

TOP TEN REASONS NOT TO VOTE CONSERVATIVE

CUPE
On the front line

**VOTE FOR
PUBLIC
SERVICES**



Make no mistake, the Conservative Party is the old Reform-Alliance in disguise!



THE CONSERVATIVES WANT TO SLASH PUBLIC SERVICES



Stephen Harper's Conservatives believe the role of government is to deliver "services that cannot be offered in a more efficient and effective way by the private sector."¹

Conservatives start from the view that services should be offered **by corporations** and believe that only when the private sector fails should government step in.



CONFUSED ABOUT WHAT CONSERVATIVES REALLY STAND FOR? IT'S NO WONDER!

Back in the Reform Party days, Harper supported a strategy of "calculated ambiguity" so that voters couldn't really tell what the Reform party stood for.² Now, like then, the Reform/Conservatives are being cagey about their plans to slash public services and axe social spending.³

The Conservatives would impose a law banning federal deficits. But this would remove one of the **key tools** governments have to respond when markets fail or the economy slows down.



THE CONSERVATIVES SUPPORT PRIVATE HEALTH CARE

Conservative leader Stephen Harper congratulated the Liberals on the 2003 Health Accord because it contains...

"NO RESTRICTIONS ON PRIVATE HEALTH CARE DELIVERY WITHIN THE PUBLIC SYSTEM."



Harper sees no problem with provinces using the for-profit sector to deliver CAT scans, MRIs and elective surgery. His support for private for-profit health services is clear when he says:

"IT DOES NOT MATTER WHO DELIVERS HEALTH CARE; IT MATTERS WHO CAN RECEIVE IT."



The Conservative platform proposes "REASONABLE" rather than "UNIVERSAL" access to health care! Canadians should be very concerned!

Harper says his position on private health care is not different from that of the Liberals.⁴

"THE DIFFERENCE IS THAT WE'VE BEEN HONEST ABOUT THIS AND THEY'VE LIED ABOUT IT"



Unfortunately, he may be right. The Liberals under Paul Martin have a very shaky commitment to publicly-funded, publicly-provided, universal health care.

WHY SHOULD WE BE WORRIED ABOUT PRIVATE HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS?

Privatized health care is much more expensive than publicly provided health care. In addition to all the normal costs of running health care facilities, private operators and their shareholders want their PROFITS.

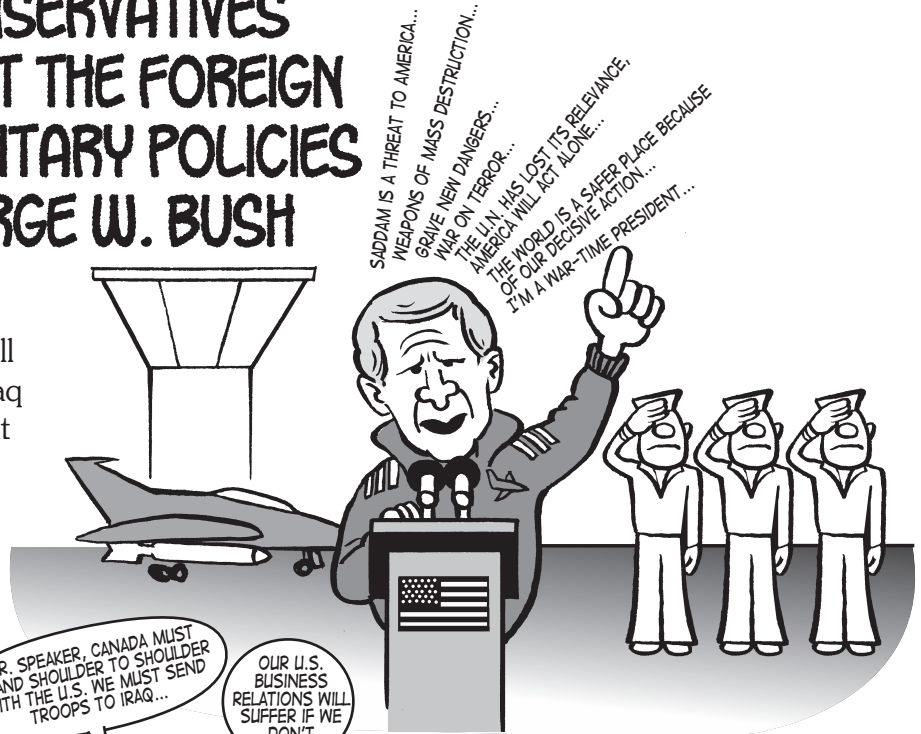


Not only that, private for-profit facilities have been known to cut all kinds of corners to improve the bottom line. Cutting corners puts patients at risk!!



