

KELLIE LEITCH LAUNCH REMARKS

Thank you very much Ehab for that kind introduction.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I am running to become your next Prime Minister of Canada.

We are going to win this leadership race. We are going to defeat the Trudeau Liberals in 2019.

Today I am going to tell you why Canadians are listening carefully to our campaign.

This Liberal government is failing Canadians.

Failing to protect our historic Canadian values.

And they are failing Canadians with enormous new government spending that is growing the size of government and choking off private sector jobs.

FRENCH

Je me présente pour devenir la prochaine première ministre du Canada.

Nous allons gagner cette course à la chefferie.

Nous allons vaincre les libéraux de Trudeau en 2019.

Aujourd'hui, je vais vous expliquer pourquoi les Canadiens sont si attentifs à notre campagne.

Ce gouvernement libéral ne respecte pas les attentes des Canadiens.

Il ne respecte pas nos valeurs canadiennes historiques.

Et il ne respecte pas les Canadiens, avec ses énormes nouvelles dépenses gouvernementales qui alourdissent l'État et nuisent au secteur privé.

END FRENCH

Freedom.

Prosperity.

Canadian Identity.

Many people say that they are proud Canadians. I would like to tell you what that means to me to be a proud Canadian.

Whether you are born in Canada or you came to Canada, some time ago or even this week.

It doesn't matter when you came here or where you came from, doesn't matter as much as where we are going as a country and as a Canadian people, together.

The expectation we all have is that Canada is a place where people are more equal than anywhere else in the world.

It's a safe place because violence to resolve conflict is unacceptable and not tolerated.

In Canada, more than anywhere else in the world you are rewarded based on your efforts.

More than anywhere in the world you have a real chance to succeed, if you are willing to work hard.

Canada is a place where you can provide for yourself. You can provide for your family. That is the expectation that we have for each other.

If you are born in Canada, you have freedom. If you come to Canada, you have freedom.

When you live in a society that treats everyone equal under the law, you have freedom.

But, when you prosper, when you are able to provide for yourself and your family, you have even more freedom.

Freedom & Prosperity.

Equality Of Opportunity.

These are central and at the core of our shared Canadian Identity.

But that is not all, Canadians are generous. We work hard and then we help others.

We are generous to each other, here at home and we are generous to others in the world who need our help.

Canada is always there. This is the Canadian way. We help when anyone asks.

But the one Canadian value that makes Canada the special place that it is tolerance.

Canada is a country where we have disagreements about priorities and about what's important – and that's valuable – but what's most valuable is we have those disagreements within a framework that applies to each of us equally.

Where we respect each individual's right to form their own opinion, where we don't seek to impose our views on others.

Where our disagreements are dealt with peacefully without resorting to force and violence.

And, when we don't agree, we are tolerant of each other's opinions.

We are a tolerant society. Our tolerance and respect for one another has made us a strong nation. A diverse nation with many strengths from many peoples, from every corner in the world.

This is our way. The Canadian way. And is the Canadian dream that has been made available to millions upon millions that were willing to:

Work hard

Provide for themselves and their families

Give back to their communities

In this country you are free to practice your faith, whatever you choose.

In this country women and men are equal.

In this country you are free to love whomever you choose

But, Violence and misogyny are not Canadian values and will not be tolerated.

Hate speech will not be tolerated.

Mental or any other form of abuse will not be tolerated.

On this we all agree.

It's the next part of the conversation that has been particularly troubling to the mainstream media, the Ottawa bubble, the Liberals and even some Conservatives.

The world has changed dramatically in the last 30 years and especially in the last 15 years.

The world is a much more dangerous place.

The values that we hold dear in Canada are not those that are held dear around the entire world.

And those who disagree with our values are willing to go to greater and greater lengths to disagree with those values violently.

At the same time, and because of the wars in Ukraine, Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, more and more people are trying to come to Canada.

We are the beacon of hope for the world.

Immigration has become a more urgent issue now, more than ever before.

And we know this because last year the Liberals brought more immigrants into Canada than in any single year in the last 45 years.

(<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/canada-welcomed-320000-immigrants-in-past-year-highest-number-since-1971/article32102991/>)

And let me be very clear — immigration is a good thing for this country. Canada has been built by immigrants.

But what is troubling is that fewer and fewer of the people who come to Canada do not get a face-to-face interview with an immigration officer.

Only a handful of immigrants ever see an immigration officer face-to-face.

