

2015 Federal Election Sport Questionnaire Ottawa

Candidate: Anita Vandenbeld, Liberal Party of Canada

Riding: Ottawa West-Nepean

Infrastructure and Facilities

Question 1: There is an estimated \$17 billion dollar deficit in sport and recreation facilities. Are you willing to support a dedicated infrastructure fund for sports and recreation facilities at the community level? If so, what level of funding are you willing to dedicate?

A Liberal government recognizes that physical activity is essential to the health of Canadians. As physical fitness levels decrease, so does the health and well-being of Canadians. We will work with the provinces and territories to reverse this trend, focusing on a strategy of promotion and prevention. Key to this is ensuring that Canadians have access to recreational facilities, and can participate in amateur sport at a local level.

A Liberal government will maintain the Children's Fitness Tax Credit. We will also go further to invest in the long-term health of Canadians and the economy. Liberals understand that investing in infrastructure is vital to creating middle class jobs today and sustained economic growth for years to come. Every dollar spent on public infrastructure grows and makes our economy more competitive, while also creating jobs, strengthening our cities and communities, and improving our health, well-being, and quality of life.

The timing has also never been more critical. Interest rates for new investment are at historic lows, our current infrastructure is aging, and Canada is in immediate need of a boost in economic growth. Each year over the next decade, we will steadily increase federal infrastructure investment. At full implementation, this will represent an annual additional investment of \$9.5 billion per year. This will almost double federal infrastructure investment to nearly \$125 billion – from \$65 billion – over ten years, which will be the largest new investment in infrastructure in Canadian history. The best investments we can make are those that generate economic growth and provide immediate and long-term social gain. A Liberal government will provide a new, dedicated funding envelope for social infrastructure. A Liberal government will make the smart infrastructure investments necessary to create more livable communities and help us build a better future for our children and grandchildren. This is in sharp contrast to the Harper government's decision to cut federal funding for recreational infrastructure at a time when it is in urgent need of both repair and expansion. A Liberal government will provide a new, dedicated funding envelope of \$20 billion for social infrastructure, which will prioritize investment in, among other things, recreational infrastructure.

Question 2: There is also across the country a critical problem with lack of access to sport and recreation facilities for those with a disability. Are you willing to include support in the infrastructure fund for accessibility initiatives?

Liberals are committed to building an accessible and inclusive society for all Canadians. Canadians with disabilities continue to face significantly higher rates of poverty and unemployment and unequal access to goods and services, including government services. We believe the federal government must work in concert with provinces and territories, as well as with Canadians with disabilities and their advocates, to build a truly equal society without barriers to participation.

The Liberal Party has a strong record of supporting Canadians with disabilities. It was a Liberal government that invested in employment and income supports for disabled Canadians, broadened eligibility for the Disability Tax Credit, and expanded the list of disability supports allowable under the Disability Supports Deduction. The Conservative government has paid lip service to the needs of Canadians with disabilities, claiming publicly to be acting yet failing to meet major pledges. Four years after ratifying the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Conservatives have yet to implement it. The Liberal Party of Canada pledges to fully implement the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and take substantive action to address the barriers faced by Canadians with disabilities.

Liberals believe that stronger support for amateur sport and physical activity leads to higher quality of life and ultimately to a more sustainable health-care system. When it comes to our health and well-being, Canadians want and expect political leaders to make real progress on the issues that intimately affect us and our families. These issues require a true partnership between the federal government and the provinces and a Liberal government will restore collaboration to the federal-provincial relationship. A Liberal government will call a federal-provincial meeting to reach a long-term agreement on health care funding and reengage in areas where there is direct federal responsibility, including health promotion.

Amateur/high performance sport

Question 3: High performance sport brings international attention to Canada and helps develop national identity and pride. Potential high performance athletes are identified and initially developed through a system of community sport organizations. As the progression to high performance athlete occurs, funding requirements increase. Federal government financial support has focused primarily on high-performance programs and not provided financial support at the community level. On a scale of 1-5, (where 5 is very important and 1 is not important at all?), how important do you believe it is to provide additional financial support for high performance development to community sporting organizations?

1 2 3 4 **5**

Comments:

Sport for Development

Question 4: Participation in sport can offer many benefits to communities. On a scale of 1 to 5, where 5 is maximum benefit and 1 is minimum benefit, please indicate how you rate the benefits provided by sport in each of these areas:

(Respond "5" for all)

- Promoting health and fitness – 1 2 3 4 **5**
- Reducing youth crime – 1 2 3 4 **5**
- helping new Canadians feel part of the community – 1 2 3 4 **5**
- supporting the growth and development of First Nations communities through greater access to sport-based educational and social programs – 1 2 3 4 **5**
- Building character and relationships – 1 2 3 4 **5**

In which of the above area(s) would you request funding for your community? Why?

We want to ensure that all Canadians have the tools to make healthy decisions. Promoting healthy and active lifestyles leads to higher quality lives and a more sustainable health care system. Despite world-class care and medical advances, the health of Canadians is deteriorating. We are all better off if the population is healthy, as health care costs are lower and Canadians are happier and more productive.

That is why a Liberal government will ensure that the federal government rebuilds its capacity to deliver on evidence-based decision-making. We will devote a fixed percentage of program funds to experimenting with new approaches to existing problems, instilling a culture of measuring results, innovation, and continuous improvement in how government serves the needs of Canadians.

Further, a Liberal government will mobilize the experience and knowledge of Canadians and incorporate their input into our decisions and evaluations of existing programs and policies. This approach will help to ensure that Canadians have the tools they need to make informed decisions about their health.

Obesity is a growing threat to the health of Canadians. Health complications related to excessive weight are a strain on our health-care system. The estimated direct cost of treating obesity is between \$2 and \$6 billion annually. A Liberal government will work with the provinces and territories, and provide leadership by providing the necessary, stable funding required to help reverse this disturbing trend. Key to this will be ensuring that all Canadians have the opportunity to participate in amateur sport and recreation in their communities. In addition to significant federal investments in social infrastructure like recreational facilities, the Liberal Canada Child Benefit will help provide Canadian families with the financial means to access recreation and sport opportunities essential for their continued health.

The Liberal Party of Canada knows that participation in amateur sports is critically important to encouraging and promoting an active and healthier society, particularly among young Canadians. We will look for ways to promote and facilitate healthy lifestyles for Canadians, we welcome all suggestions for how to promote and facilitate healthy lifestyles for all Canadians.

Once again thank you for emailing me on these important issues.

Sincerely,

Anita Vandenberg
Liberal Candidate for Ottawa West-Nepean