



COSCO News

Council of Senior Citizens' Organizations of B.C.

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<https://www.facebook.com/COSCOBC/>



FEDERAL ELECTION EDITION SENIORS VOTE!

A Message from Sheila Pither, COSCO President

Welcome to COSCO's federal election edition of our newsletter. COSCO is non-partisan but that doesn't mean that we are not actively involved in election campaigns. Our role is one of informing the political parties about the needs of older adults. But that isn't the only obligation. We also inform voters about the issues we are pursuing in order to protect and improve the lives of seniors. Three pillars upon which COSCO is based are Health, Housing, and Income Security. In this Newsletter we have described what we want to improve in those areas.

But we have chosen a fourth pillar, one that focuses on global concerns. The pandemic gave us a bitter reminder that there is no way to isolate ourselves and be comfortably secure. When SENIORS VOTE we look beyond our borders. The legacy we are creating to pass on to future generations cannot be ignored.

A force to be reckoned with? We believe that to be true. Older adults have much to contribute, as election day approaches—time, experience, wisdom and just enough skepticism to assist us in choosing the candidate we will support. In this and every other election COSCO focuses on issues, not political parties.

We hope that this little publication will encourage you to ask questions. Please attend Town Hall events to meet the candidates in your riding. COVID-19 makes it possible for you to participate from your home. Meetings are abundant. Promises fill the air. It's an exciting, stimulating time.

Email Sheila Pither at pither470@shaw.ca

Seniors vote

A force to be reckoned with

The Council of Senior Citizens' Organizations of BC (COSCO) believes that seniors, working together, are a force to be reckoned with. Seniors will vote on September 20th. Together, we can help make Canada a more caring and inclusive society. Backed up by those votes we call upon every party to make serious commitments to:

- Create a universal national Pharmacare program – not just repeatedly promise one – so nobody has to choose between food and needed medicines.
- Protect the most vulnerable seniors with national standards for long term care and home care with funding for adequate staffing levels.
- Build affordable, accessible housing with a range of choices for seniors.
- Take immediate action to lift seniors out of poverty by increasing Old Age Security and the Guaranteed Income Supplement, and increase the survivor benefit.
- Protect the pensions of workers when corporations go bankrupt, not just the claims of executives and big banks.
- Provide affordable child care to allow parents to fully contribute to the economy without retirees serving as “baby sitters” every day.
- Aggressively tackle the climate crisis for the sake of everyone on the planet, and especially for the future of our children and grandchildren.
- Combat systemic racism, hate and ageism to build inclusive communities that welcome everyone.

We ask you to look for these issues when you are deciding where to cast your ballot. Seniors vote to help Canada to be an even better place to live.

Produced by the Council of Senior Citizens' Organizations of B.C.
www.coscobic.org



Seniors Vote!

ISSUES: Seniors Health Care

Long-Term Care

The terrible suffering of so many seniors in long-term care in Canada that was exposed during COVID-19 must never happen again.

- We need an absolute guarantee from the federal, provincial and territorial governments in Canada that they will work together to respect the human rights of all seniors in long-term care. They deserve high quality care so they may live in dignity and enjoy a reasonable quality of life.
- We want our governments to stop playing political games and work together to agree on and implement National Standards for Long-term Care and a Long-term Care Act, and to do this as a matter of urgency in an open and transparent way.
- Successive Canadian governments deliberately chose to spend much less on long-term care than comparably wealthy countries. The Parliamentary Budget Officer has calculated that Canada currently spends about half of what is needed to improve long-term care. We call for increased Federal funding for care for older adults accompanied by strong accountability measures.



Home Care/ Home Support



Most seniors want to live in their own homes as long as possible. Most are able to do so. However, many seniors have chronic health problems and need a range of supports to be able age at home with dignity and autonomy. Whether older adults are able age in place often depends on their income-level and/or the availability of family and community support. Given low levels of funding for home care/ home support provided by all levels of government, the lack of integrated health care and social services available in our communities, and the fact that most younger family members are employed and often geographically distant, seniors may become isolated and struggle to survive at home.

- Caring for a resident in long-term care costs more than providing adequate home support services in our communities. We need our governments to pledge that they will fund home care and support at the levels that are needed to ensure the dignity and respect for all seniors regardless of income-level.

Seniors Vote!

