

VISION ACTION BAILLIE

May 24, 2017

Jalana Lewis, Member
Canadian Association of Black Lawyers
Via email: jalana.lewis@gmail.com

Dear Ms. Lewis,

Thank you for extending the invitation to our candidates to respond to your questionnaire concerning African Nova Scotians: A Distinct People. Please accept our response on behalf of all candidates.

Nova Scotia Provincial Candidate Survey - **AFRICAN NOVA SCOTIANS: A DISTINCT PEOPLE**

ENVIRONMENTAL RACISM

The Environmental Noxiousness, Racial Inequities & Community Health Project (The ENRICH Project) is a research project based at Dalhousie University that is looking at the impacts of environmental racism in Nova Scotia. In Nova Scotia, environmental racism disproportionately impacts African Nova Scotian and Mi'kmaq communities. What's environmental racism? Environmental racism refers to the disproportionate location of polluting industries and other environmentally hazardous activities near Black and Indigenous communities. The ENRICH Project helped to develop An Act to Address Environmental Racism (Bill 6), which was introduced in the Nova Scotia Legislature on April 29, 2015, but eventually failed to pass into law. The ENRICH Project also helped to develop a non-partisan Environmental Bill of Rights for Nova Scotia, which was launched on April 21, 2017, with the hope that it will be supported by all political parties.

For more information, refer to "The Environmental Noxiousness, Racial Inequities & Community Health Project (ENRICH Project)", at www.enrichproject.org

1. If elected, how will you work with your constituents, political party and fellow Members of the Legislative Assembly to ensure African Nova Scotian communities are protected from the negative consequences of environmental racism?

When land use projects, which may have faced strong opposition or even been rejected in other areas, were put in areas where the population is made up of citizens who are visible minorities, it emphasized the power imbalance between those who made the decisions and those who had to live by those decisions.

This power imbalance was pervasive throughout the entire decision-making chain.

A PC team will increase the per vote funding parties receive for votes cast for women, African Nova Scotians and Indigenous candidates. This will ensure more women, African Nova Scotians and Indigenous Nova Scotians are elected and at the decision-making table.

A PC government will make decisions on these proposals on the basis of science and solid research and race will not enter into the decision-making process. And, when certain communities are being considered for projects, we want the citizens of those communities to feel empowered to voice their opinions and for those opinions to be considered.

LAND CLAIMS

The Nova Scotia Barristers' Society, as part of its work to enhance access to justice for Nova Scotians, has involved a number of lawyers who work pro bono supporting the North Preston Land Recovery Initiative. This work advances landowners' claims pursuant to the Land Titles Clarification Act, administered by the Department of Natural Resources. This legislation is intended to furnish members of African-Nova Scotian communities, including North Preston, an efficient and inexpensive regime in which to clear a landowner's titles so they can enjoy the benefits of land ownership, such as access to municipal services, mortgage financing and estate succession. Historic title problems in North Preston perpetuate the cycle of poverty in which some residents of the community find themselves entrapped. For more information, refer to "Untitled: The Legacy of Land in North Preston," at <http://northprestonland.ca>.

2. Do you support the North Preston Land Titles Initiative?

The Progressive Conservative Party supports the North Preston Land Claims process. Our party consulted with Angela Simmonds on this very important issue. We understand the frustration of residents trying to clarify titles after generations. The PC team supports the North Preston Land Recovery Initiative and worked with Ms. Simmonds to consider changes to the Act and/or regulation that would make the process easier and more fair for residents of North Preston.

For us, it is a question of fairness. People who have paid taxes on land for generations should not have to go to great expense to claim title.

A PC government will work with Justice Department lawyers to help move this issue along. We will consider changes to regulations and direct government staff to make solving this long-standing issue a priority.

PC MLAs would continue consulting with members of North Preston to better understand the Land Recovery Initiative. We will also direct staff of government departments to make sure this issue is a priority and to liaise with volunteers from the North Preston Land Recovery Initiative.

SUSTAINABLE EMPLOYMENT INITIATIVES

While our primary goal remains to build a dynamic and vibrant Black business community, we must adapt to an ever changing and challenging economic reality. A historically marginalized business culture within the African Nova Scotian community, deepened by a lack of information around business assistance programs as well as an insufficient number of Black and non-Black business role models and mentors, has made it difficult to create sustainable business entities originating from within the African Nova Scotian community.

3. If elected, how would you support the inclusion of economic development initiatives aimed at African Nova Scotian communities as full participants in the supply chain across the province?

Jamie Baillie and the PC party have an optimistic, pro-growth agenda that focuses on rebuilding our province, creating jobs and getting Nova Scotians back to work. Voters are tired of governments with no vision that only focus on cuts.

