place on the world stage. We are promoting our national interests and spreading our Canadian values of freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law. And we are defending our sovereignty over the vast Canadian Arctic.

Today, Canada is strong, united and free – the envy of the world. We are in the best financial position of any country in the G7. While other countries are struggling with uncertainty, Canada is on the cusp of becoming a bastion of economic strength on the international stage.

the TRUE NORTH STRONG AND FREE

Stephen Harper's plan for Canadians

Despite our gains over the past two and a half years, Canada is at risk of going back.

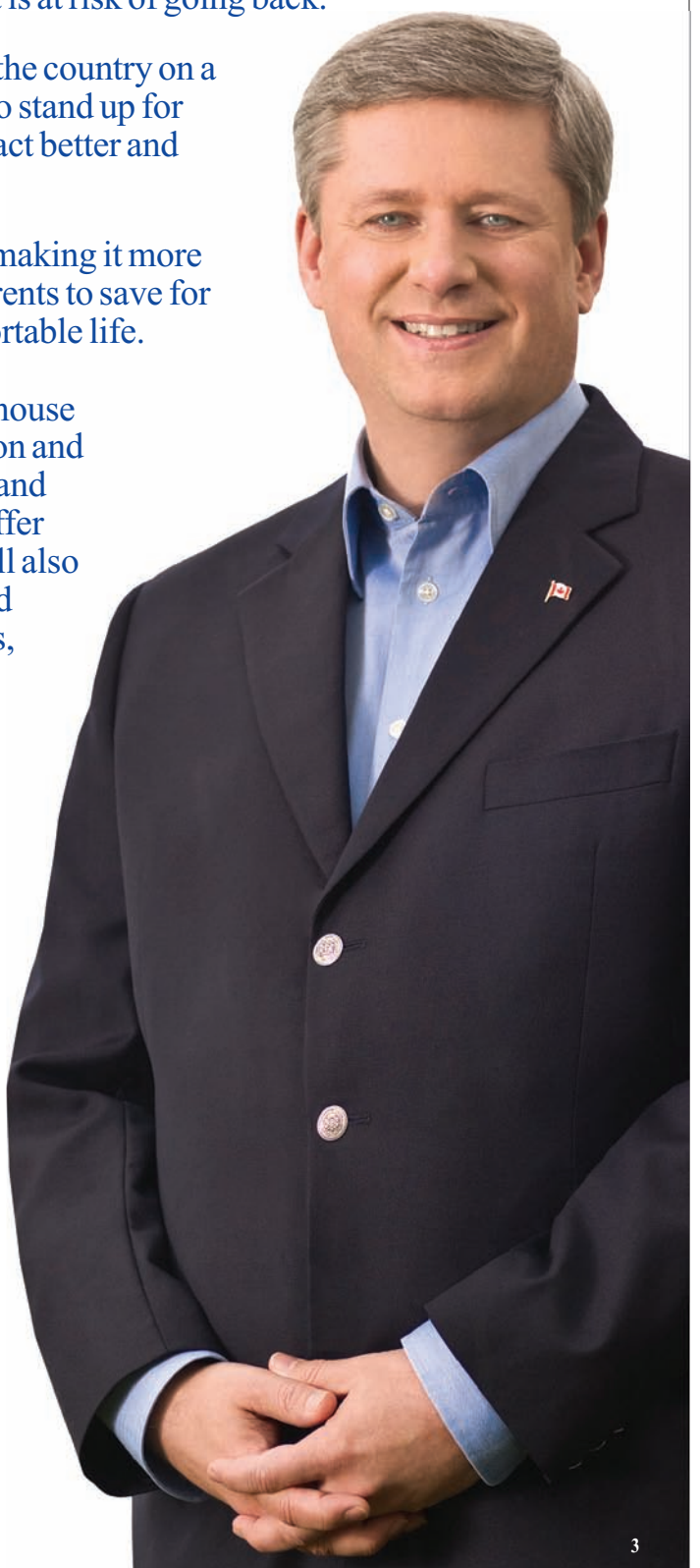
A Harper Conservative Government will continue to guide the country on a steady course through global instability. We will continue to stand up for Canada's national interests as a credible competitor and attract better and higher-paying jobs.

We will deliver on a modest and realistic plan that includes making it more affordable for a young couple to buy their first home, for parents to save for their children's education and for seniors to retire to a comfortable life.

We will continue to make our communities safer by ending house arrest for serious and violent crimes, including home invasion and drug trafficking. We will help youth at risk of gang activity and introduce a new law on young offenders that will impose stiffer sentences for crimes like murder and manslaughter. We will also protect consumers from illegal and unfair retail practices and protect consumers and children from unsafe imported goods, including toys and food.

Under Stephen Harper's leadership, Canada will emerge stronger and more united than ever before.

This election, Canadians face a clear choice. It's a choice between the Harper Conservatives' credible and affordable plan, and risky tax-and-spend experiments that will drive up the cost of everything from groceries to gas and throw Canada back into a deficit. It's a choice between strength and weakness. And it's a choice between moving forward and going back.



Canada.
We're better off with Harper.

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COST OF LIVING AND QUALITY OF LIFE

As high energy costs and turbulence in international financial markets have taken their toll on the world economy, Canadians have become increasingly concerned about the rising cost of living and threats to our quality of life. Stephen Harper and the Conservative Government have helped Canadians cope with these challenging times. Reducing the GST by two per cent has helped boost economic growth during the current slowdown. This is part of a plan that has helped the Canadian economy. Savings and benefits are more than $3,000 per year for a typical, two-child Canadian family earning $80,000.

A re-elected Conservative Government will continue to provide practical help to Canadian families to assist them with higher costs of living, and protect them from unfair retail practices so that families can focus on the things in life that matter most, like buying their first home and saving for their children's education.