It's less than 1 out of 5 people. Less than 20%

(Report of the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence titled Vigilance, Accountability and Security at Canada's Borders)

I've been hearing from Canadians that more screening is necessary.

And it's not just a large number of Conservatives, but a significant majority of all Canadians.

Conservative supporters, Liberal supporters, New Democrat supporters....
Canadians! A majority across party lines – want more screening, not less.

FRENCH

Encore plus troublant, de moins en moins de personnes qui arrivent au Canada passent une entrevue en tête-à-tête avec un agent d'immigration.

Seuls quelques immigrants rencontrent un agent d'immigration en personne.

C'est moins de 1 immigrant sur 5. Moins de 20 %.

Les Canadiens me disent qu'il faut être plus sélectif.

Et cela ne vient pas seulement d'un grand nombre de conservateurs, mais également d'une majorité de Canadiens.

Des partisans conservateurs, des partisans libéraux, des partisans néo-démocrates...

Canadiens! Et Canadiennes! Une majorité de citoyens de tous les partis réclament plus de filtrage de demandes d'immigration, pas moins

END FRENCH

And because of this I will continue to argue that Canadians want to protect our nation, our way of life – our Canadian values, our Canadian identity, a Canadian identity that so many people have fought and died for.

Now the question turns to: Why should we screen? And, what are we screening for?

The discussion of immigration and screening seems to focus heavily on questions of security and keeping out undesirables.

When it doesn't focus on these items it tends to focus on economic matters.

But there is another aspect of the immigration system that is being over-looked which, applies what I have been talking about with thousands of Canadians over the last 8 months.

That is the concept of immigration as an act of nation-building. A process that strengthens our country, the fabric of who we are, and what we will be in the future.

This is reflected in the objectives of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act which states that the purpose of the act is to enrich the social and cultural fabric of our nation.

I believe the significant decline of face to face interviews detracts from the concept of nation-building.

Sadly, immigration officers are under pressure to meet their quotas by glossing over paper applications.

They have no opportunity to meet the people they are welcoming to our country unless they have suspicions about the authenticity of their applications.

This is unhealthy, and dangerous for our nation as a whole.

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Ce n'est pas sain. C'est même dangereux pour l'unité de notre nation.

END FRENCH

This trend became significant with the introduction of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (2001).

Prior to the introduction of the Act, most applicants for permanent resident visas were interviewed by an immigration official. A Canadian.

The trend to waive interviews for 'straightforward' cases arose during the late 1990's

Today, this Liberal government is obsessed with numbers and quotas.

There are constant demands for more and more approvals meaning an effective demand for fewer refusals since, refusals take more time and therefore make it more difficult to meet the approval quotas.

There is more and more evidence surfacing that our immigration officers are expected to make seventy-five decisions per day.

Less than 5 minutes per application?

How can we expect our immigration officer to fulfill their responsibilities to protect our country under these circumstances? They are completely unrealistic.

On the matter of screening visitors, refugees and immigrants to Canada for anti- Canadian values.

It's no wonder that every other person running for the leadership of the conservative party is against it.

How can you even ask questions about equality of women, of freedom of religion about equality for all under the law – Canadian Law – without face to face interviews or personal interactions with trained immigration officers?

To be fair, Tony Clement did raise the issue of more interviews with trained immigration officers. And he's right.

Now the other candidates, so far, who want to become Prime Minister, are indicating that they stand on the other side of the majority of Canadians on this most important issue.

FRENCH

Mais à ce jour, les autres candidats qui souhaitent devenir premier ministre sont à l'encontre de la position de la majorité des Canadiens sur cette question des plus importantes.

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I found the initial reaction to my discussion of Canadian values to be astounding. And for me, this was a tipping point.

I could, as most Conservatives do, talk only about the debt, deficits and tax cuts. And while these policies are also important to discuss, they cannot be our only focus.

Canadians are not only interested in tax cuts. Canadians care about how we protect our Canadian values. How we protect who we are and build our nation for the future.

And we must not let Liberals claim sole stake to any discussion of our Canadian values.

We must not be afraid to talk about our Canadian values.

I am running for the leadership of the Conservative Party of Canada with a clear directive from the thousands of Canadians that I have met personally and the many more thousands who have written and reached out to my campaign, who have said...

Stand up for the values that make this country great. That makes Canada great!

I am the only leadership candidate willing to talk about and stand up for a unified Canadian identity that is based on historic Canadian values.

How we protect those Canadian values in today's reality of ever increasing immigration levels and ever decreasing face to face interviews with trained, Canadian Immigration officers is up to us.

