

3. Email Template

Here is a template email letter that you can write to candidates.

Let's get the candidates to commit to supporting autistic and otherwise disabled people!

When sending the email, make sure to **add the name of the MP** at the top, and **your own name** and **postal address** at the bottom.

You can also change the template to personalize it.

Subject: Your Commitments to Autistic and Disabled People in Canada

Dear Mr./Ms./Mx. _____,

I am writing to you as a member of your constituency, and as a member of Autistics United Canada, a grassroots collective of autistic youth and adults across the country. As one of the few entirely autistic-led organizations in Canada, representing thousands of members, we would like to ask about your party's commitments to improving the lives of autistic people.

1. Autistic people and otherwise disabled and neurodivergent people face violence, discrimination, and human rights violations daily, at school, work, home, institutions, and healthcare settings. **What is your party committing to do to protect the rights, well-being, and safety of autistic and otherwise neurodivergent/disabled people?**

2. **Will your party commit to meaningfully consulting directly with autistic people of diverse backgrounds and autistic-led organizations whenever creating national autism and disability policy,** in accordance with United Nations

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and General comment No. 7 (2018) on the participation of persons with disabilities?

3. Canada ranks second last in health care among high-income countries (Schneider et al., 2021). The lack of universal pharma care, vision care, and dental care have been identified as concerns. **Will your party implement a universal, single-payer public pharma care, vision, and dental care system? If elected, when will this happen?**

4. Autistic people have protested harmful interventions for decades. Applied Behaviour Analysis, a costly intervention, has been widely reported to cause long-term trauma, maladaptive compliance, and vulnerability to abuse (Brown, 2014; Dawson & Fletcher-Watson, 2020; Gardner, 2017; Milton, 2018; Sandoval-Norton & Shkedy, 2019; Wilkenfeld & McCarthy, 2020). ABA has historical and ongoing links to gay and gender-non-conforming conversion therapy, which the federal government has already moved to ban (Pyne, 2020). As well, pseudoscience "cures" for autism are still marketed in Canada and sold by Canadian health care providers (Lindsay, 2020; Weeks, 2019).

Will your party resolve to take stronger measures to ban harmful "treatments" for autism such as Applied Behavioural Analysis, Miracle Mineral Solution, chelation, and fecal matter transplant therapy, and fund neurodiversity-affirming, trauma-informed supports created with autistic consultation in their place? If so, when can we expect this to happen?

5. To ensure that all disabled people have access to safe, affordable, and accessible housing, **will your party commit to desegregate housing by closing institutions and re-routing funding towards independent supported living, and funding more than the inadequate 20% new accessible housing targeted in the National Housing Strategy? If elected, what targets will your party commit to and when can we expect they will be achieved?**

6. Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) users, including those newly hospitalized during the pandemic and requiring assistive technology, face

significant barriers due to inaffordability and maltreatment by school and health care providers (Ganz, 2015; Lindsay, 2010; McQuigge, 2020). **Will your party commit to funding affordable early access to AAC and creating a national education program led and informed by AAC users to train health care providers, educators, and other professionals working with autistic and otherwise AAC-using people?**

7. While Canadians receiving CERB received up to \$38,000, the support offered to disabled people was a mere \$600 one-time payment to Disability Tax Credit recipients. **Is your party committed to reforming the benefits system such as the DTC and reducing poverty among disabled people in Canada? Will your party commit to working alongside provincial and territorial governments and Indigenous peoples to create a universal guaranteed basic income program? If elected, how and when would your party plan to implement reforms?**

8. The passage of Bill C-7 in March 2021 dramatically expanded eligibility for Medical Assistance in Dying to include disabled people not near end-of-life. Human rights and disability justice experts and UN officials have warned that this expansion discriminates against disabled people and lacks adequate safeguards. We are gravely concerned about how disabled people, particularly people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, disabled BIPOC, disabled people in poverty, and other multiply marginalized disabled people, are being coerced and pressured to receive MAiD due to systemic inequities, extreme lack of critical health care, supports and services, and ableist institutional bias.

Will your party commit to reforming MAiD legislation to align with Article 6 and 26 of the UN ICCPR and the Vulnerable Persons Standard, by:

- 1) restoring more stringent safeguards to protect those vulnerable to coercion?**
- 2) implementing safeguards that disabled people who request MAiD are guaranteed meaningful, timely alternatives to access disability services and supports?**
- 3) collecting and publicly reporting comprehensive data about MAiD (including disaggregated demographic data) to assess whether Canada's**

safeguards are adequate?

4) meaningfully involving and actively addressing the concerns of diverse groups of disabled people, especially multiply marginalized disabled people in any review or changes to MAiD?

9. Disabled and neurodivergent children and their families do not have access to affordable, inclusive child care support. This disproportionately impacts disabled parents, who also face institutional ableism and lack of supports that sanction the removal of their children from their care. **Will your party commit to funding affordable, inclusive, neurodiversity-affirming childcare and protecting the rights of disabled parents to keep and raise their own children?**

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing your response.

Sincerely,

[your name]

[your postal code]