HELPING CONSUMERS

Reducing Taxes on Diesel Fuel

A re-elected Conservative Government led by Stephen Harper will reduce the federal excise tax on diesel and aviation fuel by half - from four cents per litre to two cents per litre - reducing the price of transportation by truck, train, plane and ship, and helping to bring downward pressure on consumer prices.

Protecting Consumers with Stronger Competition Laws

A re-elected Conservative Government led by Stephen Harper will implement a strong consumer protection plan by modernizing Canada's outdated competition laws. New competition laws will:

- Make it easier to investigate and prosecute bid-rigging and hard-core cartel behaviour such as price fixing.
- Raise maximum penalties for bid-rigging and cartels to a $25-million fine and 14 years in prison.
- Introduce fines of up to $10 million – $15 million for repeat offenders – for companies that abuse their dominant market position.
- Provide for restitution for consumers who fall victim to deceptive marketing practices.

Restricting Unfair Text Messaging Charges

A re-elected Conservative Government led by Stephen Harper will prevent telecommunications companies from charging fees to customers for receiving unsolicited commercial text messages. We will amend the Telecommunications Act to strengthen the power of the Commissioner of Complaints for Telecommunications Services, including the creation of a code of conduct for wireless services. We will also create a compliance and deterrent power that allows the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) to block these and similar unfair charges in the future.

Protecting Against Internet Spam

A re-elected Conservative Government led by Stephen Harper will introduce legislation to prohibit the use of spam (unsolicited commercial email) to collect personal information under false pretences and to engage in criminal conduct. The new law will reduce dangerous, destructive and deceptive email and web site practices, and will establish new fines for those who break the law.

Ensuring Truth in Labelling for Consumer Goods

A re-elected Conservative Government led by Stephen Harper will extend our new truth in labelling guidelines for food products to consumer products, ensuring that Canadians know more about the products they purchase.

As was done with food products, the use of the "Product of Canada" label will be restricted to consumer products where both the contents and processing are Canadian. Qualified "Made in Canada" labels will be used for consumer products that are processed in Canada, but contain imported content, such as "Made in Canada from imported contents."

Enacting Stronger Consumer Product Safety Legislation

A re-elected Conservative Government led by Stephen Harper will follow through with consumer product safety legislation providing for more inspection and testing of food, toys and consumer products to ensure that dangerous products are swiftly recalled. The legislation will also establish stiff offences and penalties for violations.

We will ensure that any regulation of natural health products balances the protection of Canadians' health and safety with the freedom to choose alternative products.

Establishing Tough Laws on Tampering with Gas Pumps

A re-elected Conservative Government led by Stephen Harper will amend the *Weights and Measures Act* and the *Electricity and Gas Inspection Act* to ensure the accuracy of gas pumps and home-heating meters. We will increase fines for companies that overcharge consumers, with additional fines as high as $50,000 for repeat offenders.

BENEFITS TO FAMILIES

Allowing Income Splitting for Caregivers of Family Members with Disabilities

A re-elected Conservative Government led by Stephen Harper will allow families where one spouse is not working full-time in order to care for one or more family members with disabilities – whether children or adults – to split their income between spouses for tax purposes.

Making it Easier for Families to Save for Family Members with Disabilities

A re-elected Conservative Government led by Stephen Harper will make it easier for families to plan for the future of their children with disabilities by improving the Disability Savings Plan. We will allow the proceeds of a deceased individual's Registered Retirement Savings Plan (RRSP) or Registered Retirement Income Fund (RRIF) to be rolled over on a tax deferred basis to the Disability Savings Plan of a financially dependent infirm child or grandchild. This builds on the Disability Savings Plan established by this government in 2007, and will make it easier for a person with disabilities to access money that has been transferred from the unused retirement savings of a deceased family member.

Helping First-Time Homebuyers with High Closing Costs

A re-elected Conservative Government led by Stephen Harper will give first-time homebuyers a tax credit for up to $5,000 of eligible closing costs on the purchase of a new home.

Helping Parents Save for Their Children's Education

A re-elected Conservative Government will expand the current Registered Education Savings Plan (RESP) to allow charities and not-for-profit organizations to establish RESPs, in partnership with parents, for children from low-income families that otherwise would not have the ability to save.

Improving the $100 per Month Universal Child Care Benefit

A re-elected Conservative Government led by Stephen Harper will fully index the $100 per month Universal Child Care Benefit to inflation. This will ensure that the value of the benefit does not erode over time.

To help sole-support, single-income parents with the costs of caring for children under six years old, a re-elected Conservative Government will make the $100 per month per child Universal Child Care Benefit given to these parents tax free. This will recognize the uniquely high child care burdens borne by single parents.

Helping Seniors by Increasing the Age Credit Amount

A re-elected Conservative Government led by Stephen Harper will increase the Senior Age Credit Amount by an additional $1,000, on top of already planned increases. Once this increase is fully implemented, it will result in savings of more than $400 per year for eligible seniors receiving the full value of the credit.

Ensuring Fairness for Seniors Collecting U.S. Social Security

A re-elected Conservative Government led by Stephen Harper will end the unfair treatment of Canadians receiving U.S. Social Security payments. Starting in 1997, the Liberal government began to tax 85 per cent of U.S. Social Security payments received by Canadian seniors. A re-elected Conservative Government will restore the 50 per cent inclusion rate that applied before the Liberals took office. The restored, lower rate will apply to Canadians who were receiving U.S. Social Security payments prior to January 1, 1996.

Helping Make Housing Affordable for Vulnerable Canadians

Stephen Harper and the Conservatives are committed to ensuring that all Canadians have an adequate quality of housing. We have extended the Homelessness Partnering Strategy for the next two years and will maintain funding to deal with homelessness at least at the current levels. We will work with provinces, municipalities and charitable organizations to look at ways of improving the effectiveness of federal dollars spent on homelessness initiatives.