EDUCATION

African Nova Scotian learners are experiencing systemic racism and a lack of social inclusion in the classroom, beginning at an early age. Black students are disproportionately subjected to suspensions. In addition, achievement gaps in literacy and math persists among this group of learners. Inadequate distribution of funds and resources are a major challenge to fostering equitable opportunities for African Nova Scotian students. A recent study by CBC News looked at data from 5 of 8 school boards in the province and found that Black students receive out-of-school suspensions at a rate of 1.2 to 3 times higher than the overall population of African Nova Scotians in the student population [http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/african-nova-scotian-students-suspension-numbers-1.3885721]

4. If elected, would you advocate for a province-wide response to ensure success for African Nova Scotians, in all levels of the education system, that takes a collaborative approach to solution finding between and amongst community, schools, school boards and the education department that, among other things, ensures access to disaggregate data across education structures?

A Progressive Conservative government wants all children in our education system to have the tools and support they need to achieve their full potential. That means working with teachers and parents to make sure classrooms are welcoming and productive places to learn for all children.

HEALTH

The healthcare system in the province has yet to adopt culturally competent training that reflects the needs of racialized groups accessing health services. There exists an under-representation of health professionals from communities of African descent working in healthcare, creating further barriers for marginalized groups navigating a complex system.

5. If elected, would you support the collection of empirical health data with race, ethnicity and language identifiers as well as investment in health research that examines the intersections of race, ethnicity, culture, gender identity, income, citizenship status, sexual orientation, language and disability?

A Progressive Conservative government would support health research that results in improved health outcomes for Nova Scotians.

CHILD WELFARE

A considerable body of research shows that African Canadian children and youth are more likely to be involved in the Child Welfare system compared to their representation in the general population. In Nova Scotia, African Nova Scotians make up about 2.3% of the general population but over 10% of African Nova Scotian children and youth are involved with Child Welfare. This overrepresentation in the Child Welfare system has multi-generational impacts on African Nova Scotian families resulting in

their negative involvement in the health, education and justice systems with poor outcomes for African Nova Scotian children, youth and families.

6. If elected, would you support the use of disaggregate data to prevent and reduce the overrepresentation of African Nova Scotian children and youth in the Child Welfare system? And if so, how do you envision leveraging that support?

A Progressive Conservative government will support changes in the child welfare system that support families and result in better outcomes for children.

ACCESS TO JUSTICE

African Nova Scotians seek both a just criminal justice system and justice in a broader sense. Over-incarceration and anti-Black racism (systemic and individual) within the criminal justice system and corrections arise in part from the legacy of enslavement and segregation. Over-policing and surveillance was most recently documented by the street check statistics released by the Halifax Regional Police and the RCMP.

[<http://halifax.ca/police/documents/Streetcheckdataprelimanalysis.pdf>]. The HRM report reveals that African Nova Scotians in Halifax are 3 times more likely to be stopped and checked by police than white individuals. African Nova Scotians have the right to move and live freely in this province without being subject to racial profiling on the street or in stores or other places [<https://humanrights.novascotia.ca/sites/default/files/crp-report.pdf>].

7. If elected, would you support the implementation of an African Nova Scotian justice strategy to address: (1) street checks; (2) overrepresentation of African Nova Scotians in the criminal justice system; (3) underrepresentation of African Nova Scotian criminal justice personnel (Crown Prosecutors, correctional officers) and judges; and (4) the need for African Nova Scotian corrections and reintegration services?

A Progressive Conservative government will work with Justice Department staff, police, corrections staff and members of the African Nova Scotian community to ensure members of the African Nova Scotian community are treated fairly and in a culturally appropriate manner.

8. If elected, would you support the systematic use of African Nova Scotian Cultural Impact Assessments?

For information on Cultural Impact Assessments check out this helpful resource <http://www.robertswright.ca/upload/385169/documents/D0DF4E3F969480DD.pdf>

African Nova Scotian Cultural Impact Assessments are rarely used in our province. A Progressive Conservative government would work with judges, crown attorneys and members of the African Nova Scotia community to determine when cultural impact assessments can and should be used in our justice system.

IMMIGRATION

10% of Black people in Nova Scotia are new Canadians, coming primarily from African countries, the Caribbean and the U.S.A. with a diverse range of experiences, education and skills.

9. If elected, how would you ensure that provincial immigration, refugee and migrant worker policies and programs respond to the concerns and recognize the talents of newcomers of African descent?

A Progressive Conservative government wants Nova Scotia to be a safe and welcoming home to immigrants, refugees and other newcomers to our province.

As such, we would adjust any policies or programs to respond to the concerns of newcomers of African descent and all newcomers. We will work to make Nova Scotia a place where newcomers can make the most of their talents and expertise to make our province stronger and more diverse.

REPARATIONS

The global reparations movement advocates to recognize the wrongs of the past (enslavement, segregation and racial exploitation) including present systemic, institutional, economic, psychological and environmental racism and its effects on Black communities. Reparations serve to acknowledge that there is an obligation on governments to repair the consequences and violations of the Atlantic Slave trade and related injustices.

10. If elected, do you agree that the Nova Scotia government must incorporate issues of restoration for injustices against the African Nova Scotian community into government plans?

A Progressive Conservative government will be open to discussion the issue of reparations with the African Nova Scotia community.

Sincerely,



Janet Fryday Dorey
Campaign Co-Chair
PC Party of Nova Scotia