



Susan Eng (second from left), VP CARP Advocacy co-chairs a Seniors Vote pre-budget meeting with Pat Kerwin, President of Congress of Union Retirees of Canada at the Canadian Nurses Association offices in Ottawa.

Coordinated by CARP, **Seniors Vote** is a collaboration of 50 senior, retiree, professional, and advocacy groups who are representing well over one million older Canadians. They are raising common concerns which particularly resonate with all older Canadians – financial security in retirement and health care reform.

**Seniors Vote** recognizes today's ballot questions are the blueprint for our children's future. These pages detail the priority issues for the 2015 federal election, and outline what seniors will vote for.



## Income and Retirement Security



## Federal Leadership on Health Care Transformation

Older Canadians are among the most politically engaged voters. Their past party loyalty simply cannot be taken for granted. And this has led all political parties to ask, *"What do seniors want?"* The answer has been a call for the kind of transformative change in our public systems that will make life better for all Canadians as they age:

- **Pension reform** is needed to ensure that people will not outlive their money by expanding access to pension savings and increasing income support.
- **Health care reform** to ensure Canadians will not be treated as consumers or merely patients, but rather as "health care citizens" who pay for the health care system and expect it to serve the values set out in the Canada Health Act – universality, accessibility and comprehensiveness. The system must undergo transformative change and focus on the needs and expectations of the health care citizen, to provide medical intervention, and support prevention and the social determinants of health, family caregivers and end-of-life care.
- **Homecare programs** that allow seniors to stay in their own homes. There is a need for a national housing strategy that includes seniors housing.
- **An end to growing income inequality.** More and more seniors are falling below the poverty line. Seniors are also concerned that too many of their children and grandchildren are facing a precarious job market and a bleak future.

Achieving income security in working life and retirement is increasingly difficult for Canadians of all ages:

- *Nearly five million Canadians live in poverty.*
- *12 percent of seniors still live in poverty, amounting to more than 600,000 people.*
- *One in six single seniors live in poverty, most of whom are women.*
- *12 million working Canadians do not have workplace pension plans and significant numbers of Canadians will face a substantial drop in their standard of living on retirement.*
- *Younger working Canadians will have especially limited access to workplace pensions.*

Health care remains the highest priority for Canadians who are calling for transformative change.

- *Older Canadians and their families find the system difficult to navigate, incomplete, inadequate in meeting post-acute and chronic care needs.*
- *Over eight million caregivers provide invaluable support to family members and the formal health system, without adequate support from employers and government.*
- *Poverty, social isolation, a poor physical environment, and inadequate housing leads to poor health outcomes. Investments in prevention and in the social determinants of health could save the system money and produce better health outcomes for Canadians.*




*It is now common knowledge that older Canadians are the most committed voters; 65% or more vote regularly.*



**The voice of seniors will be heard in the election!**  
**Seniors Vote** calls on the federal government to:

- Work with the provinces to increase the CPP.
- Strengthen income support by: *restoring the OAS eligibility age to 65 from 67, increasing the exempt earnings band for GIS, and increasing the amount of OAS and GIS for low income seniors.*
- Increase income supports for low-income, single older Canadians not yet eligible for OAS by creating an equivalent to the OAS spousal allowance.
- Prohibit retroactive erosion of earned pension benefits.
- Work with the provinces to create a national pharmacare plan, with an ultimate goal of first dollar coverage for all Canadians.
- Work with the provinces to fund and set standards to improve access, affordability, and quality of post-acute and chronic care, in the home and in the community, with particular focus on dementia care.
- Increase financial support and provide workplace protection for caregivers.
- Work with provinces to ensure Canadians have access to appropriate housing, including affordable and supportive housing, and assisted living services.



**Seniors Vote / Le Vote des Aînés is endorsed by a group of national and regional senior, retiree, advocacy and professional associations including:**

- National Pensioners Federation (NPF)
- CARP
- Réseau FADOQ
- Congress of Union Retirees of Canada (CURC)
- International Federation on Ageing (IFA)
- College of Family Physicians of Canada
- CURAC
- Canadian Nurses Association (CNA)
- National Association of Federal Retirees
- Canadian Association of Retired Teachers (ACER-CART)
- Canadian Alliance of United Seniors (CAUS)
- Council of Senior Citizens' Organizations of British Columbia (COSCO)
- Professional Institute of the Public Sector of Canada
- The Royal Canadian Legion, Ontario Command
- Police Pensioners Association of Ontario (PPAO)
- British Columbia Old Age Pensioners Organization (BCOAPO)
- Older Women's Network (Ontario)
- Quebec Provincial Association of Retired School Educators (QPARSE-APPERO)
- The United Senior Citizens of Ontario (USCO)
- Social Services Network (SSN)
- Public Interest Alberta
- Saskatchewan Seniors Association Incorporated (SSAI)
- Federation of Senior Citizens and Pensioners of Nova Scotia (FSCPNS)
- Service Employees International Union Retirees (SEIU)
- Communications Workers of Canada Retirees Council
- Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees (SOAR)
- Retired Members Division of Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU)
- PEI Federation of Union Retirees

This list is current as of May 15, 2015. To read the updated list of organizations who endorse **Seniors Vote**, visit [www.carp.ca](http://www.carp.ca) and search "Seniors Vote".