We have also renewed funding for the Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program to assist low-income Canadians in renovating their homes and for the Affordable Housing Initiative, which supports the creation of new rental housing units.

Helping Aboriginal People Participate Fully in Canadian Life

A re-elected Conservative Government led by Stephen Harper will ensure that Aboriginals have the opportunity to fully participate in Canada's economy and society. Improving Aboriginal education is crucial to giving young members of the Aboriginal community the opportunity to succeed.

We will work to complete tripartite educational agreements, modelled after the successful agreements in British Columbia and New Brunswick, with provinces and First Nations organizations across the country.

A re-elected Conservative Government will also commit to pursuing bilateral agreements with provinces to address the wrongs of the residential schools era for Aboriginals attending similar schools not covered by the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement.

JOBS FOR THE FUTURE

Since coming to office, Stephen Harper and the Conservatives have taken steps to help Canada compete in the world economy and to make sure that we are creating and preparing Canadians for the next generation of work. We reduced taxes on business, invested in science and technology and provided incentives for young Canadians to enter the skilled trades. We took measures to encourage more participation in the workforce, such as the $1,000 Canada Employment Credit, the Working Income Tax Benefit for lower-income working families and efforts to attract more skilled workers through immigration and to promote recognition of international credentials.

A re-elected Conservative Government led by Stephen Harper will do more to invest in jobs for the future and for a flexible labour market that responds to the needs of Canadians.

Giving Self-Employed Canadians Access to EI Parental Benefits

A re-elected Conservative Government led by Stephen Harper will give self-employed Canadians the opportunity to access maternity and parental benefits.

Lowering Taxes for Small Business

A re-elected Conservative Government led by Stephen Harper will continue to reduce taxes for small and medium-sized businesses. In our first term, we reduced the small business tax rate to 11 per cent, raised the eligibility threshold for the small business income tax rate to $400,000 and raised the lifetime capital gains exemption for small business owners to $750,000. We will build on this record in our second term by:

- Raising the small business eligibility threshold to $500,000.
- Indexing the lifetime capital gains exemption to inflation.

Reducing the Paper Burden for Small Business

A re-elected Conservative Government led by Stephen Harper will achieve its target of a 20 per cent reduction this year in reporting requirements for small businesses and will continue to reduce the burden of unnecessary red tape and paperwork on Canada's small-business sector. A re-elected Conservative Government will continue to work with the private sector and small business organizations to identify inefficiencies and make permanent a formal process of measuring, reporting and reducing the burden on businesses.

Providing Access to Venture Capital for Innovative Companies

A re-elected Conservative Government led by Stephen Harper will create a new $75-million venture capital fund, to be administered by the Business Development Bank of Canada, which will allow late-stage technology companies to move from research and development to commercialization stages of business.

Protecting Creators and Consumers of New Ideas and Products

A re-elected Conservative Government led by Stephen Harper will reintroduce federal copyright legislation that strikes the appropriate balance among the rights of musicians, artists, programmers and other creators and brings Canada's intellectual property protection in line with that of other industrialized countries, but also protects consumers who want to access copyright works for their personal use.

We will also introduce tougher laws on counterfeiting and piracy and give our customs and law enforcement services the resources to enforce them. This will protect consumers from phoney and sometimes dangerous products that are passed off as reliable brand-name goods.

Making Canadian Business More Competitive

A re-elected Conservative Government led by Stephen Harper will improve the competitiveness of Canadian business, ensuring both a level playing field for companies and protection for Canadian consumers.

- We will increase the threshold for foreign investment reviews to attract more foreign investment to Canada while ensuring that such investments are of net benefit to Canada.
- We will ensure that consumer interests are protected and that the government can block foreign takeovers that would jeopardize our national security.
- We will work to ensure that Canadian companies also receive increased access to investment opportunities abroad.
- We will open up two regulated sectors, airlines and uranium mining, to allow increased foreign investment, subject to any investments in these sectors meeting the national security test and negotiation of reciprocal benefits with our trading partners.

Supporting our Manufacturing Sector

A re-elected Conservative Government led by Stephen Harper will continue our support for strategic industries, such as the aerospace and automotive sectors. The government has already established two new funds – the $900-million Strategic Aerospace and Defence Initiative and the $250-million Automotive Innovation Fund. These funds emphasize leading-edge technology and innovation to ensure that Canada remains a world leader in these industries. Unlike previous governments, a Harper Government will ensure that taxpayers' investments are repaid.

A re-elected Conservative Government will also support capital investment by abolishing tariffs on a wide range of imported machinery and equipment.

Supporting Future Technology

The Conservative Government has made major new investments in leading-edge science over the past three budgets, which will increase support for science and technology by $850 million by 2009-10.

A re-elected Conservative Government will make additional investments in internationally recognized science and technology projects in Canada.

Breaking Down Trade Barriers within Canada

A re-elected Conservative Government led by Stephen Harper will work to eliminate barriers that restrict or impair trade, investment or labour mobility between provinces and territories by 2010. In 2007, the government announced that it was prepared to use the federal trade and commerce power to strengthen the Canadian economic union. Since that time, we have seen progress among the provinces and territories in strengthening the existing Agreement on Internal Trade. We hope to see further progress, but are prepared to intervene by exercising federal authority if barriers to trade, investment and mobility remain by 2010.

Increasing Trade with Emerging Markets

A re-elected Conservative Government led by Stephen Harper will continue to pursue trade agreements, such as those successfully reached with the European Free Trade Association, Colombia, Peru and Jordan. We are committed to seeing these deals passed by Parliament. In light of the recent setback at the World Trade Organization negotiations, a re-elected Conservative Government will move aggressively to improve Canada's network of bilateral and regional free trade and economic agreements.

