

May 10, 2019

Mr. Ches Crosbie
Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party NL
PC Party Headquarters
P.O. Box 8551
St. John's, NL A1B 3P2

Dear Mr. Crosbie,

Autism Society, Newfoundland & Labrador (ASNL), is a provincial charitable organization dedicated to promoting the development of individual, lifelong, and community-based supports and services for people with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), their families and caregivers. As children age, families are presented with new challenges. Our role is to ensure their concerns are understood and met with services and supports that reflect individualized differences, needs and preferences.

As Leader of the Newfoundland & Labrador Progressive Conservative Party, we are seeking your response to four key questions. Please give the following questions your consideration. Prepared responses can be sent to scrocker@autism.nf.net by e-mail. We will share a copy of this letter and your response with our membership and publicly.

Your platform states:

"We will update the strategy on the inclusion of persons with disabilities in collaboration with a variety of provincial organizations. We will focus on improving opportunities for full participation in our province, lowering barriers to employment, improving housing and home support options, improving transportation, improving access to sports and recreation, and making education inclusive, personalized and meaningful. We affirm that persons with disabilities have the right to make their own decisions and to use support if they choose. In partnership with organizations representing persons with disabilities, we will strive to apply the general principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which are: Respect for inherent dignity, individual autonomy including the freedom to make one's own choices, and independence of persons; Non-discrimination; Full and effective participation and inclusion in society; Respect for difference and acceptance of persons with disabilities as part of human diversity and humanity; Equality of opportunity; Accessibility; Equality between men and women; Respect for the evolving capacities of children with disabilities and respect for the right of children with disabilities to preserve their identities.

The IQ70 criterion remains in place, denying services to people with autism four years after the Ball Liberals were told to remove it. After four years in office, the Liberals took no action on an Autism Action Plan until eight hours before calling the election – and even this was just to announce more promises of future action. Not good enough! Lip-service does not change lives. We will develop an Autism Strategy that emphasizes early assessment and diagnosis; early and effective intervention with programs that are proven to work; and lifelong support."

Autism Society
Newfoundland & Labrador



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To follow up on these important points, we have the following questions:

Use of IQ 70 to Determine Service Provision for Adults with ASD

We believe the current practice of using a person's IQ score as a criterion for determining the need for support services and programs is exclusionary and discriminatory.

Q: Do you have a timeline in mind for the actual removal of IQ70 and how will you accommodate the needs of those who have been denied services for years?

Screening, Timely Referral and Early Identification.

We believe early identification is critical to positive outcomes for individuals with ASD and, therefore, evidence-based screening and surveillance practices must be implemented provincially.

Q: What is your position on additional tools for developmental screening to ensure those flagged for early signs of ASD receive timely and appropriate referrals? Further, will your party consider allocating funding for a Public Information Campaign about early signs of autism?

Accountability with ISSP/IEP process

We believe students with ASD need enough appropriate supports to thrive in the learning environment. This must include those who are struggling, as well as those who are gifted.

Q: How do you plan to increase accountability with the ISSP and IEP process?

Employment Equity

We believe all those on the autism spectrum, with a goal of employment, should have the opportunity to obtain and maintain 'real work for real pay'.

Q: What steps would you take to improve access to the workforce for those with ASD?

To learn more about what ASNL and the autism community identified as 'Issues That Matter', please refer to our 2018 Position Statement Booklet.

Yours sincerely,



Scott Crocker
Chief Executive Officer

