

## ISSUE

Taxation is difficult to discuss at the best of times. Too often there is an abrupt stop at: ‘taxes are bad’, with the implication that when governments levy taxes they are taking something away. A call for tax cuts rarely includes what service should be cut because of reduced tax revenue. It is time to discuss what is done with our taxes and how these provide benefits to Canadians. When a tax is cut, what do we lose?

## CONTEXT

What is done with tax revenues is often invisible to Canadians. We underestimate the significant role public investments play in maintaining and improving our quality of life. We forget that we depend on public services such as education, healthcare, childcare, public pensions, employment insurance and family benefits to elevate our living standards. Every individual, organization and business relies on the physical infrastructure of our communities, parks, sidewalks, roads, public libraries, transportation systems, water and sewage systems.

Taxation is how we provide what everyone needs and progressive tax policies are essential to an equitable society. On average, it is estimated that every Canadian man, woman and child gets \$17,000 benefit per year from the services our taxes (at all levels of government) fund. This is about the same amount a Canadian working full time, full year at minimum wage in many parts of Canada earns.

It is time to raise the importance of taxation as a means for doing what we can’t do as individuals or in small groups of family and friends. And yes, to do what is impossible for the market to do. There is no market solution to our shared needs for common services, public infrastructure, and income redistribution. Even business innovation and emergent technologies happen because public funds are invested.

The federal government has an important responsibility to do their job well: to tax fairly and spend wisely. The

shared values of fairness and decency must be evident in tax decisions and we must always consider both the revenue and the spending side of tax in all of our discussions of public policy and programs.

## QUESTIONS

- What are the primary values that drive your party and how do these translate into fiscal decisions?
- Does your party support progressive taxation policies to ensure equitable re-distribution of wealth and an improved economic outlook?
- How will your party provide leadership to ensure tax decisions are transparent and communicated so citizens can understand both the cost and the benefits of policy and budget decisions?

## RESOURCES

For more information and additional fact sheets in this series:  
<http://spno.ca/canada-votes-2015>

“What if candidates going door to door heard more concerns about services for the community and raising the taxes to invest in them?”