THE CONSERVATIVES SUPPORT THE FOREIGN AND MILITARY POLICIES OF GEORGE W. BUSH

When the United States invaded Iraq, Conservative foreign affairs critic Stockwell Day said Canada should send troops to Iraq and expel the last remaining Iraqi diplomat from Canada.



WHY SHOULD WE BE WORRIED ABOUT "STAR WARS"?

While former US president Ronald Reagan is now dead, his insane idea of putting weapons in space is very much alive. According to Bush and company, missiles launched from space will be able to shoot down hostile missiles fired at the US from other countries. Most scientists agree, it won't work. But there's another reason people around the world are worried about weapons in space: remember the so-called "Bush Doctrine"....

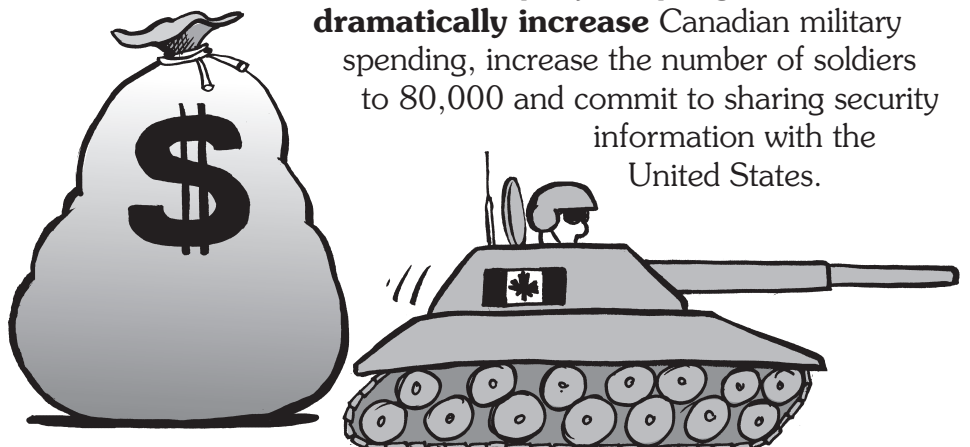


← Thank goodness Canadians didn't listen to this foolish advice.



Now, the Conservatives say they fully support the "star wars" missile defence plan of George W. Bush!

The Conservative party has pledged to **dramatically increase** Canadian military spending, increase the number of soldiers to 80,000 and commit to sharing security information with the United States.



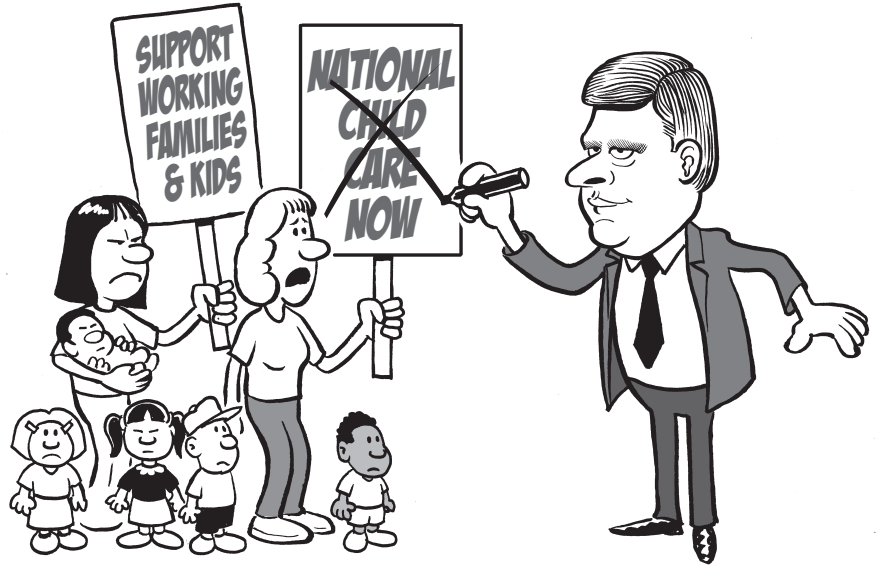
Soon, countries feeling threatened by US aggression will also want to get their weapons into space!