Dental Care and Hearing Aids



Dental care in Canada is very expensive and even moderate-income seniors who are missing teeth and cannot chew properly or have a mouth or gum infection may be unable to afford the dental care they need to remain healthy.

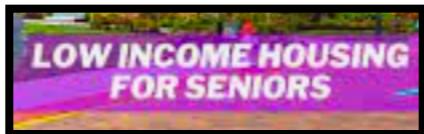
Hearing aids are expensive. Seniors with hearing issues who cannot pay can become isolated from family and friends and cannot participate in the life of their community.

- We urgently need to provide dental care and hearing aids under the Canada Health Act.

Kathleen Jamieson, COSCO



ISSUES: Affordable, Accessible Housing



Housing for low-income seniors must be a priority as seniors are now 25% of the homeless in British Columbia. Seniors want to stay in their homes until it is impossible for them to do so. Independent living will require a number of supports, including money, programs for social well being, as well as medical and healthy living programs.

Governments need to provide a comprehensive housing strategy that will include many aspects of seniors housing, from single family homes, to apartments, condos, co-ops and rentals. Homes need to be adapted to accommodate the increasing safety concerns of seniors. COSCO calls on the federal government:

- to create a national housing strategy that includes the specific needs of seniors at an affordable cost;
- to provide funding and land to build seniors independent housing. Planning of these projects must include seniors themselves and be coordinated with provinces and municipalities;
- to expand direct federal investment in community responses to homelessness through Reaching Home with investment in rural and remote homeless initiatives;
- to expand the Canada housing benefit with a new Homeless Housing Benefit to help people avoid or exit homelessness.
- to implement eviction standards and tenant supports so that no one ends up homeless
- to regulate the exorbitant cost of home insurance, in private homes, condos and rentals

Barb Mikulec

Seniors Vote!

ISSUES: Income Security



Once seniors leave the workforce, we mainly rely on our pensions to pay for ourselves. These pensions include the CPP/GIS, OAS and for some, private work-related pension funds. We are seeing reductions of our private pensions due to employer insolvency. We are also concerned with the divisive nature of the new OAS payment for seniors, with the starting age of 75 instead of 65, when most people retire. It is also a poorly thought-out benefit as it gives OAS increases to people who don't need it, and will indeed be clawed back, while it misses the needs of the poorest seniors under 75.

We call on the future federal government to:

- Increase OAS to all seniors over 65
- Provide a flexible schedule for the withdrawal of RRIFs since many seniors will be forced to cash them out before the end of their lives, creating a cash problem when seniors most need it.
- Protect pensions first in the case of employer insolvency. Company pensions are deferred incomes, paid into by the employees themselves and done with the negotiated agreement of management.
- Increase the Canada Pension Plan survivors benefits by 25%.

Larry Dea

How To Vote



1. Register

If your address changed since the last election, check to see if you are registered to vote in your current home. By phone 1-800-463-6868 or online at elections.ca. You can also go to your nearest Elections Canada office to check or to register. Lastly, you can register at your polling station on election day (or advanced voting days) but you need to prove your identity and address.

2. Ways to Vote

- a) **In person:** Go to your voting station (noted on the card you will receive in the mail). Advanced polls are from 9 AM to 9 PM on September 10, 11, 12, and 13th. Voting day: polls are open for 12 hours, in BC 7 AM to 7 PM. You can also go to an Elections Canada office before September 14th at 6 PM. These offices are open 7 days a week. COVID protocols will be in place. No proof of vaccine is needed.
- b) **By Mail:** You will have to apply online before September 14 at 6 PM in order to get your ballots on time. Go to elections.ca and then to special ballot process. This is a different process than we had for our provincial election as you will have to upload an ID card. NOTE: once you have requested to vote by mail, you cannot change your mind and vote at advance polls or on election day.

Elections Canada website August 27, 2021.
Contact Elections Canada with questions: 1-800-463-6868

ALL CANDIDATES MEETING

September 13th at 7:00 p.m.

YOUR VOICE, YOUR VOTE

Join us for a virtual town hall meeting with federal candidates from the ridings of **Vancouver Granville** and **Vancouver South**. Seniors will ask candidates a series of questions about plans their parties have to improve the lives of seniors through federal initiatives.

Moderated by **Diane L. Wood**, General Vice-President, Council of Senior Citizens' Organizations of BC (COSCO).