To improve Canada's position as a global trader, a re-elected Conservative Government will proceed with plans to open new trade offices in China, Mongolia, Mexico, Brazil and India (in Hyderabad, Kolkata and Ahmedabad).

Offering a New Incentive for Completing Apprenticeships

A re-elected Conservative Government led by Stephen Harper will enhance the current Apprenticeship Incentive Grant by adding an additional $2,000 completion bonus for apprentices who complete their training. The Apprenticeship Incentive Grant was created by the Conservative Government to award grants to registered apprentices who have completed the first or second year of an apprenticeship program in a nationally recognized Red Seal trade. The new bonus will provide an additional cash grant upon completion of a recognized Red Seal apprenticeship program.

Ensuring an Immigration System that Responds to Economic Needs

A re-elected Conservative Government led by Stephen Harper is committed to implementing the reforms contained in the 2008 Budget to reduce the immigration processing backlog and to expedite applications from people with the skills and professions most in demand in Canada.

A re-elected Conservative Government will build on the creation of the Foreign Credentials Referral Office to work with the provinces and territories to ensure greater standardization of workplace and professional credentials across the country and standards for assessment of foreign credentials and will place this issue on the agenda of the next meeting of First Ministers.

Protecting Potential Immigrants and Their Families from Unscrupulous Consultants

In order to protect immigrants and potential immigrants and their families, a re-elected Conservative Government will make immigration consulting a regulated activity.

Meeting the Regional Development Needs of All Regions

A re-elected Conservative Government led by Stephen Harper will ensure that regional development meets the economic needs and aspirations of all Canada's regions.

- We will establish a new regional development agency to cover Northern Canada, consolidating existing northern development activities into one agency.
- We will make sure that rural and low-employment communities of Southern Ontario will be able to access regional development programs along with Northern and Eastern Ontario.
- We will reverse the 2004 and 2005 Liberal cuts to the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Western Economic Diversification and Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, and ensure that spending on regional development will remain at least equal to current levels.
- To support the development of tourism infrastructure on the Saint Lawrence River, we will extend funding for international cruise port-of-call projects by an additional $24 million over two years.

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Stephen Harper's plan for Canadians

Building Canada: Infrastructure for Our Cities and Communities

A re-elected Conservative Government led by Stephen Harper will continue to invest in critical infrastructure for our cities and communities. The Conservative Government has already committed to investing $33 billion in infrastructure between 2007 and 2014 under the Building Canada Plan and to continuing the gas tax transfer to municipalities at a permanent level of $2 billion per year after 2014.

A re-elected Conservative Government will continue to support rural and remote communities by investing in new infrastructure throughout rural and northern Canada.

Helping Older Workers

A re-elected Conservative Government led by Stephen Harper will increase support for Canadians living in one-industry communities to upgrade their skills and get back into the workforce. We will increase funding for the current Targeted Initiative for Older Workers to $50 million per year through 2012. We will continue to work with provinces and territories, businesses and others to help older workers get the skills they need to find new jobs.

Supporting Canada's Resource Industries

A re-elected Conservative Government led by Stephen Harper will continue our strong support for Canada's resource-based industries, such as forestry, fisheries and mining.

The Conservative Government has already resolved the longstanding softwood lumber dispute with the United States, provided funding to British Columbia and northern Alberta to combat the pine beetle crisis and announced additional support for Canada's resource-based communities through the $1-billion Community Development Trust.

We have made it easier for fisheries operators to pass on their licences to family members, introduced a new *Fisheries Act* and assumed custodial management of the fishery in the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO) regulatory area.

We have also announced a $100-million, five-year program for geological mapping of Canada's energy and mineral resources.

Going forward, a re-elected Conservative Government led by Stephen Harper will:

- Extend funding for the forestry industry to market its products abroad and continue support for lumber mills to convert from fossil fuels to biomass.
- Modernize the administration of our fisheries to ensure greater focus on conservation and using administrative sanctions, rather than court proceedings, to deal with violations.
- Extend the "super" flow-through share incentive for mining.

Reducing the Regulatory Burden for Northern Development

A re-elected Conservative Government led by Stephen Harper will continue to implement the recommendations of the McCrank Report, *Road to Improvement*, through the Northern Regulatory Improvement Initiative. These recommendations will yield significant improvements to our regulatory regimes for Northern natural resource projects, including process simplification, increased transparency, greater consistency and reduced administrative costs.

We will continue to support the work of the Major Projects Management Office (MPMO) created by this government to improve oversight, accountability and collaboration throughout the stages of federal project review. We will establish a satellite MPMO office in the North to deal with the unique challenges of northern projects.

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Stephen Harper's plan for Canadians

Supporting Canada's Farmers

A re-elected Conservative Government led by Stephen Harper will continue our strong support for Canada's farmers and farm communities.

- We will set aside $500 million over the next four years to work cooperatively with provinces and territories to implement an agricultural flexibility program that will allow them to cope with costs of production pressures, promote innovation, ensure environmental sustainability and respond to market challenges and opportunities important to each province and territory.
- We will continue to work with Western Canadian grain farmers to ensure that the results of the barley plebiscite are respected and that they are given the freedom to choose whether to sell grain on the open market or through the Canadian Wheat Board.
- We will continue our strong support for supply-managed sectors nationally and in international negotiations.
- We will invest $50 million in slaughterhouse capacity across the country to support our beef and dairy industries and other livestock producers.