THE CONSERVATIVES OPPOSE A CHILDREN'S AGENDA

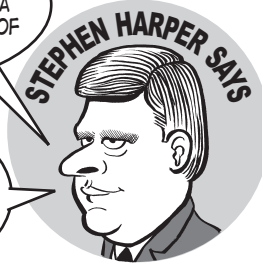
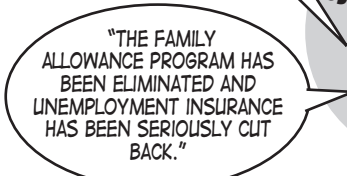
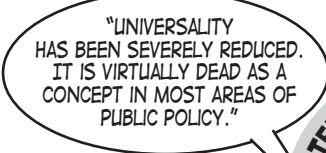
The Conservative party is opposed to a nation-wide public child care program.

The Conservative platform for this election proposes that children **as young as 14** be tried in adult court.



Stephen Harper is also on record as opposing "new money for social assistance in the name of 'child poverty'."

In 1994, he congratulated the Reform party for pushing the Liberals further to the right. He said there had been many "positive" developments as a result.



YIKES! THESE ARE SUPPOSED TO BE POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTS???



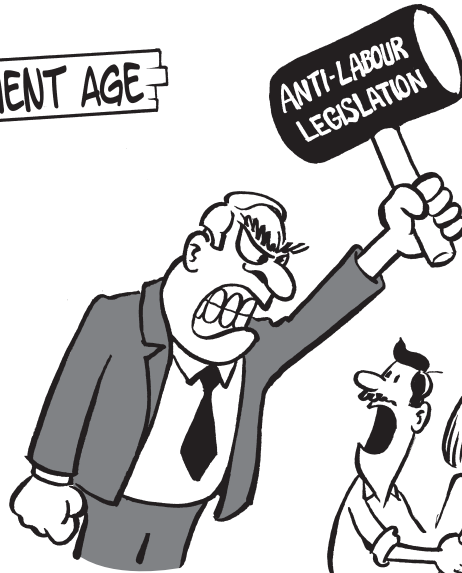
THE CONSERVATIVES WOULD NOT WORK FOR WORKERS

Stephen Harper says he would eliminate the Employment Insurance surplus by reducing premiums paid by employers and employees. But he wouldn't improve EI benefits for workers, nor take government action to create jobs.





The Conservatives would **increase** the retirement age and make workers wait **longer** for pension benefits.



Also, they would make it easier for employers to intimidate workers who speak up for their rights in the workplace and attack workers' rights to organize collectively and join unions. This past year they voted overwhelmingly against anti-scab legislation introduced by MP Monique Guay.



THE CONSERVATIVES OPPOSE AN AGENDA FOR EQUALITY

HARPER AND THE NATIONAL CITIZENS' COALITION

In 1997 Stephen Harper left the Reform party to become president of the National Citizens' Coalition. He said it was because the NCC...

"...CRITICIZES, ATTACKS AND GIVES ALTERNATIVES TO SUCH THINGS AS OFFICIAL MULTICULTURALISM, ENFORCED NATIONAL BILINGUALISM, A PRO-CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM, ANTI-FAMILY SOCIAL POLICIES, OPEN DOOR IMMIGRATION...."

STEPHEN HARPER SAYS



Under Harper, Conservative policies would make inequalities between women and men even worse. Harper says he is a "social conservative" which means he refuses to recognize the struggles of women and equality-seeking groups for social justice.



The Conservatives promise to cut social programs even more severely than the Liberals. Vowing to cut corporate taxes even more than Martin, the Conservatives say they want to lower taxes **to US levels**.⁵