We must screen for Canadian values. We must identify those who hold anti-Canadian values and in some cases – ban them from entry. In other cases, we should require them to receive more education on our Canadian values and our expectations before granting any permanent status.

But when our Prime Minister openly and proudly states that Canada “has no core identity – there is no mainstream”.

This is very worrisome and potentially very dangerous.

And I'm confident a majority of Canadians agree.

A discussion of our Canadian values is not racist, xenophobic or anti-immigrant.

It is just common sense.

And we should not be afraid or bullied by political correctness to have this discussion.

FRENCH

Discuter de nos valeurs canadiennes n'est ni raciste, ni xénophobe, ni anti-immigrant

Ce n'est que du gros bon sens.

Et nous devrions pouvoir mener cette discussion sans avoir peur, sans être bousculés par les pensées politiquement correctes.

END FRENCH

Our Canadian identity is such that we embrace freedom and tolerance and these values allow each of us the chance to pursue our best lives and to become our best selves.

I am proud to stand up for hardworking Canadians who truly believe in the need for a discussion about Canadian values and a unified Canadian identity.

Like all Canadians, I'm proud of our rights and freedoms, as they have been embodied in our fundamental constitutional documents such as our Charter.

Recent public opinion polling clearly shows that the majority of Canadians have strong opinions that are the same as mine.

The public does not align with the “establishment”, it doesn’t align with the “insiders in the media”, and it doesn’t align with the “political classes”. But it is real and it is significant

The establishment and the elites do not decide elections.

You do. We as Canadians do.

And while I’ll have some naysayers, I’m not afraid to say what I think and stand up for what I believe.

The values that I was taught growing up.

The values I learned at my family dinner table.

The ones that many of us agree are common sense and mainstream.

Debate and discussion about Canadian values and anti-Canadian values should be welcomed – this is what happens in a democracy.

It is not intolerant to believe in a set of values that we expect everyone to share, including those people who are visiting or immigrating to Canada.

And while it’s easy for some to trivialize this conversation; to try and paint this discussion in a negative light, I refuse to go down that path.

Instead, I choose the path that proudly and unabashedly holds up our unified Canadian identity and our Canadian values.

It’s what Canadians expect. It’s what Canadians deserve. It’s what Canadians are asking for.

One of the first values that I mentioned in my campaign, is the value of hard work.

And the value of rewarding hard work. It must all start with hard work.

As I’ve traveled across the country, I’ve spoken with countless Canadians who work hard to support their families, and yet many of them are just scraping by.

The Liberals, however, also working hard at spending. Spending at a reckless rate.

They’ve squandered a budgetary surplus left by our previous government.

And, in typical Liberal fashion, they’ve already shown such blatant disrespect of taxpayer dollars – your money.

The sense of their entitlement is appalling.

If we are to be a free and prosperous nation that allows Canadians to fulfil the Canadian Dream – for a better future for themselves and their families, then we must put an end to ever-increasing government expenditures.

That’s why as Prime Minister, I will implement a clear policy to fix this problem: I will cap government spending.

This must be done.

With enormous new government spending that grows government, year after year, the Liberals are choking off private sector jobs.

There will be a cap on overall government spending. Ministers and public servants will have to do more, with less every year. It's more than possible and it is necessary.

The government of Canada must live within its means, just like you do at home.

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Si nous visons à être une nation libre et prospère, qui permet à tous les Canadiens de vivre le rêve canadien d'avoir un meilleur avenir pour leur famille et eux-mêmes, il faut mettre fin aux dépenses gouvernementales qui augmentent sans fin.

C'est pourquoi, en tant que première ministre, je vais développer une politique claire pour régler ce problème : je vais imposer une limite aux dépenses gouvernementales.

Cela doit être fait.

Avec d'énormes nouvelles dépenses gouvernementales qui alourdissent le gouvernement année après année, les libéraux nuisent à l'emploi dans le secteur privé.

Les dépenses gouvernementales en général seront limitées. Les ministres et les bureaucrates auront à faire plus avec moins chaque année. C'est très possible, et c'est nécessaire.

Le gouvernement du Canada doit vivre selon ses moyens, comme nous le faisons tous à la maison.

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It's a vicious cycle.

Bigger government. More rules. More red tape.

More money needed to pay for it.

Income taxes, carbon taxes, payroll taxes. All going up.

Deficits every year.

Debt at historic levels.

Huge Government.

But what really needs to happen, the private sector needs to grow. The public sector need to shrink.

That is the way to prosperity for the entire country.

