



Canadian Library Association
Association canadienne
des bibliothèques

2008 ELECTION CAMPAIGN KIT

MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD!

COUNTDOWN TO THE FEDERAL ELECTION

Get Active – Get Involved!

A federal election is upon us once again. This is a great time to make your concerns known to candidates who may represent you in the House of Commons. It is important that you take an active role during an election because if elected, these are the men and women who will shape public policy that affects you and other members of the library community across the country. CLA encourages all of its members to get involved in their local ridings.

There are many ways to get involved in a federal election. This kit outlines ways to get involved and provides you with the necessary tools to get out there and make library issues a priority in this campaign.

The current political landscape

Prior to the 40th general election, Parliament was in a minority government situation. Below is a chart illustrating seat numbers by party, as of September 2008. For more information on current MPs, visit: www.parl.gc.ca

Party	Number of Seats
<i>Conservative</i>	127
<i>Liberal</i>	95
<i>Bloc Québécois</i>	48
<i>NDP</i>	30
<i>Green</i>	1
Independent	3
Vacant	4
Total	308

The role of the opposition in shaping public policy has been increasingly important in this minority situation. Election time is no different. Remember to engage more than one political candidate; CLA's official stance is to be non-partisan. Campaigns are an uncertain time and the incumbent MP in your riding may not be re-elected.

CLA Contact Information: Executive Director, 613-232-9625 ext. 306; info@cla.ca

Groups that are not proactive risk being marginalized!

Tips to Increase your Involvement and Have an Impact on the 2008 Election:

1. **Obtain contact and background information** on your candidates by visiting the party websites:

www.conservative.ca
www.liberal.ca
www.blocquebecois.org
www.ndp.ca

2. **Write a letter** to the incumbent and/or candidate highlighting important issues.

** For a template letter, see page 10 in this kit*

3. **Make an appointment** to meet with your MP and/or candidates (usually no more than 15-30 minutes). Once you have met with a candidate, let us know how it went by filling out a questionnaire (page 11 of this kit).

4. **Making an individual contribution** to a political candidate/registered association/registered party.

** For details see **Federal Electoral Rules** on page 9 in this kit*

5. **Attend events the candidate will be at.** To find out about upcoming events, contact your candidate's campaign office or keep informed from the local newspaper.
6. **Attend events the PM or other opposition party leaders** will be at. To find out about upcoming events, contact the party office or keep informed from the local and national newspapers.
7. **Be ready** when candidates come knocking at your door. Ask pointed questions of the candidates. See key messages and sample questions (pages 4-8 of this kit).
8. **Vote** for the candidate that best represents your interests!

KEY MESSAGES

These are summaries of CLA's key messages. More detailed information on all of these points is available from the CLA website www.cla.ca, or from the CLA office.

1. Copyright

CLA, as well as many Canadians, continues to have growing concerns regarding proposed amendments to the *Copyright Act*. Three specific points of importance should be raised when discussing copyright:

First, any new copyright legislation must be carefully crafted so that it punishes copyright-infringing behaviour but does not prevent people from using content legally. That means no digital locks, or at least ensuring it is legal to bypass a lock if the actual use of the information is legal.

Second, the government needs to recognize that government documents and government data belong to all Canadians and that all Canadians should have liberal access to these materials.

Third, persons with perceptual disabilities must have the same right to access copyrighted materials as all Canadians have. This right should apply regardless of format in order to accommodate their particular needs. Legislation is required to give persons with perceptual disabilities access equity with others.

For more information on the Canadian Library Association's position on copyright, access *Unlocking the Public Interest* on the CLA website, www.cla.ca/copyright.

2. Library Book Rate

The Library Book Rate, a Canada Post service since 1939, provides a reduced rate for mailing library books from libraries to their users, as well as between libraries.

With over 2,000 libraries actively using the Library Book Rate and over one million Canadians benefiting from it annually, the Library Book Rate is an indispensable part of the service delivered by Canada's not-for-profit public, academic, school and special libraries.

This Rate supports and encourages the sharing of taxpayer-funded library books in Canada. At relatively little cost, it acts as a bridge between all Canadians, including the disabled, the shut-ins, and residents in remote locations. It is also a way of creating a more literate and knowing population, by helping, for example, students enrolled in distance education programs or Canadians pursuing lifelong learning goals.

It is vital that the Government of Canada guarantee support for this Rate beyond 2008. Permanent funding of \$5 million per year is needed in order to maintain a reduced rate of postage for library materials and support one million Canadians.

3. Removal of the GST on Reading Materials

The GST has eroded the ability of many Canadians to purchase books and other reading materials. The cost of reading material can be too expensive for lower income Canadians, thus creating a barrier for purchase. Fewer reading materials purchased from Canadian publishers means fewer Canadian stories shared, lower literacy levels, and because of diseconomies of scale, higher costs for those who can afford to purchase reading materials.

