IMMIGRATION PARTNERSHIP
Settle. Work. Belong.

Federal Election 2019
Candidate Survey Results

Immigration is important to community and economic development. Ahead of the October 2019 Federal Election, the Immigration Partnership asked all election candidates in Waterloo Region to share their responses to four questions of importance on immigration. The follow responses were received from candidates.

If you have any questions about the survey contact:
ImmigrationPartnership@regionofwaterloo.ca.

Candidate questions

1. The Conference Board of Canada recently reported that between 2018 and 2040, 1.6 million fewer people will become workers than the number of people exiting the labour force and that immigration will account for all of Canada's net labour force growth. Immigration is both a social and an economic imperative for Canada and communities like Waterloo Region. If elected, will you support increasing immigration levels in Canada to address population growth and labour force needs and how will you work with Waterloo Region's municipalities to help meet the same through robust immigration strategies that attract more immigrants to mid-sized communities?

2. Lack of affordable housing is a major challenge for many residents of Waterloo Region. In a recent survey of almost 1,100 immigrants and refugees living here, 29% said that finding affordable housing was one of their biggest challenges in the last year. In addition to challenges to accessing affordable housing faced by the broader population, newcomers face the added barriers of lack credit or work history in Canada, references, etc. If elected, will you support the continuation of the national housing strategy and additional investment in the creation of affordable housing suitable to population needs in communities like Waterloo Region?

3. There is a talent crisis in Waterloo Region. In the 2019 EmployerOne survey of 542 employers, 64% had difficulties hiring for positions in the previous year. Immigrants are a potential solution to the hiring needs of employers, yet unemployment rates among recent immigrants are twice as high as longer established immigrants and Canadian born individuals, and in a 2019 survey of almost 1,100 immigrants and refugees in Waterloo Region 46% said finding work was one of their biggest challenges in the last year. If elected, will you support policies that enable more employers to hire more immigrants suited to their positions faster and how will you support immigrants and refugees already in the community to find meaningful work?

4. Despite the fact that immigration is imperative for Canada's future growth and prosperity, recent national polls have found that 40% of people believe immigration levels are too high and that Canada admits too many visible minority immigrants through its managed immigration system. In a 2019 statistically reliable survey of Waterloo Region residents, 34% (representing over 180,000 people) did not agree that immigration has a positive impact on their community. If elected, will you firmly support immigration to Canada and Waterloo Region and how will you use your role to promote positive perceptions of immigration and refugees?

Cambridge

Michael Branff (Green Party)

1. The Green Party of Canada advocates for a review of Immigration Policy as part of its Platform to support a green economy. One of the key areas is with respect to collaboration with both provincial and municipal governments to improve integration. The policy also includes increasing allocation of funds for improved ESL and FSL training by increased transfers to provinces. Fluency in English and French is a key indicator of success for integration. Policy also includes empowering municipal governments through: a seat at the policy-making table for municipal government through a new Council of Canadian Government; encouraging City Charters for greater autonomy and increased funding through a Municipal Fund 9currently named the Gas Tax Fund)

2. The GPC advocates enhancing the current National Housing Policy to ensure safe, affordable housing. We advocate direct investment by the federal government in housing; legislation to recognize housing as human rights; appointment of a Ministry of Housing to strengthen collaboration with provincial housing ministers; a target of 25,000 new and 15,000 rehabilitated affordable housing projects per year for ten years; establishment of a National Housing Co-investment Fund and a Canada Co-op Housing Strategy. The GPC would support amending the mandate of CMHC to support the development of affordable non-market and co-op housing with less focus on reducing risk to financing home ownership. The GPC also advocates to amend legislation so Indigenous organization can access CMHC funding for self-determined housing needs (e.g.: on northern reserves) Some of the GPC recommendations for amendments to the Immigration Policy include: (1) replacing the current immigration consulting industry with a fair, legal and accessible system to ensure more accurate messaging to people in their country of origin prior to the decision to come to Canada; (2) explaining licensing to foreign trained professionals before they come to Canada; (3) a robust system to evaluate credentials so that this process is expedited; (4) improve the pathway to citizenship for International students and current foreign workers; and (5) phase out the Foreign Trained Workers program in favour of a system that encourages immigration and permanent residence status. The Green Party is also in favour of speeding up family unification. The Green Party advocates a universal guaranteed livable income over the next five years, in collaboration with provincial government, and this would benefit all residents of Canada, including newcomers, during times of transition.

