

22 August 2021

Response from Canada's Conservatives to the Provincial-Territorial Autism Network

Canada's Conservatives stands with Autistic Canadians and their families. We support the development of a National Autism Strategy to help Autistic Canadians live full lives.

This is an important initiative and will provide crucial benefits to Canadians on the autism spectrum, as well as to their families. Conservatives first endorsed the idea of a National Autism Strategy in 2019. The announcement was made by a member of the Conservative caucus, Mike Lake, alongside his son, Jaden, who himself is on the autism spectrum. Mr. Lake has spent years in the House of Commons advocating for greater rights and supports for Autistic Canadians.

It has been almost two years since the announcement that the government would develop a National Autism Strategy, but families are still waiting. The Liberal government has provided a great deal of lip service to this issue, but the autism community has yet to see any tangible benefit that will be provided to Autistic Canadians, their families, or their caregivers.

A Conservative government would prioritize this important initiative and ensure that Autistic Canadians receive the support they need and deserve in a reasonable timeframe. We believe that concrete action is necessary, and the rapid development of this strategy by 2023 is one thing we will do to provide relief to Autistic Canadians and their families. This will be accomplished while also prioritizing meaningful, in-depth consultation with the autism community. A National Autism Strategy should reflect the real, lived experience of Autistic Canadians and address the diverse set of needs seen in the autism community.

I would like to highlight a few other ways that Conservatives will support Autistic Canadians. Canada's Recovery Plan will double the Disability Supplement in the Canada Workers Benefit from \$744 to \$1,500, providing a major boost to lower-income Canadians with disabilities, on top of our increase in the Canada Workers Benefit.

To give more Canadians with disabilities access to financial support, we will reduce the number of hours required to qualify for the Disability Tax Credit and the Registered Disability Savings Plan from 14 to 10 hours per week.

Our changes will save a person with a disability made eligible for the tax credit or their family an average of \$2,100 per year. Making it easier to qualify for the tax credit will also make it easier to qualify for the Registered Disability Savings Plan, which provides up to \$3,500 per year in matching grants for Canadians with disabilities.

We look forward to continuing to work with the Provincial-Territorial Autism Network and the autism community on this important priority.