Removing the GST from all reading materials would be a concrete and vital step towards improving Canada's literacy rates and will support the Canadian publishing industry. This move will translate into a marked increase in Canada's productivity as individuals and corporations access information to support business development, especially for small and medium-sized enterprises. Beyond productivity, this tax policy change will afford Canadians a better opportunity to access our culture through the written word.

4. Library services for Canadians with print disabilities

According to Statistics Canada, three million Canadians are unable to read traditional print. This group has access to less than five percent of public library material in alternate format, such as Braille or audio books. The reasons for this huge gap in access to information between persons with a print disability and their print-reading peers are complex and will not be remedied without partnerships and resources from all levels of government, private industry and community-based organizations. A major factor is that there aren't enough books available in non-print formats.

CLA thanks the Government of Canada for its support for Library and Archives Canada's Initiative for Equitable Library Access (IELA). Funding of \$3 million is supporting IELA as it develops a nation-wide network of libraries to assist Canadians who are unable to read standard printed material.

Long-term funding is needed:

- For the production of alternate format reading materials (Braille, audio, e-text) to increase the percentage of library materials available to those with print disabilities, beyond the current five percent;
- To support the training and materials development for a new generation of librarians able to help these under-served Canadians.

5. The Community Access Program

Industry Canada's Community Access Program (CAP) provides Canadians with affordable public access to the Internet and the skills they need to use it effectively. CAP helps Canadians, wherever they live, to take advantage of emerging opportunities in the new global knowledge-based economy. Under CAP, public locations like schools, libraries and community centres act as "on-ramps" to the Information Highway, and provide computer support and training.

Libraries are valuable CAP providers, as they already play an essential role within their communities. Offering free access to information and technology, libraries are centres of learning literacy, information and innovation, acting as engines of both economic and social

development. They are the public's preferred point of Internet access, and are truly open to all.

CLA appreciates that the Government of Canada has been continuing the Community Access Program. However, from peak funding of \$40 million per year, CAP is at a reduced level of \$14.6 million for 2008-2009, and there is currently no commitment to carry it on in the new fiscal year.

It is absolutely crucial that the Community Access Program continue with long-term, sustainable funding, as it serves a vital role within all communities. CLA urges Industry Canada to continue and to enhance CAP.

6. Public Library Infrastructure

Public libraries are in need of further investment to build and/or upgrade their infrastructure: to increase access to the physically disabled; to become more energy-efficient, and to incorporate the latest information and communications technology (ICTs). Historically, the Government of Canada has not allocated extensive capital funding to public libraries, compared to its support of other heritage and community development institutions like museums and archives.

The new Building Canada Fund has five national priority funding categories, but excludes heritage and cultural infrastructure such as libraries, museums, archives and galleries. In order to better serve Canadians, regulatory changes are needed to encourage Building Canada infrastructure funding for heritage and cultural institutions including public libraries.

7. Support for libraries through Library and Archives Canada

Library and Archives Canada (LAC)'s National Archival Development Program (NADP) provides financial assistance to Canadian archives and related organizations to increase their capacity to preserve and make accessible unique archival materials about Canada and Canadians. This program provides \$1.1 million directly to archives; and an additional \$600,000 is provided to the Canadian Council of Archives (CCA), which is responsible for providing advice to LAC on the direction of the program and for the NADP's administration, including managing the adjudication of applications and the funding process.

LAC has the legislative authority to make similar investments in libraries, but has been unwilling to do so without additional funding. A targeted increase of \$1.7 million in the allocation to Library and Archives Canada for a National Library Development Program would be an excellent step in providing funding to assist local libraries in the preservation and dissemination of knowledge.

8. National Literacy Initiatives

Literacy continues to be a top priority for libraries and educational institutions, and is constantly receiving a flurry of media attention. CLA is committed to working with the government and its stakeholders to encourage literacy, advance literacy awareness, and promote literacy initiatives for the benefit of all Canadians. The implementation of a national

literacy strategy would play a key role in ensuring that all Canadians have an opportunity to achieve the vital skills for social and economic development.

9. **Net Neutrality**

Net Neutrality is the principle that all information or services sent over high-speed internet access should be treated equally, with no degradation or prioritization or privileges based on content, source, ownership or destination of information or service. In 2008, Net Neutrality became a very important issue in Canada.

The Telecommunication Policy Review Panel's report in 2006 included excellent suggestions in Recommendation 6-5 that would go a long way to protect Net Neutrality:

The *Telecommunications Act* should be amended to confirm the right of Canadian consumers to access publicly available Internet applications and content of their choice by means of all public telecommunications networks providing access to the Internet. This amendment should authorize the CRTC to administer and enforce these consumer access rights, take into account any reasonable technical constraints and efficiency considerations related to providing such access, and be subject to legal constraints on such access, such as those established in criminal, copyright and broadcasting laws.