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4. There is a great deal of misunderstanding about Immigration and especially about Canada's experience with immigration. Immigration is essential for Canada's economy. Improved education needs to happen is the school systems and there also should be a public education campaign.

Kitchener Centre

Andrew Moraga (New Democratic Party)

1. Absolutely - if elected, the NDP and I will support increasing immigration levels in Canada to address population growth and labour force needs. Working with Waterloo Region, we would assess immediate and long-term needs, partner with our Ministry of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship and our Ministry of Innovation, Science and Economic Development and create clear pathways (such as supporting an increased for federal immigration transfer payments to mid-sized communities such as Waterloo Region) to attract immigrants to our community.

2. Yes. The NDP is proud of our national affordable housing strategy. That's why a New Democrat government will create 500,000 units of quality, affordable housing in the next ten years, with half of that done within five years. This will be achieved with the right mix of effective measures that work in partnership with provinces and municipalities, build capacity for social, community, and affordable housing providers and co-ops, and meet environmental energy efficiency goals. This ambitious plan will create thousands of jobs in communities all across the country, and help Canadians get the affordable housing they need. Our federal investment will begin with $5 billion in additional funding in the first year and a half of a New Democrat government. Additionally, this strategy will include measures to support Canadians at risk of becoming homeless, taking the lead from communities about local needs and adopting a "housing first" approach. To help people find an affordable home in the long term, we will support the creation of more social housing and other affordable options.

3. Absolutely - If elected, I will support policies that enable more employers to hire more immigrants suited to their positions faster. One of the biggest barriers between immigrants and mid-sized communities is the lack of recognition of experience in foreign countries. We have individuals in this community who were doctors, engineers, technicians and other highly sought out roles before they immigrated to Canada; outdated immigration policies are key barriers blocking newcomers from finding fulfilling work in their professional fields. That's why a New Democrat government will make sure that our immigration policies and levels meet Canada's labour force needs and recognize our newcomers' professional and education experience and contributions. We will work with the provinces and municipalities to address gaps in settlement services and improve foreign credentials recognition.

4. If elected, I will firmly support immigration to Canada and Waterloo Region. As the child of an immigrant, I understand firsthand the stigma and negative perceptions of immigration. Our immigration system should be accountable to Canadians and rooted in the values of fairness, respect, and dignity. We know that immigrants strengthen our country, and we will always stand against those who would use fear of our neighbours to divide us. In my role as MP for Kitchener-Centre, I would stand against hate and

misinformation directed towards our newcomer and immigrant communities to show that we all have a common human experience that unites us. As a racialized person and the child of an immigrant, I will be an active ambassador everyday for immigrant communities to demonstrate one of many positive ways we contribute and give back to the beautiful country we call home; Canada.

Mike Morris (Green Party)

1. I support increasing immigration levels, while also ensuring that newcomers have better access to services, English language training, health care and help transitioning into the workforce. Kitchener, and Waterloo Region, are made stronger by immigration and by having a diverse population. Immigrants not only contribute to the economy, but help create a vibrant community in our city. Green MPs would work to improve the pathway for international students and foreign workers to Canadian permanent residency and citizenship. We would also speed up family reunification, especially reuniting children with their parents.

2. Everyone should have access to a safe, dignified, affordable place to call home. As a Green MP, I would push to legislate housing as a legally protected fundamental human right for all Canadians and permanent residents. The current National Housing Strategy does not go far enough to create new housing and address housing affordability in Canada. In fact, the Parliamentary Budget Officer found that the strategy doesn't contain any net new housing investments. It's important that we act more quickly and invest in housing for all.

   The Green Party would work to increase access to housing by:
   - Allocating one per cent of GST to housing and other municipal infrastructure on an ongoing basis to provide a consistent baseline of funding.
   - Restoring tax incentives for building purpose-built rental housing and provide tax credits for gifts of lands, or of land and buildings, to community land trusts to provide affordable housing.
   - Re-focusing the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) on supporting the development of affordable, non-market and cooperative housing.

