

Liberal Party of Canada

Summary of Questions from The Writers' Union of Canada

Fair Copyright

1. Would your party propose a Bill to modernize copyright that is founded on creators being compensated for the use of their works? Specifically, would you remove the over-broad exceptions that appeared in Bill C-32 (such as “fair dealing for education”) which would result in the sanctioned expropriation of writers’ property and income?

Digital technology offers many new opportunities, but enjoying content without compensating its creators shouldn’t be among them. In this spirit, a Liberal government will modernize Canada’s copyright laws with technology neutral legislation that balances the needs of creators and consumers. Any exception under fair dealings must be clearly defined with a clear and strict test for fair use so that authors and other creators are fairly compensated for their work.

2. How would you ensure that the Copyright Act protects creators’ existing and future revenue streams in a digital economy?

A Liberal government will stand with Canadian creators and artists as they navigate both the opportunities and challenges of the new digital society. During the debate on copyright legislation in the last Parliament, it was the Liberal Party that developed a much-praised solution to providing musicians with compensation through a new private copying compensation fund rather than a consumer levy.

A Liberal government will look to develop similarly innovative solutions to ensure that the Copyright Act protects creators’ existing and future revenue streams in a digital age.

Fair Taxation for Artists

3. Would your party introduce a Copyright-Income Deduction for creators, modeled on that used in the province of Quebec? If so, when?
4. Would your party exempt from taxation subsistence grants for creators administered by the Canada Council for the Arts? If so, when?

Answer to questions 3 and 4:

Liberals have always understood that artists are hard working citizens, committed to the value of cultural expression. A Liberal government will significantly increase support for Canadian artists and creators by doubling the annual budget of the Canada Council for the Arts, from \$180 million to \$360 million over the next four years. A Liberal government will further support Canadian artists by restoring the Promart and Trade Routes cultural promotion programs and increasing their funding to \$25 million.

Investment in the Arts

5. Would you invest in the not-for-profit arts sector by increasing the allocation to the Canada Council for the Arts and the department of Canadian Heritage, among others? If so, by how much and in what timeframe?

Yes. The Liberal Party recognizes that the cultural sector is a major part of the Canadian economy. According to a Conference Board study, culture generates more than \$80 billion in direct and indirect economic benefits every year, and creates 1.1 million jobs. The Liberal Party also recognizes that the Canada Council for the Arts is a major force in supporting working artists. A Liberal government will increase investments in the arts sector by doubling the annual budget of the Canada Council for the Arts, from \$180 million to \$360 million over the next four years.

6. Would your party return funding to the Prom-Art program? If so, when? If not, what would your party propose to do for the development of foreign markets for Canadian cultural products?

Yes. The Promart and TradeRoutes cultural promotion programs play an important role in bringing Canadian culture to the world and increasing our exports. A Liberal government will immediately restore these programs. We will also increase their funding to \$25 million annually, starting in year one of a Liberal government. New annual funding will help to create a domestic tours program as well.

7. Would your party return the Public Lending Right Commission's hit rate to the original \$40 and commit to indexing it to inflation going forward?¹ Would you push for PLR compensation to cover ebooks as well as print books?

Payments issued by the PLR Commission are funded by the Canada Council for the Arts. In 2009-10, PLR payments accounted for 6.3 percent of all grants, payments, awards and prizes funded by the Canada Council for the Arts. A Liberal government will support Canadian artists by doubling the Canada Council for the Arts' annual budget over the next four years, enabling the Canada Council for the Arts to significantly increase the number and size of its grants, payments, awards and prizes.

8. What investments does your party propose to make in art and culture as a component of a National Strategy for the Knowledge/Digital Economy?

Canadians should continue to have access to ever more Canadian stories and Canadian content in the Digital Canada of the future. New media should provide vibrant and rewarding new avenues for expression by Canadian artists. The public broadcasters, Radio Canada and the CBC have crucial roles to play in achieving these objectives.

A Liberal government will invest in Canada's cultural sector by doubling the annual budget of the Canada Council for the Arts over four years. A Liberal government will also provide the CBC and Radio-Canada with stable and predictable funding in support of their unique and crucial roles as essential promoters and defenders of Canadians culture in the digital age.

¹ Payments for any given book are based on the number of times that book is found in a changing selection of public libraries. Each time a book is found, that counts as a "hit." The "hit rate" is the value of each "hit" to the author.