You work to pay off your mortgage. You don't just take out a second mortgage and expect that someone else will pay for it.

You make the tough choices of what you can do as a family. Priorities that are difficult but necessary.

Skating lessons vs. swimming lessons or your children. Vacation or no vacation. Home repairs this year or waiting until next year. Saving for future education or for your retirement.

Reality.

The Government of Canada must face this reality too.

Prioritize and make choices so the next generations of Canadians can be prosperous.

But, we've all seen the caricature of the Conservative who is interested more in money than in people. And we know that is unfair. As Conservatives we believe in a strong economy, we believe in prosperity not for its own sake but for what it allows us to achieve.

Balanced budgets are a conservative dogma that all candidates are expected to endorse. Being dogma it defies explanation and justification.

To what end must the books be balanced? For their own sake?

Prosperity is a means to an end. That end is the highest amount of freedom possible.

Personal freedom. Economic freedom.

Canadians work hard, pay taxes and want the freedom to spend their money as they chose. We want safety and security, healthcare, education, to be able to help those who cannot help themselves and to help people who have worked hard and contributed to our system but who sometimes, really need a hand up at a certain point in their lives – like a lot of people in Alberta need right now.

These services allow us to achieve more, they give us greater options, greater choice, for pursuing the kind of life we want to lead.

And this is where we differ from the Liberals. We do not believe these things are entitlements. We do not believe we're owed them. Instead, we do believe that they are the benefits of hard work, work we do together, to improve our lives together.

But we have to work hard to get there. Just like you do every day. Hard work that ensures greater wealth for Canadian families so that they can support themselves and secure their futures.

And, this greater prosperity then allows us to help others and provide the supports that are required so that everyone can enjoy the equality of opportunity required to build a better life in Canada.

Most Canadians live this, every day.

This is the reason so many individuals and families choose to come to Canada. Because Canada is the beacon of hope to the world because of our shared values: hard work, generosity, freedom of equality of opportunity and tolerance.

This is what makes me a proud Canadian. I am proud to be Canadian.

We have a long campaign ahead of us.

There is sure to be spirited debate around these and other issues, as the campaign progresses.

But from my travels so far and from listening to thousands of Canadians, it is clear that our party wants a leader who will stand up for Canadian values.

Who will stand up for hard work.

And who will stand up for controlling wasteful government spending.

Our party leadership must continue to listen to our membership base. But more than listen, they should deliver on what you want.

We are off to a great start, we still have a lot of work to do: we have to raise money, visit as many riding associations as possible, sign up members and recruit volunteers.

With your help, we can win.

I've been a Conservative party activist since I was 14.

I've hammered in lawn signs, knocked on doors and I've been listening. I know what the grassroots of this party is looking for in a leader.

My experience keeps me grounded in the Canadian values that we hold dear.

We must be honest and confident to discuss with our fellow Canadians, who we are, what we believe in and where we hope to lead our country.

If this were easy, it would hardly be meaningful. So yes, we're going to have to work hard to get there.

Work hard to win this leadership.

Work hard to beat Trudeau and the Liberals.

FRENCH

Il faut être honnête et ne pas avoir peur de discuter avec les Canadiens de qui nous sommes, de ce en quoi nous croyons et des objectifs de notre pays.

Si c'était facile, l'exercice serait inutile. Donc, effectivement, il faudra travailler fort pour y arriver.

Il faudra travailler fort pour gagner cette course à la chefferie.

Il faudra travailler fort pour battre Trudeau et les libéraux.

END FRENCH

We cannot get there alone.

We have to inspire and motivate our membership to continue to get active.

We need a fresh perspective and new approach. One that proudly looks forward to the future.

I know we are all committed. I know we will work hard. I know we will stand up for our Canadian values. And I know that, with renewed vigour, we will defeat Mr. Trudeau in 2019.

FRENCH

Joignez-vous à moi et travaillons d'arrache-pied pour prouver aux Canadiens qu'une fois de plus, le Parti conservateur du Canada est le seul parti qui protège vos familles, votre liberté, votre prospérité et votre avenir. Et le seul qui défend vos valeurs canadiennes.

END FRENCH

Join me and let's work hard to prove to the Canadian people, once again, that the Conservative Party of Canada is the only party looking out for your families, for your freedom and for your financial prosperity and future. And the only party standing up for your Canadian values.

Thank you very much.

Merci

Background Information

Satzewich, Vic. 2015. Points of Entry: How Canada's Immigration Officers Decide Who Gets In.
Vancouver, UBC Press