   As an MP, I would also work on eliminating poverty by pushing for:
   - A universal Guaranteed Livable Income (GLI) program to replace the current array of income supports, such as disability payments, social assistance and income supplements for seniors.
   - A federal minimum wage of $15 per hour.
   - A national affordable childcare strategy.

3. It is so important that newcomers have access to employment supports and training that allows them to apply their education and skills to the Canadian context. The federal government should make it easier for immigrants to use the skills they have, especially when there is a shortage of workers and talent in Canada.

   I would work with other Greens in Parliament to:
   - Ensure professionals being considered for immigration have the licensing requirements for their professions clearly explained before entry.

- Work with professional associations to create a robust system for evaluating the education and training credentials of immigrants against Canadian standards, with the goal of expediting accreditation and expanding professional opportunities for immigrants

4. I will always advocate for immigration and support newcomers to our country and community. Immigration has a positive social and economic impact, and has helped create the vibrant, diverse country that we have today. I have found that most anti-immigrant sentiments are rooted in an unmet need of some kind - either the need for better housing, health care, or the affordability of daily life. We need to continue to welcome immigrants and refugees, and we need to address those core issues that impact everyone's wellbeing. We have a duty to be a welcoming country, and we have enough wealth to ensure that everyone is cared for and has their basic needs met.

Kitchener-Conestoga

Tim Louis (Liberal)

1. Yes. Immigration benefits Canada as a whole, but not every community – including those experiencing serious labour shortages – is able to make the most of the contributions new Canadians can bring. A re-elected Liberal government is committed to growing immigration levels to 350,000 by 2021. To make sure that communities of all sizes are better able to attract and support new Canadians, a re-elected Liberal government will move forward with a Municipal Nominee Program. This program will allow local communities, chambers of commerce, and local labour councils to directly sponsor permanent immigrants.

2. Yes. For many newcomers starting their careers, saving up enough to make a down payment on a home is a far-off dream at best. In Waterloo Region, people are facing these challenges head on. Low supply, high demand and housing speculation by foreign owners is driving up housing prices for people across the country.

   That is why the Liberal government established the First-Time Home Buyer incentive to make home ownership more affordable for first-time buyers by allowing them to lower their monthly mortgage payments without increasing their down payment.

   We launched Canada's first-ever National Housing Strategy, a ten-year plan that will help more than 600,000 Canadians find safe and affordable places to live and we funded the construction of nearly 140,000 more housing units to be built by 2028. We also created the new Canada Housing Benefit to help 300,000 Canadians with the high costs of rent.

3. Yes. To keep our economy strong and growing, we will move forward with modest and responsible increases to immigration, with a focus on welcoming highly skilled people who can help build a stronger Canada. In 2017, the Liberal government launched the Global Skills Strategy which as attracted 30,000 highly skilled workers and entrepreneurs in Canada. We also launched the Agri-Food Immigration Pilot to meet labour needs in our agricultural sector. If elected as the Member of Parliament for Kitchener–Conestoga, I will work with all levels of government to ensure Waterloo Region attracts and retains highly

skilled talent in all sectors to keep our region competitive while supporting newcomers in their search for meaningful employment in our communities.

4. Unequivocally yes. Canada's story is the story of immigrants – of people who came here seeking a better life for themselves and their families – and of the people who welcomed them. Together, we have helped to grow our economy, build strong communities, create good jobs, and make Canada the best place in the world to call home. As an immigrant myself, I will strongly defend this tradition. I will also use my role to work across the region to better connect immigrant and refugees to organizations and employers to foster a stronger community.

Kitchener South Hespeler

David Weber (Green Party)

1. Yes. Immigrants and the skills they possess are important in fulfilling the needs of our businesses, and in keeping our economy thriving. We need to ensure that professional organizations are able to expedite accreditation of certifications, and we need to invest in greater ESL resources so that new comers can be included in the communities they seek to call their new homes.