A STRONG, UNITED, INDEPENDENT AND FREE CANADA

After two and a half years with Stephen Harper and the Conservatives, our country is stronger and more united than it has been in more than 40 years. Support for federalism in Quebec is at a modern-day high. We have cleaned up lobbying and campaign financing and have begun to reform our democratic institutions. We have started to rebuild our national defence and to play a bigger role on the world stage. Our abundant natural resources, especially in our vast, untapped Arctic, have become key strategic assets as the world focuses more on energy and the environment.

A re-elected Conservative Government will do more to build pride in Canada's institutions and to project our strength abroad.

Protecting Our Resources and Building a Clean Energy Superpower

A re-elected Conservative Government led by Stephen Harper will make sure that Canada secures its strategic resources, that our energy development is clean and environmentally sustainable and that Canadians will be the main beneficiaries of the development and export of our resources.

- *Reaffirming the Ban on the Bulk Transfer of Water*
  We will reaffirm the Canadian Government's position that NAFTA cannot require Canada to export bulk water to other NAFTA countries. We will work with the provinces and territories to strengthen the current ban and ensure a clear legislative prohibition on bulk water removals or export from Canadian drainage basins.

- *Promoting the Development of Northern Pipelines*
  A re-elected Conservative Government led by Stephen Harper will help reduce regulatory and other barriers to increasing our pipeline network in the Far North in order to bring oil and gas to markets in Canada and throughout the world.

- *Prohibiting the Export of Raw Bitumen to Higher Polluting Jurisdictions*
  A re-elected Conservative Government led by Stephen Harper will prevent any company from exporting raw bitumen (unprocessed oil from the oil sands) outside of Canada for upgrading in order to take advantage of lower pollution or greenhouse gas emissions standards elsewhere.

- *Promoting Biofuels, Wind and Other Alternatives*
  The Conservative Government is investing $1.5 billion over the next seven years in the production of biofuels, and requiring gasoline to contain 5 per cent renewable content by 2010 (2 per cent renewable content for diesel by 2012). We are investing $1.48 billion over four years into incentives to produce more wind, solar, geothermal and tidal power – an investment that will produce over 14 million megawatt hours of clean electricity, or enough to power a million homes. We will continue to make biofuels and renewable energy a key part of our environmental and energy strategy.

- *Generating 90% of Our Electricity From Non-Emitting Sources by 2020*
  As part of our Turning the Corner action plan, a re-elected Conservative Government will work to ensure that 90 per cent of Canadian electricity needs are provided by non-emitting sources such as hydro, nuclear, clean coal or wind power by 2020.

Defending Our Arctic Sovereignty

A re-elected Conservative Government led by Stephen Harper will continue, as major priorities, to protect the sovereignty and promote the development of Canada's Arctic and North. A re-elected government will:

- Introduce amendments to the Arctic Waters Pollution Prevention Act to extend our jurisdiction over polluting vessels to the edge of Canada's 200 mile exclusive economic zone.
- Require mandatory notification of any foreign vessels entering Canadian territorial waters.
- Assert Canada's rights over our Arctic waters, including the Northwest Passage, and work actively to complete the submission, by 2013, of scientific data on the extent of Canada's continental shelf under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.
- Build a world-class High Arctic Research Station that will be on the cutting edge of Arctic issues, including environmental science and resource development.

Reforming or Abolishing the Senate

The Conservatives and Stephen Harper believe that the current Senate must be either reformed or abolished. An unelected Senate should not be able to block the will of the elected House in the 21st century.

As a minimum, a re-elected Conservative Government will reintroduce legislation to allow for nominees to the Senate to be selected by voters, to provide for Senators to serve fixed terms of not longer than eight years, and for the Senate to be covered by the same ethics rules as the House of Commons.

Offering Fair Representation in the House of Commons

A re-elected Conservative Government led by Stephen Harper will introduce legislation to move closer towards representation by population in the House of Commons for Ontario, British Columbia and Alberta, while protecting the seat counts of other provinces.

Reforming Public Appointments

A re-elected Conservative Government led by Stephen Harper will continue to reform appointments to federal agencies, boards, commissions and Crown corporations.

- We will establish a task force to report within one year on unnecessary federally appointed positions that can be eliminated, with a target of reducing federal appointments by 10 per cent overall.
- We will work to ensure that appointees to federal agencies, boards, commissions and Crown corporations reflect the diversity of Canada in language, gender, region, age and ethnicity.
- We will appoint members to the Public Appointments Commission. The Commission will oversee the selection process for appointments to federal agencies, boards, commissions and Crown corporations, as well as develop guidelines, review and approve the selection processes for appointments and report publicly on the Government's compliance with the guidelines.

While the creation of the Commission was authorized by the Federal Accountability Act brought in by the current government, the previous Parliament blocked the appointment of several distinguished Canadians from sitting on the Commission. A re-elected Conservative Government will ensure that the Public Appointments Commission gets up and running.

Making Government More Accountable for Taxpayers' Money

A re-elected Conservative Government led by Stephen Harper will require all federal departments and agencies to produce detailed quarterly financial statements.

Ending Insider Loans to Political Candidates

A re-elected Conservative Government led by Stephen Harper will implement legislation, obstructed and delayed in the previous Parliament, which would prevent candidates for federal political office from taking out large private loans on non-commercial terms.

Respecting the Provinces and Territories, Establishing a Charter of Open Federalism

A re-elected Conservative Government led by Stephen Harper will respect the jurisdiction of the provinces and territories in the Constitution Act, 1867, and will enshrine our principles of federalism in a new Charter of Open Federalism.

Limiting the Federal Spending Power

A re-elected Conservative Government led by Stephen Harper will ensure that any new shared-cost program in an area of provincial or territorial responsibility has the consent of the majority of provinces to proceed, and that provinces should be given the right to opt out of the federal program with compensation, so long as the province offers a similar program with similar accountability structures.