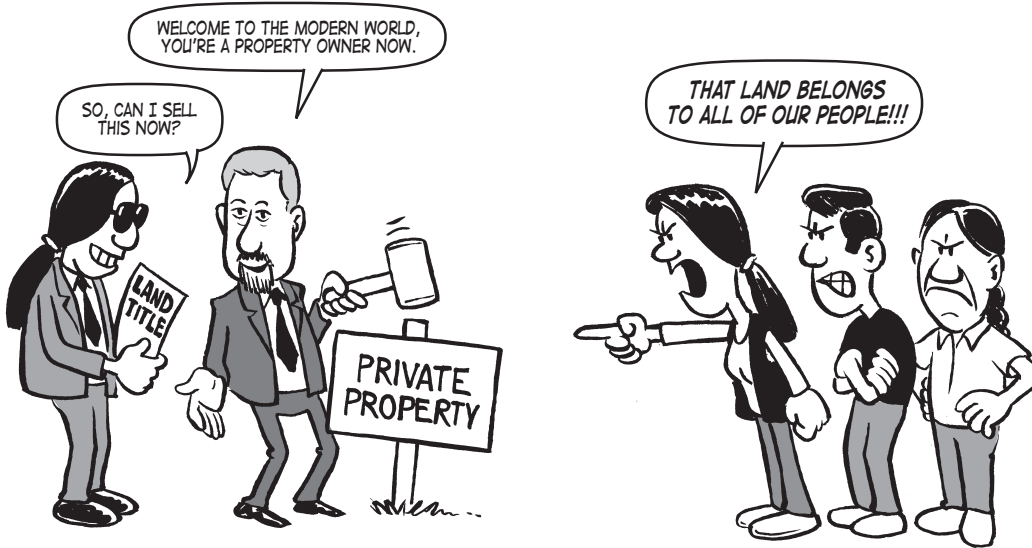


This would be very bad news for women, children, new immigrants and the many other Canadians who depend on healthy social programs.



THE CONSERVATIVES DO NOT SUPPORT COLLECTIVE PROPERTY RIGHTS FOR ABORIGINAL PEOPLE

Conservative MP Chuck Strahl is on record arguing that individual aboriginal people should have the right to buy and sell ancestral lands that have always been held in common by First Nations.⁶ The Conservative platform says it would transfer property rights to aboriginal people on an individual basis.



IT'S DÉJÀ REFORM ALL OVER AGAIN

The Conservatives are continuing the Reform aboriginal policy of old. For example, Conservative candidate Cumant Grewal was part of the shameful filibuster of the historic Nisga'a Treaty in December 1999 when the Reform party tried to scuttle passage of the treaty by presenting 471 amendments during an exhausting 42-hour debate.

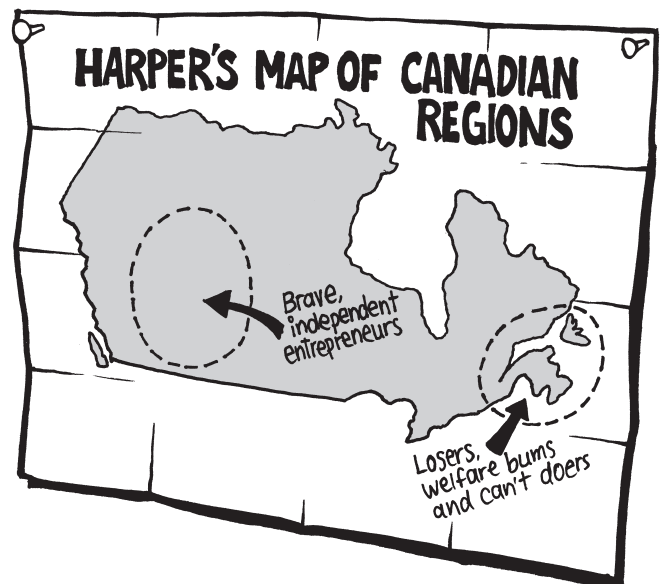


THE CONSERVATIVES BLAME REGIONAL INEQUALITY ON THE REGIONS

The Conservative platform on regional development would focus entirely on deregulation and incentives for business. Harper **blames the regions themselves** for uneven development. In 2002, he said:

"THERE'S UNFORTUNATELY A VIEW OF TOO MANY PEOPLE IN ATLANTIC CANADA THAT IT'S ONLY THROUGH GOVERNMENT FAVOURS THAT THERE'S GOING TO BE ECONOMIC PROGRESS...."

"THAT KIND OF 'CAN'T DO' ATTITUDE IS A PROBLEM IN THIS COUNTRY BUT IT'S OBVIOUSLY MORE SERIOUS IN REGIONS THAT HAVE HAD HAVE-NOT STATUS FOR A LONG TIME."⁷





THE CONSERVATIVES OPPOSE THE KYOTO ACCORD ON GLOBAL WARMING

WHAT'S WRONG WITH HARPER'S VIEW ON KYOTO?

People like George W. Bush and Stephen Harper like to cast doubt on the science of global warming. But independent scientists around the world overwhelmingly agree: global warming is happening at an alarming rate, it is due to greenhouse gas emissions, and if we don't take action soon, it could be catastrophic. It's true that the Kyoto Accord will do little to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The targets are too modest. Does that mean we should withdraw from the agreement? **Absolutely not!** Kyoto is only the critical **first step** in an international effort to tackle global warming. Without Kyoto, there may be no hope.