To register for free, [**CLICK HERE**](#)

For more information, email margot@jsalliance.org

This event is jointly hosted by the Jewish Seniors Alliance, Marpole Oakridge Family Place, South Vancouver Seniors Network, South Granville Seniors Centre, COSCO BC, and the BC Health Coalition.





2021 Federal Election

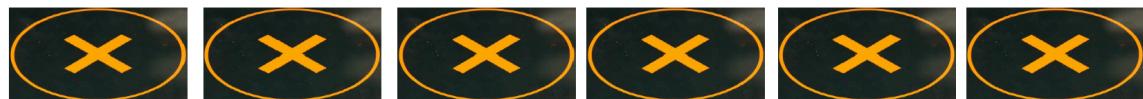
*Election Virtual Town Hall on Seniors Issues
with Candidates from across British Columbia.*

Monday, September 13th, 2021

10:00 a.m.—11:30 a.m.

Join us by Zoom!

https://fedretirees-retraitesfed.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_tn4qBfL1RVuPHgbpnZsgVw



A SENIORS' STRATEGY

Choices. Solutions. Join us. Registration opens Aug. 1

Major challenges and opportunities face seniors, our families, and our communities

WE MUST find the best way forward. That's why the Council of Senior Citizens' Organizations of B.C. is organizing this important virtual conference.

Ideas. Facts. Leading edge research on issues that affect us all. You'll hear all that and more as world class speakers outline their visions for the future.

Equally important, conference participants will choose webinars where they can share their experiences, their ideas about what the future should look like and how *Living in the 21st Century: A Seniors' Strategy* will be a real achievement.

We invite you to participate, to learn and to contribute your insights as we work to build inclusive, sustainable, age-friendly communities.

September 2021

Sunday 26	Monday 27	Tuesday 28	Wednesday.... 29
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*COSCO
conference*

Who should participate?

THIS VIRTUAL conference will be of particular interest to:

- Seniors and seniors' representatives.
- Municipal councillors and planners, parks and recreation, and health authority representatives.
- MLAs, MPs and First Nations.
- Federal and provincial departments dealing with seniors.
- NGOs such as social planning councils, community centre representatives, advocacy groups, and everyone who works with seniors.

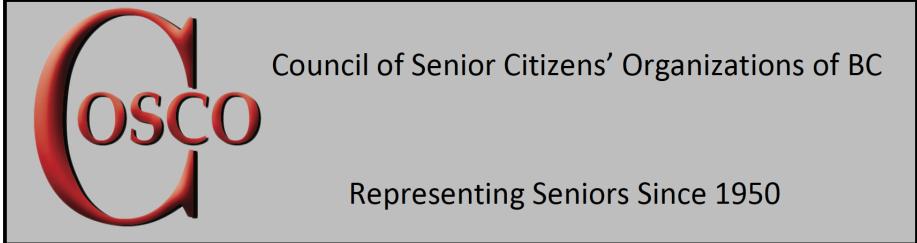
To register:

- On or after Sunday, August 1, visit our website: www.coscobic.org
- The fee is \$25.

For more information:

- Sheila Pither
604 684-9720
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Visit us at www.coscobic.org & <https://www.facebook.com/COSCOCBC/>

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	Wilf Brodrick - (BCGREA)	Chair – Finance Committee	
	Jerry Gosling - (BC OAPO)		
	Pat Thiesen - (BCRTA)		
	Diane Wood - (BC FORUM)		
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	Leslie Gaudette - (LSA)	Chair – Strategic Planning and Policies Committee	
	Navin Goburdhun - (BCGREA)		
	Agnes Jackman - (BC Forum)	Chair – Membership & Fundraising Committee	
	Kathleen Jamieson - (MVCCSNS)	Chair – Health Committee	
	Barry Jones -(CNPA)		
	Rod McIvor -(CNPA)		
	Jean Sickman - (BCGREA)		

About COSCO

COSCO is an umbrella organization that brings together 64 different seniors groups, representing approximately 70,000 women and men to work on common issues.

COSCO is affiliated with the 1,000,000 member National Pensioners Federation (NPF) which promotes these issues at the national level.

COSCO is a registered non-profit organization

Disclaimer:

Unless otherwise noted, opinions, viewpoints, accuracy of facts submitted by the member is the sole responsibility of the writer, and not necessarily the opinion of the Editor, Executive, or Membership of COSCO.