

ASC's Advisory Committee of Adults on the Spectrum reacts to Canada's political party leaders' responses.

As part of ASC's Election Advocacy package, the leaders of Canada's 5 largest political parties (Conservatives, Liberals, NDP, Bloc Québécois and Green Party) were sent a letter asking the leaders about their party's position on the important issues facing the ASD community. The leader's responses are archived on ASC's [website](#).

ASC wondered what the significance of these letters, and their content was for members of ASC's *Advisory Committee of Adults on the Spectrum*. In keeping with ASC's policy of inclusiveness of persons living with an ASD, we requested some feedback on how the committee members felt about the party leader's responses. Here's what they had to say:

On the NDP private members bill C-212 to adopt a Canadian Autism Day

- "I think it is a good one [adopting bill C-212] but not really necessary (there's already a world Autism Day on April 2nd) but I am not sold on C-211 about ensuring that ABA/IBI is covered in provincial and territorial Medicare plans. I just think there are too many questions to be answered..."
- "Private member's bill about Autism Day in Canada: a great way to raise awareness"

On Conservative Leader Stephen Harper's lack of response to ASC's questions

- "I don't know which is worse: the parties that made statements about the progress of Autism services going at the same rate, or the fact that the party that was elected didn't even bother to acknowledge the situation."
- "As for the Conservative Party, I am disappointed that it did not reply to ASC's letter. I think it shows how uncaring this party is about autism issues."
- *All responding advisory committee members expressed disappointment in the lack of response from the governing Conservative Party.*

On the lack of formal strategy or plan in relation to autism by all parties

- "Lack of a formal plan in relation to autism, too broad based of a response."
- "The Green Party, I think, needs to educate itself more about autism. That's probably why it did not have a position on it."
- "The political parties need to reflect on the National Autism Strategy referred to in *Pay now or Pay Later*, because we are now starting to see the consequences of paying later."

A general theme that emerged in all responses was the party's tendency to talk about health care in a broad aspect, instead of focusing on the real issues of autism (for example discussing prescriptions and hospital beds, instead of talking about way to help people with autism be more independent.)

Another general theme was that the parties, left to their own devices, will not emerge with a national autism strategy. As one committee member says "I think it's time that pressure was put on it [the government in power] to sit down with the provinces and territories and discuss a National Autism Strategy. "