



September 15, 2008

**RE: Questionnaire**

Attached please find the response of Canada's New Democrats to your 2008 Election questionnaire. It is the policy of our party to respond on behalf of all New Democrat candidates.

Our full platform will be released shortly and our web site is updated with all of our latest information. To find out more, we encourage you to consult: [www.ndp.ca](http://www.ndp.ca)

Thank you for your interest in the views of Canada's New Democrats on the critical issues facing Canadians.

We appreciate your efforts to help voters make an informed decision on voting day.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jack Layton', with a long, sweeping flourish extending upwards and to the right.

Jack Layton  
Leader of Canada's New Democrats

## **Question 1**

New Democrats have always been strong supporters of public broadcasting, film, television and new media. The NDP has worked to get results for these important cultural industries by calling for:

- fair tax treatment for artists through tax averaging and exemption of the first \$30,000 copyright and certain royalty income;
- increased funding for the Canada Council for the support of artists;
- sustained funding for the Canadian Television Fund and Telefilm Canada;
- enhanced federal film incentives to encourage film and television production.

During this election, New Democrats will be announcing further measures to help the film, television and new media industries.

## **Question 2**

New Democrats also believe they must include clear targets for the creation of original Canadian drama production. The minimum expenditure requirement that was scrapped has allowed broadcasters to walk away from their obligation to ensure that Canadian airwaves tell Canadian stories. New Democrats will introduce better rules around Canadian content to ensure more made-in-Canada films, television and new media are enjoyed by everyday Canadians. and would work with film distributors to agree on targets and a strategy to screen and distribute domestic films in Canada.

Federal programs like PromArt and Trade Routes have helped turn Canada's multi-million dollar film, television and new media industries into an international force. While the Conservatives have made no secret of their disdain for cultural programs, to attack the economic viability of a major industry that creates thousands of well-paying jobs is ridiculous. It is important that programs like these are in place to further the growth and development of these industries.

## **Question 3**

Jack Layton and the New Democrats were quick to condemn the Conservative's changes to Canada's copyright laws. New Democrats are pushing for proper legislation that will ensure artists and creators are compensated for their work while allowing consumers reasonable rights of access. Over the past two years we have urged the Conservative government to consult with stakeholders and develop relevant legislation that would protect artists, innovators and consumers in the 21st century. However, this government has completely ignored all calls to bring forward reasonable copyright legislation and regrettably this bill is worse than originally feared. There is no evidence of any attempt to strike a reasonable balance to protect both either artists or consumers. Instead, C-61 represents a full capitulation to the U.S. corporate lobby and does not strike a balance between the needs of artists and consumers

#### **Question 4**

Canada's New Democrats believe Canadian cultural industries must be owned by Canadians and are concerned that Canadian independence and our valuable cultural assets are increasingly at risk, and the federal Conservative government does not seem to mind. To this end, we would work to ensure that Canadian television networks remain Canadian owned. We would also continue to promote an independent foreign policy, where Canada is a leader in negotiating fair trade deals that protect cultural diversity without interference from foreign interests.

#### **Question 5**

New Democrats understand that cultural professionals are at a considerable tax disadvantage. Their incomes fluctuate greatly from year to year. That's why Peggy Nash (Parkdale - High Park) introduced a motion in the House of Commons calling for tax fairness for Canadian artists. Until 1982 when tax averaging was abolished in Canada, self-employed workers could spread their taxes over more than one tax year so that they were not penalized by the system while others benefited from lower taxes on regular incomes and could rely on benefits for unemployment. New Democrats have long called for tax fairness for artists by introducing a system of tax averaging to provide fair and equitable tax treatment for Canadian artists.

#### **Question 6**

Jack Layton and the New Democrats have led the fight against the censorship provisions in Bill C-10. New Democrats believe that there is no appropriate role for the Minister of Canadian Heritage or the government in making subjective judgments about what is appropriate film or video content. In a country as diverse as Canada we must rigorously protect artistic freedom. Enshrining guidelines that seek to define what is "offensive", "odious" or "objectionable" are completely inappropriate. New Democrats are committed to reversing efforts to legislate censorship (as demonstrated by Bill C-10).