2. Yes. The Green Party will work with municipal and provincial levels to advance affordable housing initiatives. This includes $750 million for affordable housing units, for a goal of 25,000 new units per year and 15,000 rehabilitated units per year. A further $40 Million will be invested in emergency shelters.

3. The Green Party will have a portal of skilled jobs that employers are seeking to fill and individuals with skills seeking employment. This will be necessary during a rapid shift of oil and gas workers moving into renewable energy fields, and such an employment/worker connection service can also be utilized by newcomers seeking to find employment. Many workers in The Temporary Foreign Workers program come to Canada for seasonal employment, but would like to stay. Because of their stay is limited, they do not qualify for health benefits or many other things that Canadians enjoy. We should end the TFW program and instead, offer pathways to citizenship. We also need to invest in ESL so that all newcomers can soon function in English or French to the extent that they need to be included in society and able to meet employment expectations

4. We need to support immigration as it is what will have us be sustainable in our economy, including health care and pension plans as well as fulfilling the needs for specific jobs. I will be an advocate by sharing information, participating in multi-cultural activities and making every effort to build bridges between new comers and longer time residents. Most opposition to immigration comes from fear of others and also disappointment in governments' failures to provide services to those already here. As we improve at eliminating poverty and homelessness with better social supports that the Green Party offers, it will go a long way to removing fear that immigration is causing hardship upon long time Canadians.

Waterloo

Bardish Chagger (Liberal)

1. Before I had the honour of being elected your member of parliament, I was proud to work at the K-W Multicultural Centre, which gave me a great deal of first-hand experience working with new Canadians, and a deep understanding of how the multicultural mosaic makes Canada the best place in the world in which to live. I also sat on the Workforce Planning Board of Waterloo Wellington Dufferin and therefore recognize the importance of monitoring the workforce needs of our region and Canada. The Liberal government has already committed to responsibly grow immigration levels to 350,000 by 2021. Also understanding that we need global talent to help our businesses grow, we worked with leaders in our region to develop the Global Talent Stream. Permitting businesses to bring the talent they need to Canada with two-week processing.

    Waterloo Region's post-secondary education institutions are magnets for international students, and that's why we've added points to the Express Entry system for Canadian education, and revamped the Post-Graduation Work Permit Program. That means the talented international students who are educated, including at our region's top-class educational institutions, will find it much easier to stay here and contribute to our community and satisfy our labour force needs.

2. All Canadians, including new Canadians, deserve a safe and affordable place to call home. That's why I am proud that our Liberal government introduced Canada's first-ever National Housing Strategy (NHS), including $55+ billion over 10 years to strengthen communities, reduce chronic homelessness by 50%, create 100,000 new housing units (four times more than what the previous Conservative government did in 10 years), repair and renew more than 300,000 housing units (three times more than what the previous government did in 10 years), and protect an additional 385,000 households from losing an affordable place to live. A key part of the NHS is the Canada Housing Benefit. The Liberal government will work with provinces and territories to develop a $4 billion Canada Housing Benefit to be launched in 2020 to respond to local housing needs and priorities. Once fully implemented, the Canada Housing Benefit will: assist at least 300,000 families; provide an estimated average of $2,500 per year to each household recipient; and be delivered directly to households. The NHS includes a $13.2 billion Co-Investment Fund that will create and repair affordable housing across Canada for those with the greatest need, to help Canadians have a safe place to call home. But we know many middle- class families are struggling in expensive housing markets. That's why in 2019, we launched the new First-Time Home Buyer Incentive to help middle class Canadians take their first steps towards home ownership. The Incentive will make home ownership more affordable for first- time buyers by allowing them to lower their monthly mortgage payments without increasing their down payment.

3. My time at the K-W Multicultural Centre included me organizing the Global Skills Conference, which was a one-day conference to help connect job-ready newcomers with the resources and information on credential recognition, skills development, professional associations, regulatory bodies, and related professions.