Ensuring the CRTC Responds to Regional and Linguistic Needs

A re-elected Conservative Government led by Stephen Harper will respect the unique needs of French-language broadcasting services in Quebec by guaranteeing alternating French- and English-speaking Chairpersons of the CRTC and that one of the two Vice-Chairpersons will be from each official language group. At least 25 per cent of the CRTC commissioners will be French-language speakers, appointed in consultation with Quebec and groups representing linguistic minorities. Hearings related to French-language or Quebec broadcasters will be heard by panels consisting of a majority of French-language or Quebec CRTC members.

Supporting TV5 International French Language Broadcasting

A re-elected Conservative Government led by Stephen Harper will increase funding for TV5, the international French-language television network, by $25 million over the next five years.

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Stephen Harper's plan for Canadians

Promoting Canada's Arts and Culture

A re-elected Conservative Government led by Stephen Harper will maintain financial support for arts and culture at or above existing levels, while continuing to improve the effectiveness of allocations wherever possible. The current government has already invested more in arts and culture than the previous government, including an additional $30 million for the Canada Council for the Arts, $9 million to improve our national museums, $30 million per year to support arts and heritage festivals and renewed $60 million in additional funding in each of the last two years for the CBC. We will continue our record of strong support for the arts.

- A re-elected Conservative Government led by Stephen Harper will create a new, refundable tax credit on up to $500 of eligible fees for children under 16 who participate in eligible arts or cultural activities, such as music lessons, drama or art classes.
- A re-elected Conservative Government will not reintroduce the Bill C-10 proposals to change film and video tax credit eligibility. Although these proposals were approved unanimously by the House of Commons, we will take into account the serious concerns that have been expressed by film creators and investors.

Instilling Pride in Canadian History and Identity

A re-elected Conservative Government led by Stephen Harper will take steps to help celebrate Canadian history and identity and develop a stronger sense of national citizenship. This year, Canada celebrates the 400th anniversary of the establishment of Quebec City, which marked the foundation of the Canadian state. As Canada approaches other important historical milestones, such as the 400th anniversary of our first English settlement in Cupids, Newfoundland and Labrador in 2010, the 200th anniversary of the War of 1812 and the 150th anniversary of Confederation in 2017, a Conservative Government will act to ensure that these occasions achieve the national recognition they deserve.

Supporting Sport and Amateur Fitness

A re-elected Conservative Government led by Stephen Harper will continue support for sport and amateur fitness in Canada, at both the elite and recreational levels. We will also enhance the Children's Fitness Tax Credit by making it refundable.

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Stephen Harper's plan for Canadians

Building on the Canada First Defence Strategy

A re-elected Conservative Government led by Stephen Harper will continue rebuilding the Canadian Forces and providing the equipment that our Navy, Army and Air Force require. We are committed to a Canada First Defence Strategy that will provide predictable growth for Canada's defence budget, increase the size of our forces to 70,000 regular and 30,000 reserves. The Strategy will also invest $45 to $50 billion over the next 20 years in the purchase of major equipment, including replacements for our destroyers and frigates, maritime patrol, search and rescue, fighter aircraft and land vehicle fleets.

We will ensure that we acquire the ships, aircraft, vehicles and other equipment our Forces need in a manner that ensures our troops have the best possible equipment and that taxpayers' dollars are prudently spent. A re-elected Conservative Government will leverage these dramatic increases in defence procurement to ensure that new high-technology jobs are created in Canada through a combination of buying Canadian-made defence equipment and securing high-value industrial benefits when equipment is purchased abroad.

Supporting Canada's Mission in Afghanistan

A re-elected Conservative Government led by Stephen Harper will continue to support Canada's military and development mission in Afghanistan and will respect the terms of the Parliamentary resolution passed in March, 2008. Under this resolution, Canada's military mission in Kandahar will continue until July, 2011 now that that NATO and allied forces have agreed to provide additional troops and resources in Kandahar. Canada's military mission in Afghanistan will cease by the end of 2011.

Supporting Canada's Veterans

A re-elected Conservative Government led by Stephen Harper will continue to improve the lives of Canada's veterans. We will:

- Restore Veterans Allowances for veterans living in Canada for more than 10 years who fought for Commonwealth or Allied Forces during World War II or the Korean War.
- Increase funeral and burial assistance rates for veterans to bring the rates for veterans in line with those of active duty Canadian Forces and RCMP officers.

Promoting Canada's Democratic Ideals Abroad

A re-elected Conservative Government led by Stephen Harper will make the promotion of Canada's democratic values on the world stage a major focus of our foreign policy. We will establish a new, non-partisan democracy promotion agency that will help emerging democracies build democratic institutions and support peaceful democratic change in repressive countries.

Continuing Canada's Support for International Development

A re-elected Conservative Government will continue Canada's strong support for Overseas Development Assistance and continue efforts to make foreign aid more effective in achieving development goals. Canada is on track to double aid to Africa by 2008-09, and by 2010 to double overall foreign aid over 2005 levels.

ENSURING HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL WELL-BEING

Canadian families are concerned about the quality of the air we breathe and the water we drink. They are also concerned about pollutants and chemicals found in our food, environment and consumer products. The Conservatives, led by Stephen Harper, have acted to address these concerns. We are establishing tough regulations on greenhouse gases and air pollution. We have preserved vast land and marine areas to ensure that the beauty and biodiversity of our country are preserved for future generations. We have taken measures to protect consumers by banning toxic chemicals and creating new truth in labelling guidelines to make sure Canadians know what they are getting when food products are labelled "Product of Canada" and "Made in Canada".

A re-elected Conservative Government led by Stephen Harper will do more to preserve our environment and protect the health and well-being of Canadians.

