



## TPP compromises access to generic drugs: Justin Trudeau must make his position clear

Social and labour organizations are urging the leader of the Liberal Party of Canada, Justin Trudeau, to clarify his position on the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). In an open letter, they expose the fact that the TPP will slow down the introduction of generic medication to the market. This will force Canadians and residents of the other signatory countries who depend on life-saving medication to buy higher-cost brand name drugs for a longer period of time.

“The TPP is a bad deal for anyone who relies on prescription medication. This is why it’s important to act now” states the open letter. “If you support the TPP, Canadians should know that before they vote. Your opponents have made their positions clear, Stephen Harper supports this agreement and Thomas Mulcair opposes it”.

The open letter was sent by the national chairperson of The Council of Canadians, Maude Barlow; the national president of the Canadian Union of Public Employees, Paul Moist; the national president of the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions, Linda Silas; the national coordinator of the Canadian Health Coalition, Melissa Newitt; the national president of the National Union of Public and General Employees, James Clancy; the executive director of the Pivot Legal Society, Katrina Pacey; and the executive director of the Canadian Association of Community Health Centres, Scott A. Wolfe.

Below is the open letter addressed to Justin Trudeau:

*October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2015*

*Dear Mr. Trudeau,*

*To begin, we would like to congratulate you on your campaign to date. It has been one of the longest campaigns in Canadian history that we’re sure has tested your limits.*

*But it’s not over yet. In fact, these final days have become even more important. One of the most important issues that will affect everyday Canadians for years to come has landed squarely at our feet – the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP).*

*Canadians pay the second highest prices for drugs in the world. If the TPP passes, this unfortunate fact will become permanent. Furthermore, if the TPP passes it will make it much harder for Canada to establish the Universal Prescription Drug program roundly supported by all Canadians.*

*In 2006, the Conservative government amended the Food and Drug Regulations to increase “data exclusivity” for brand-name drugs from five years to eight years. This move keeps generic drugs off the market for longer, obliging governments and consumers to purchase higher-cost brand name drugs for a longer period of time.*

*On face value, this move looks as though it could have been easily reversed by a simple change in government. The Conservatives, however, are moving rapidly to enshrine this standard in the TPP agreement. If successful, this move would tie future government’s hands making it virtually impossible to reverse.*

*Aside from domestic concerns of making Canadians pay too much for their drugs, this policy would also have dramatic and immediate impacts on our international partners and their population. Many signatories, like Vietnam, have standards that allow generic drugs to enter their domestic markets sooner. The TPP will reverse that, forcing them to raise the price of life-saving drugs for those who can least afford it.*

*Clearly you can see that the TPP is a bad deal for anyone who relies on prescription medication. This is why it's important to act now. If you support the TPP, Canadians should know that before they vote. Your opponents have made their positions clear, Stephen Harper supports this agreement and Thomas Mulcair opposes it.*

*With just a week left in this campaign we implore you to immediately take a strong position and oppose the TPP. Now is the time to raise your voice and tell Canadians you refuse to support a deal that will hurt anyone who relies on life-saving drugs.*

*Leadership requires action in the face of tough choices – now is the time to act Mr. Trudeau.*

*We eagerly await your support.*

*Sincerely,*

*Paul Moist, national president  
Canadian Union of Public Employees*

*Maude Barlow, national chairperson  
The Council of Canadians*

*Linda Silas, national president  
Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions*

*Melissa Newitt, national coordinator  
Canadian Health Coalition*

*James Clancy, national president  
National Union of Public and General Employees*

*Katrina Pacey, executive director  
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