    All levels of government have a responsibility to ensure that new Canadians are in the best possible position to secure meaningful work and contribute their skills to the Canadian

economy. Our government increased funding for settlement services by more than 30% to help newcomers learn English or French, job search workshop programs, as well as mentoring services. We created 10,000 new language training spots and invested $28 million in an Employment Strategy for Newcomers. We have also improved foreign credential recognition for newcomers, including through a loan program. We established a permanent Start-Up Visa program to facilitate innovation, investment and job-creation. Over 170 start-up companies have launched. I am proud that thanks to our government's policies, and to the hard work of new Canadians, we achieved a 5.7% immigrant unemployment rate in 2018—the lowest recorded since tracking began. But we can and will do even better.

4. I constantly remind everyone that I am the child of immigrants to broaden the perception of immigrants to Canada. Unless indigenous, everyone at some point immigrated and we should never forget that. I personally don't know anyone who has come to Canada that hasn't worked hard and contributed all they can; and their children often even more. I strongly believe that immigration is an essential part of Canadian society, and that multiculturalism is one of the most important things that have made Canada the success that it is today. I am proud to have been part of a government that has many visible minority and immigrant members. When I sat at the cabinet table, I looked around and saw people descended from all parts of the world, including several who themselves immigrated to Canada. I am proud that Waterloo Region has a history of welcoming refugees, including numerous Syrian and Rohingya refugees in recent years, through both government-assisted refugee programs as well as privately sponsored. Support for immigration and for the welcoming of refugees is one of the core values of the Liberal Party and will remain that way.

Kristen Wright (Green Party)

1. Our platform says, 'Newcomers are a source of incredible skills and potential for our country.' Without increased immigration younger generations will be required to bear the burden of supporting our aging population. We will therefore 'address labour shortages by increasing immigration' We will also 'Improve the pathway for international students and foreign workers to Canadian permanent residency and citizenship.'

2. Yes. We are committed to policies that increase housing supply including expanding social housing. We will increase the National Housing Co-investment Fund by $750 million for new builds, create a Canada Co-op Housing Strategy that would update the mechanisms for financing co-op housing, in partnership with CMHC, co-op societies, credit unions and other lenders. We will make new and existing housing as eligible infrastructure for funding purposes, allowing the Canada Infrastructure Bank to support provincial and municipal housing projects and Include new and existing housing as eligible infrastructure for funding purposes, allowing the Canada Infrastructure Bank to support provincial and municipal housing projects and will provide financing to non-profit housing organizations and cooperatives. We will also give municipalities a set at the table in developing these programs.

3. Making the labour market more efficient for all workers and employers is challenging. Waterloo- and Kitchener are unusual case of mid-sized cities with very strong population and employment growth, high levels of new Canadians and large numbers of international

students. Solutions unique to the region will have to be developed in partnership with the municipal and regional governments.

4. Waterloo is a model of how immigration contributes to the growth and wealth of a community. While some still express concern about the impacts of high levels of immigration, and these views are not easily changed, the majority of Canadians do support immigration. I do firmly support the model that has been so successful here, and will collaborate with local governments to help the people of the region fully appreciate our success.

People's Party of Canada

1. The People's Party of Canada would lower the total number of immigrants and refugees accepted every year to between 100,000 and 150,000, depending on economic circumstances.

2. The sharp rise in housing costs is a result of a slew of economic factors. Many of these factors pose problems that are within the jurisdiction of provincial and municipal governments. Zoning laws, for example, are within the purview of the municipal government and have a great effect on housing costs. The federal government's job is not to interject and intervene at the provincial and municipal levels. Therefore, a People's Party government would not support a national housing strategy, and would instead encourage provinces and municipalities to find solutions at their level of government.

3. The People's Party of Canada would reform our immigration point system to accept only the most talented and skilled immigrants. Canada does not accept only economic migrants, as is commonly believed. We will lower the total number of immigrants accepted to Canada while ensuring that each one has skills that are in demand. Right now, only 26% of all the immigrants and refugees who come to Canada every year are directly chosen because they have the right qualifications and work experience to fulfill our economic needs. The rest are dependents (spouses and children), come through the family reunification program or as refugees, do not work, or do not have the skills that we need even if they find work.

4. The People's Party is pro-immigration. However, we recognize that the current immigration system in Canada and the total number of immigrants we accept is unsustainable. Our policy is to accept only the brightest applicants who can integrate quickly into Canadian society.