CLA passed Resolution 2008-4 in support of Net Neutrality.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS

1. CLA, as well as many Canadians, continues to have growing concerns regarding proposed amendments to the *Copyright Act*. Can your party commit to introducing copyright legislation that would ensure users' rights are recognized in balance with the rights of creators and rights holders?
2. Literacy continues to be a top priority for libraries and educational institutions. Can your party commit to the implementation of a national literacy strategy?
3. The Library Book Rate, a Canada Post service since 1939, provides a reduced rate for mailing library books between libraries and from libraries to their users. What is your party willing to do to ensure that a reduced rate of postage for library materials is maintained in order to support one million Canadians?
4. Industry Canada's Community Access Program (CAP) provides Canadians with affordable public access to the Internet and the skills they need to use it effectively. What is your party willing to do to ensure that CAP stays alive, in order to help Canadians, wherever they live, take advantage of emerging opportunities in the new global knowledge-based economy?
5. Network (Net) Neutrality is the principle that all information or services sent over high-speed internet access should be treated equally, with no degradation or prioritization or privileges based on content, source, ownership or destination of information or service. In 2008, Net Neutrality became a very important issue in Canada. Where does your party stand on addressing Net Neutrality?

ELECTORAL FINANCE RULES

Changes to the *Canada Elections Act* introduced in the *Federal Accountability Act* have made significant changes to both whom can make political contributions and how much they are allowed to give. This document provides an outline of the rules governing contributions; should you have a question that is not answered here, please feel free to contact CLA's Government Affairs office at 613-233-8906.

Corporations, small- and medium-sized businesses, trade unions, and unincorporated associations are not permitted to make political contributions. Please note that this restriction includes a prohibition on non-monetary contributions, such as the donation of goods or services.

In any calendar year, individual Canadian citizens and permanent residents may contribute \$1,100 to each registered political party, and a total of \$1,100 to the various entities of each registered political party, including constituency associations, candidates, or individuals seeking a party's nomination. Individuals may also donate up to \$1,100 to the campaign of each non-affiliated or independent candidate and a total of \$1,100 annually to the various leadership contestants of a particular contest. Limits are calculated annually, so any donations made earlier in the year will reduce what you are able to contribute during an election. It is the responsibility of the contributor to ensure that they do not exceed donation limits; contributions of more than \$200 will be listed in Election Canada's electoral contribution database.

As an example, an individual would be allowed to make a \$400 donation to the Conservative riding association in Toronto Centre, give \$500 to the Conservative candidate in Ottawa South, and an additional \$200 to a Conservative nomination contestant in Halifax West. This individual would be unable to make further donations to Conservative candidates or riding associations during the year, but would still be able to donate up to \$1,100 directly to the Conservative party and make a similar series of donations to the other parties.

TEMPLATE LETTER

You may use this letter as a guide to writing to your candidates. Please personalize this letter to reflect your own situation. You can then print your letters on your letterhead and mail or fax it to your candidates. Don't forget that if your office is located in a different political riding than where you live, you may send letters to both sets of candidates.

DATE

CANDIDATE'S NAME
CANDIDATE'S ADDRESS

Dear Mr. or Mrs. NAME:

On behalf of the Canadian Library Association (CLA), I would like to congratulate you for running in the current federal election. CLA is Canada's largest national and broad-based library association, representing the interests of public, academic, school and special libraries, professional librarians and library workers, and all those concerned about enhancing the quality of life of Canadians through information and literacy.

During this election campaign, CLA is interested in assisting your campaign by providing information on issues currently facing Canadians. Key to the library community are:

- Copyright
- The Library Book Rate
- The GST on reading materials
- Library services for Canadians unable to read traditional print
- Industry Canada's Community Access Program
- Funding to improve public library buildings
- Support for libraries through Library and Archives Canada
- National literacy initiatives
- Controlling the flow of data on the Internet

I would be delighted to meet with you at your convenience to discuss any key issue further. I can be reached at PHONE NUMBER or by email at EMAIL ADDRESS.

If you have any questions, or would like to work with CLA on an announcement or initiative in your riding, please don't hesitate to contact Alana Fontaine, CLA Public Affairs, at 613-233-8906.

Sincerely,

ELECTION FEEDBACK FORM

PLEASE PRINT

Your name and role _____

Address _____

Name of candidate that you met with _____

Name of Riding _____

Political Party

- Liberal
- Conservative
- NDP
- Bloc
- Other (specify)

Duration of the Meeting

- 15 Minutes or less
- 15-30 Minutes
- 30 Minutes or more

Was the candidate knowledgeable of the issues facing the library community?

Yes

No

General comments and feedback from the meeting:

***Please print, complete and return by fax to Alana at (613) 230-2669 or by email at alana@impactcanada.com**