




# Grey Power and Valence Issues in Canadian Federal Elections

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Politics of Aging

## Potential for Grey Power?

| Age Group | Average Turnout in 2006, 2008, 2011, 2015 Elections (%) |
|-----------|---|
| 18-24     | 46.6  |
| 25-34     | 50.1  |
| 65-74     | 74.95   |
| 75+       | 64.15   |

This paper attempts to situate Canadian seniors within the multitude of factors that electors face each time they are asked to cast their vote. This paper asks: how have the valence issues related to seniors, long-term/home care and income security in retirement, impacted Canadian federal elections since 2006? The paper finds that pensions and retirement savings have long been a concern for all three political parties, whereas long-term care and health becomes relevant as the baby boom generation ages. The results question the perceived grey power of the aging population of Canada: electoral success has not yet been conclusively linked to the valence issues of long-term care and retirement savings.

|  | 2006  |  | 2008   |   | 2011   |   | 2015   |  |
|--|---|--|--|---|--|---|--|--|
|  | Healthcare  | Pensions   | Healthcare   | Pensions  | Healthcare   | Pensions  | Healthcare   | Pensions   |
|   | -Immediate and long-term increase in long-term care units<br>-Romanow report<br>-Seniors' Charter | -Implement a Benefits Insurance Program<br>-Initiate an annual review of seniors' needs<br>-Regulate underfunding of private pensions<br>-Amend the CPP formula<br>-CPP survivor benefits for same-sex couples | -Expand home care to reflect Romanow report<br>-Access to home care for 100 000 families | -Create the Canadian Pension Benefits Insurance Fund<br>-Ensure access to federal disability tax credit for all CPP disability pensioners | -Home Retrofit Program and Home Adaption for Seniors'<br>Independence Program<br>-Inter-generational Home Forgivable Loan Program<br>-New transfer payments for long-term care and home care | -Double the C/QPP<br>-Add voluntary contribution to government pensions<br>-Expand GIS to lift every senior out of poverty<br>-Tighten legislation to protect seniors when businesses go bankrupt | -Home care for 41 000 more seniors<br>-5000 new nursing home beds<br>-New health accord with provinces<br>-National Strategy on Aging                  | -Lower age of eligibility for OAS and GIS<br>-Raise both C/QPP and GIS<br>-Tighten bankruptcy rules<br>-Roll back increase in TFSA maximum<br>-End income splitting, while maintain protection for seniors |
|  | None  | -Support for CPP, OAS, and GIS<br>-Pledge of no new taxes<br>-Overall reduction in sales tax   | None   | Senior Age Credit Amount increase by \$1000<br>-Fairness for seniors collecting USA Social Security                                       | -Family Caregiver Tax Credit   | -Previous action<br>-Top-up' of GIS: \$600 for singles, \$840 for couples<br>-Maximum of TFSAs up to \$10 000   | -Continued funding of palliative care research   | -Protect TFSA increase<br>-Registered Retirement Income Funds<br>-Future of voluntary retirement savings   |
|  | -National Pharmaceuticals Strategy  | -Continue previous commitments to CPP and GIS<br>-Create climate for Canadians to work past 65   | None   | -Increase GIS by \$600 per year, \$800 per year for low income couples  | -Home care listed as a "priority"<br>-Family Care Employment Insurance Benefit to cover cost of family home care   | -Increase in CPP<br>-Secure Retirement Option: voluntary supplement to CPP<br>-Enhancement of GIS<br>-Private pension plans   | -Investments in affordable housing and seniors' facilities<br>-\$3 billion allotted for home care over four years<br>-New health accord with provinces | -Continue income splitting - Age of eligibility for OAS and GIS to 65<br>-Increase GIS by 10%<br>-Link OAS and GIS increases to new Seniors Price Index  |