Developing a Cap and Trade System to Cut Pollution and Greenhouse Gas Emissions

A re-elected Conservative Government led by Stephen Harper will implement our Turning the Corner action plan to reduce Canada's greenhouse gas emissions in absolute terms by 20 per cent over 2006 levels by 2020. We will work with the provinces and territories and our NAFTA trading partners in the United States and Mexico, at both the national and state levels, to develop and implement a North America-wide cap and trade system for greenhouse gases and air pollution, with implementation to occur between 2012 and 2015.

Ensuring Tougher Enforcement of Environmental Laws

A re-elected Conservative Government led by Stephen Harper will introduce a new Environmental Enforcement Act to strengthen and consolidate enforcement and penalty provisions in existing environmental legislation. This act will establish a team of specialized environmental prosecutors, increase inspection and seizure powers and increase fines and penalties for violators. We will establish a searchable database that tells the public the details of a corporation's convictions for environmental crimes and we will require each corporation convicted of an environmental crime to notify shareholders of its conviction and punishment.

Conserving Our Land and Water

A re-elected Conservative Government led by Stephen Harper will continue to adopt measures to conserve more of Canada's untouched lands and waters. We will continue to work to complete our national parks system to ensure that all of Canada's natural regions are represented. We have already announced the expansion of the Nahanni National Park and the creation of the Lancaster Sound Marine Conservation Area.

Strengthening Environmental Laws to Deal with Toxic Chemicals

A re-elected Conservative Government led by Stephen Harper will strengthen the *Canadian Environmental Protection Act* to help control or reduce the environmental and human health impacts of chemical substances. We are continuing to assess 200 high-priority chemical substances – such as Bisphenol-A, which the government recently banned from use in baby bottles – to determine whether they are safe and how they can be used safely or otherwise removed from our household products.

Improving Food Safety

A re-elected Conservative Government led by Stephen Harper will continue to implement the Food Safety Action Plan, which over the next four years will invest more than $160 million in the Canadian Food Inspection Agency to hire new inspectors, better track imports and improve safety systems.

A re-elected Conservative Government will proceed with an impartial third-party investigation of the recent listeriosis outbreak.

Supporting Research and Improving Treatment for Major Diseases

The Conservative Government is proud of its record in working to fight some of the gravest diseases facing Canadian families like cancer, spinal cord injury and mental illness. We established the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer and the Mental Health Commission of Canada and supported the Spinal Cord Injury Translational Research Network of the Rick Hansen Foundation.

A re-elected Conservative Government will continue to take creative measures to tackle major lung, heart and neurological diseases.

We will also work toward bringing an end to discriminatory life insurance practices.

Increasing the Number of Physicians and Nurses in Canada

A re-elected Conservative Government led by Stephen Harper will take additional steps to ensure that Canada's communities and hospitals have more doctors and nurses where they are most needed.

Protecting Children with Tougher Laws on Tobacco Packaging

A re-elected Conservative Government led by Stephen Harper will help to prevent the exploitation of children by the tobacco industry by setting a minimum package size for cigarillos that is less affordable for children, prohibiting flavour and additives that would appeal to children, and banning all tobacco advertising and promotion in print and electronic media which may be viewed and read by youth.

Encouraging Sports, Fitness and Arts and Cultural Activities Among Children in Lower-Income Families

A re-elected Conservative Government will extend the benefit of the existing Children's Fitness Tax Credit and the new Children's Art Tax Credit to lower-income families that pay little or no income tax by making both credits fully refundable.

PROTECTING THE SAFETY AND SECURITY OF CANADIANS

Stephen Harper and the Conservatives have taken decisive steps to crack down on crime and ensure the safety and security of our neighbourhoods and communities. We have put in place mandatory prison sentences for gun crimes, toughened provisions for Dangerous Offenders to ensure that the most violent predators are imprisoned indefinitely and raised the age of protection from 14 to 16 to protect youth from adult sexual predators.

A re-elected Conservative Government will do more to strengthen the safety and security of our justice system.

Preventing Troubled Youth from Joining Gangs

A re-elected Conservative Government led by Stephen Harper will increase funding for the Youth Gang Prevention Fund, which helps fund community groups that work with troubled youth to prevent them from becoming involved in gang violence. We will increase funding to $10 million per year and extend this program until 2013.

Ensuring Responsibility and Rehabilitation for Young Offenders

A re-elected Conservative Government led by Stephen Harper will replace Canada's young offenders' law with new, balanced legislation that focuses on deterrence and responsibility. The new law will make the primary goal of the legislation to protect society and the primary goal of sentencing to discourage others from committing crimes. The law will ensure that young offenders who are convicted of very serious and violent crimes will face appropriate sentences and that upon conviction they will be named. As under the old law, the age at which the sentencing provision applies (14, 15 or 16) will be determined in each province.

Replacing Automatic Release with Earned Parole

A re-elected Conservative Government led by Stephen Harper will replace the automatic release of prisoners after serving two-thirds of their sentence with earned parole for behaviour and rehabilitation in prison.

Ending House Arrest for Serious Crimes

In the last Parliament, the Conservative Government introduced legislation to prevent conditional sentences, such as house arrest, from being imposed on persons convicted of serious crimes such as robbery, arson, home invasion, impaired driving causing death and kidnapping. Unfortunately, the opposition parties voted together to ensure that numerous serious crimes would still be punishable by house arrest.

A re-elected Conservative Government will amend the *Criminal Code* to make sure that serious crimes, including serious property offences, are not eligible for house arrest.

Eliminating the "Faint Hope" Clause to Protect Victims and their Families

A re-elected Conservative Government led by Stephen Harper will repeal the *Criminal Code's* "faint hope clause", which allows even the most serious criminals to seek early release and put their victims and victims' families through the pain of a parole hearing. The law will also be amended retrospectively to prevent previously convicted multiple murderers from receiving additional parole hearings before the end of their sentences.

