

Conservative Party of Canada Platform - 2021

A truly public CBC

1. *Remove all ads from CBC English services, and from digital services in all languages. (NO)*
2. *Increasing funding so that the CBC can fulfill its public purpose. (NO)*
3. *End political appointments for the President and the Board of Directors. (NO)*

During his run for leadership of the Conservative Party of Canada, Erin O'Toole promised to end all funding for CBC's digital services, and slash funding for English TV and CBC News Network before privatizing those services entirely. He stated that Radio-Canada and all French services would go untouched.

There is no clear evidence in the Conservative Party's election platform to suggest that this position has changed. Specifically, the party promises to "review the mandate of CBC English Television, CBC News Network and CBC English online news" and proposes a dramatically different service with an alternative funding model, like that of PBS in the United States. There is also no firm indication that O'Toole has abandoned his plan to eventually privatize English TV and CBC News Network.

The Conservative Party also proposes to create a "distinct legal and administrative structure" for Radio-Canada while maintaining funding at current levels. Under this new system, Radio-Canada's Board would include some Directors appointed by the Government of Québec – a new model of governance for the national public broadcaster that introduces province-level oversight. Radio-Canada would no longer be permitted to charge user fees on its digital platforms or offer branding services like CBC Tandem.

The Conservatives have not addressed the issue of ending political appointments for the CBC's President and Board of Directors.

Telling our own stories

1. *Compel companies like Netflix to invest an equal share of their revenues in the production of original Canadian content, just as Canadian broadcasters do. (UNCLEAR)*

The Conservative Party will require streaming giants like Netflix and Disney+ to invest "a significant portion of Canadian gross revenue" into the production of Canadian content. This would also include a mandated proportion of French language content. However, there are no firm numbers or percentages attached to the proposal, making it impossible to assess its actual impact in supporting the production of Canadian content.

Strong and credible journalism

1. *End the nearly \$2 billion in tax subsidies that reward Canadian business for buying ads from Google and Facebook at the expense of credible, legitimate, Canadian media. (NO)*

2. *Follow Australia and France to force Google and Facebook to compensate Canadian news organizations for their content, including the CBC. (YES)*

The Conservatives propose to make foreign tech companies pay a digital services tax representing 3% of their gross revenue in Canada, assuming they don't pay corporate income tax in Canada. They are not proposing to close the tax loophole in Section 19 of Income Tax Act that provides almost \$2 billion in tax subsidies to Canadian companies that buy ads from Facebook and Google.

The Conservatives will also end the \$600 million news media bailout introduced by the Liberal government in 2019, which provides traditional news outlets with refundable tax credits and tax incentives for non-profit journalism outlets. The Conservatives propose to create a "digital media royalty framework" based on best practices from countries like France and Australia. This framework will provide compensation to Canadian media when their content is shared on platforms like Google and Facebook.

Canadian values in Canadian media

1. *Enforce existing laws. Governments already have a lot of power to crack down on platforms that facilitate illegal activity, but they refuse to use it. That has to change. If it's illegal offline, it's illegal online. (UNCLEAR)*
2. *Make platforms' Canadian executives personally liable for their company's conduct, with penalties including possible jail time. (NO)*
3. *Change the law so that Canadian courts can block the flow of funds to repeat offenders. If you break the law, we should break your business. (NO)*

The Conservative Party proposes to address illegal and harmful activities online through the criminal justice system by "clearly criminalizing statements that encourage acts of violence against other people or identifiable groups". They also propose to introduce a "stronger legal duty for social media platforms to remove illegal content, such as content that incites violence". However, it is not clear to what extent these "stronger legal duties" will impose legal liability on platforms for hosting illegal content.

The Conservatives also promise to exempt user-generated content from Internet regulations, meaning that companies like Facebook and YouTube may not be held liable for hosting, disseminating and profiting from illegal content that is uploaded to their platforms by users.

The Conservative Party platform does not address the issue of personal liability for Canadian executives of big tech firms. It also does not address the possibility of imposing barriers that would prevent platforms that consistently break the law from accessing the Canadian financial system.