82% of Canadians support the Kyoto accord, but **Stephen Harper doesn't!**⁸ The Alliance/Conservatives fought hard against the Kyoto Accord. They are big supporters of the **oil industry's view** — that Canada can ignore its international obligations to reduce emissions that contribute to global warming.



With Stephen Harper's Conservatives, pollution and smog would increase and Canada would do little to reduce the harmful emissions that are contributing to droughts and damaging human health worldwide.



"[KYOTO IS] THE WORST INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENT THIS COUNTRY HAS EVER SIGNED."



82% of Canadians SUPPORT KYOTO!



THE CONSERVATIVES CARE MORE ABOUT PRIVATE CORPORATIONS THAN THE PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS THAT MAKE CANADA UNIQUE

The top priorities for the Conservatives are **further cuts to government** and an **expanded role for the private sector**.

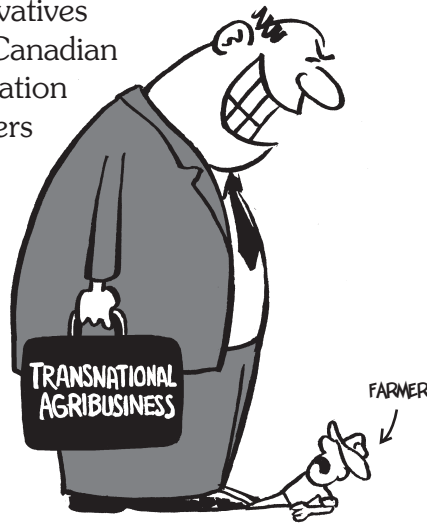


"WE DO NEED DEEPER AND BROADER TAX CUTS, FURTHER REDUCTIONS IN DEBT, FURTHER DEREGULATION AND PRIVATIZATION..."

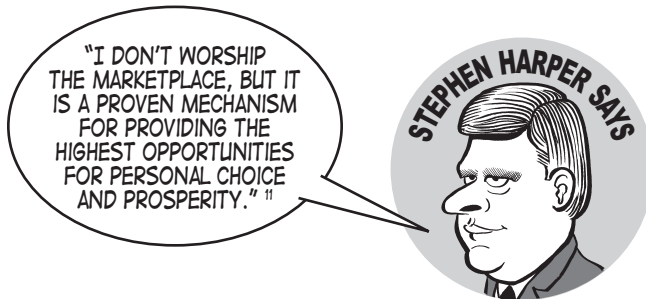
"...THE PUBLIC ARGUMENTS FOR DOING SO HAVE ALREADY BEEN WON."⁹



For example, the Conservatives would do away with the Canadian Wheat Board, an organization that helps all wheat farmers get fair prices on world markets. Getting rid of the Wheat Board will leave individual farmers to deal with merciless transnational agribusiness giants.



And Stephen Harper recently spoke in favour of “commercializing” CBC radio and television.¹⁰



NOTES

1. Pocket Policy: Guide for Federal Conservative Candidates, 2004 p.2
2. Murray Dobbin, Preston Manning and the Reform Party (Halifax: Goodread biographies, 1992), xvi
3. “Harper taking a moderate approach”, Toronto Star, May 06, 2004, A6
4. Apr. 28, 2004 Toronto Star, Liberals engulfed by furor over health care, Canadian Press, Ottawa www.tommydouglas.ca/articles/articles-april04.htm
5. Heather Scofield and Brian Laghi, “Liberals slam Harper’s tax-cut plan as ‘ruthless’”, Globe and Mail, May 18, 2004
6. Chuck Strahl, Tuesday November 7, 1995 Hansard, www.parl.gc.ca/english/hansard/previous/256_95-11-07/256GO1E.html
7. Stephen Harper, as quoted in the Toronto Sun, May 31, 2002
8. “82% of Canadians Support Kyoto – Harper Doesn’t.” Sierra Club of Canada Media Release, June 8, 2004
9. Stephen Harper, “Rediscovering the Right Agenda”, Report Magazine, June 2003 www.cciinc.org/politicalaffairs/060103.html
10. http://www.friends.ca/News/Friends_News/archives/articles05190403.asp
11. Stephen Harper, as cited in Kevin Michael Grace, “Getting back on track: The Canadian Alliance’s newly elected leader Stephen Harper, says his task now is to turn his party, often viewed as a regional protest movement, into an alternative government.” Montreal Gazette, March 22, 2002

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Designed and illustrated by Tony Biddle
Adapted from a previous version of “Top Ten Reasons Not to Vote Conservative”

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