Getting Tough with Gangs and Organized Crime

A re-elected Conservative Government led by Stephen Harper will introduce new laws to target biker gangs and other organized criminal groups. Any murder committed in a gang-related context will be deemed first-degree murder and a new criminal offence carrying a mandatory prison sentence will be created for drive-by shootings.

Allowing Canadian Victims to Sue the Sponsors of Terrorism

A re-elected Conservative Government led by Stephen Harper will introduce legislation to allow Canadians who have been affected by terrorism to sue the sponsors of terrorist organizations, including to recover funds from states that are designated as sponsors of terrorism.

Cracking Down on Drug Crime with Mandatory Prison Sentences

A re-elected Conservative Government led by Stephen Harper will continue efforts to change Canada's drug laws to ensure that serious drug crimes — such as trafficking and running large cannabis grow operations or crystal methamphetamine labs — face mandatory prison sentences.

Protecting Pregnant Women Against Violence

A re-elected Conservative Government led by Stephen Harper will amend the *Criminal Code* to make the pregnancy of a woman an aggravating factor in sentencing if a woman is assaulted or killed. This new legislation will not open the issue of fetal rights.

A Conservative Government will not initiate or support any legislation to regulate abortion.

Introducing Tougher Penalties for Impaired Driving Causing Death

A re-elected Conservative Government led by Stephen Harper will abolish conditional sentences and introduce mandatory prison sentences for impaired driving causing bodily harm or death.

Ending the Ineffective Long-Gun Registry and Reduce Guns in our Streets

A re-elected Conservative Government led by Stephen Harper will ensure that all firearms belong to licensed gun owners, and that all restricted firearms, including handguns, are registered. But we will end the wasteful, ineffective long-gun registry.

Instead, the Conservative Government will direct resources to measures that will actually reduce the number of guns on Canadian streets, including investment in better enforcement at our borders.

As a first step, a re-elected Conservative Government will launch a Joint Force Land and Marine Border Patrol Pilot Project with the Customs and Border Services Agency and the RCMP to patrol unguarded U.S. road and marine crossings to Canada in Quebec.

Requiring Mandatory Registration and DNA Sampling for All Sex Offenders and Dangerous Offenders

A re-elected Conservative Government led by Stephen Harper will require automatic inclusion for all serious sexual offences in the National Sex Offender Registry. The registry will include mandatory DNA sampling of all those convicted or currently in custody on such offences and will permit police to use the registry as a proactive investigative tool to prevent further offences from occurring.

COSTING THE PLAN

The measures listed in this plan offer a clear choice to Canadians. Our opponents are making grandiose and expensive promises that would require massive tax hikes or deficits, or both. In contrast, Stephen Harper and the Conservative Party propose modest and affordable steps that will improve the lives of Canadians while maintaining the health of our national finances.

Our proposals build on the fiscal successes that we have achieved during our first term in office, including three balanced budgets, $37 billion in debt paydown, large scale tax reductions for Canadian families and businesses, unemployment rates near their lowest level in a generation and the strongest fiscal position among the G7 countries.

Our plan's budgeting is based on the revenue projections in Budget 2008. These are the most up-to-date projections released by the Department of Finance, and they remain consistent with the most recent published private sector forecasts for government revenues.

These projections do not include any changes made since Budget 2008. Most notably, they do not include the $4.2 billion in revenues from the Advanced Wireless Spectrum (AWS) auction, since the proper accounting profile across time for AWS auction proceeds has not yet been determined.

Plan Commitments and Budget Balances

As shown in the table below, our plan is fully costed and affordable. Following implementation, we project an operating balance of $8 billion over this and the next four years.

MEASURES IN PLAN	COSTING (MILLIONS OF DOLLARS)	
COST OF LIVING AND QUALITY OF LIFE	**FOURTH YEAR COST (FULL IMPLEMENTATION)**	**CUMULATIVE COST (2008-2013)**
Diesel Tax Cut	730	2,265
Support for Caregivers	100	315
Support for Homebuyers	240	680
Support for Families	180	590
Support for Seniors	435	1,070
Support for Consumer Protection	15	45
Support for Housing	*	*
Support for Self-Employed Parents	**	**
JOBS FOR THE FUTURE		
Support for Regional Economic Growth	185	600
Support for Manufacturers and Resource Industries	460	1,660
Support for Small Business	60	220[1]
Support for Farmers	100[2]	300[2]
Support for Older Workers	20[3]	60[3]
Support for Tourism	*	*
A STRONG, UNITED, INDEPENDENT AND FREE CANADA		
Support for Arts and Culture	155	435
Support for Veterans	55	185
Support for Trade Promotion	*	*
Support for Democracy Abroad	*	*
ENSURING HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL WELL-BEING		
Support for Health and Fitness	40	165
Support for Environmental Enforcement	15[4]	50[4]
Support for Food Safety	*	*
PROTECTING THE SAFETY AND SECURITY OF CANADIANS		
Support for Stronger Justice	10	30[5]
TOTAL PLAN COST	2,800	8,670
CURRENT PROJECTED BUDGETARY BALANCE	5,300	16,700
POST-PLAN PROJECTED BUDGETARY BALANCE	2,500	8,030

* Paid for from existing funding within the fiscal framework
** Paid for through Employment Insurance fund
1 Net cost to fiscal plan does not include existing $75 million for small business venture capital fund
2 Net cost to fiscal plan does not include $60 million in fourth year ($250 million cumulative cost) in unallocated program funding
3 Net cost to fiscal plan does not include existing $90 million Targeted Initiative for Older Workers
4 Net cost to fiscal plan does not include $65 million in existing funding for environmental enforcement
5 Net cost to fiscal plan does not include existing $12 million for Youth Gang Prevention Fund

HARPER LEADERSHIP 08

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