



PEOPLE'S PARTY
OF CANADA

The People's Party of Canada (PPC; French: Parti populaire du Canada or simply People's Party) is a federal political party in Canada. The party was formed by Maxime Bernier in September 2018, shortly after his resignation from the Conservative Party of Canada. Bernier, the Member of Parliament for Beauce and a former cabinet minister, was the party's only MP from its founding in 2018 to his defeat in the 2019 Canadian federal election. Bernier had represented the Quebec riding in Parliament from 2006, when he was elected as a Conservative.

The party has been referred to as conservative, libertarian, populist, and classical liberal, while being seen on the right-wing to far-right of the traditional left-right political spectrum.

The PPC formed electoral district associations (EDAs) in 326 ridings, and ran candidates in 315 ridings, of Canada's total 338 ridings, in the 2019 federal election. However, no candidate was elected under its banner and Bernier lost his bid for personal re-election in Beauce.

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History

The People's Party of Canada was formed a few weeks after the resignation of Maxime Bernier, a former Conservative Party leadership candidate and cabinet minister, from the Conservative Party of Canada. In his resignation speech, Bernier stated that he was leaving because "I've come to realize ... this party is too intellectually and morally corrupt to be reformed." Bernier also stated that, under opposition leader Andrew Scheer (to whom Bernier finished runner-up in the 2017 Conservative Party leadership election), the Conservative party had abandoned its principles on issues including political correctness, corporate welfare, equalization reform and supply management. In a National Post op-ed, Bernier stated that his motive for forming the party was to reverse the public choice dynamic in the Canadian political system resulting in vote-buying and pandering by political parties. He reiterated his belief that the Conservative Party could not be reformed to end this practice, and that a new political party was required.

Bernier was accused by prominent Conservative politicians such as former Prime Ministers Stephen Harper and Brian Mulroney of trying to divide the political right. He responded on the CBC television show *Power & Politics* that he wanted to focus on disaffected voters, and cited the political rise of French President Emmanuel Macron as an example. Bernier later cited the breakthrough of the People's Alliance of New Brunswick in the 2018 New Brunswick election and the Coalition Avenir Québec win in 2018 Quebec elections as examples of voters' disdain for traditional political parties and expressing a desire for change by voting for new parties.

In November 2018, Minister of Democratic Institutions Karina Gould said that Maxime Bernier would qualify for debates hosted by the Leaders' Debates Commission if the party nominated candidates in 90% of ridings.

The party held rallies in Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto, Ottawa-Gatineau, Winnipeg, Saskatoon, and Quebec City. In 2019 it held rallies in Saint John and Halifax. On December 21, 2018, the party established EDAs in all 338 electoral districts.

Maxime Bernier

(photo by Parti
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Maxime Bernier, 2017.

Bernier, formerly a
member of the
Conservative Party,
founded the People's
Party of Canada in
2018.



Candidate selections, 2019 election

Bernier told the National Post that the party would start candidate nominations for the October general election after the by-elections. On March 25, 2019, Bernier announced in a press conference that the party has opened an online search for candidates until April 23, with candidate selection meetings to follow between May 7 and 13. In an interview on the CTV television show Power Play, he said that the party planned to have their first convention on June 1 to 2. The party held their conference from August 18 to 19, where "roughly 500 party officials took part in door knocking workshops, traditional media and social media training, debate training and mock debate.

In the 2019 Canadian federal election, Bernier lost his own seat to a Conservative, and no People's Party candidates were elected.[21] Bernier was the only People's Party candidate to come even close to winning; he won 28.4 percent of the vote (a 20 point drop from 2015), and no other candidate won more than four percent of the vote.

The party received approximately 1.6 percent of the popular vote nationwide. According to the Canadian Press, the PPC may have cost the Conservatives some ridings, but didn't garner enough votes to affect the overall result.

Principles and policies

Bernier stated that his party is "a coalition of people who are disenchanted with traditional politicians who say one thing one day, and another the next". He mentioned that his platform would be based around the principles of freedom, responsibility, fairness, and respect. Bernier has stated that these principles are non-negotiable, but that members would have input on policies as they are refined, and that a candidate questionnaire asks potential candidates about which policies they want in the platform.

Health care

The party's platform argues that "it is up to the provinces to implement reforms in line with the more efficient and less costly mixed universal systems of other developed countries. Throwing more federal money at the problem is not the right approach." They plan to replace the Canada Health Transfer with "transfer of tax points of equivalent value to the provinces and territories" by giving up the GST revenue collected by the federal government while creating a temporary program "to compensate poorer provinces" disadvantage from the replacement. The party claims this would create the conditions for provincial and territorial governments to innovate while maintaining the Canada Health Act.

Foreign affairs

The party platform argues that foreign policies should be "focused on the security and prosperity of Canadians, not an ideological approach that compromises our interests". It supports multilateralism, non-interventionism, free trade and humanitarianism. However, it plans to not get involved in foreign conflicts "unless we have a compelling strategic interest in doing so", to reduce Canada's United Nations presence "to a minimum", withdraw from UN commitments the party sees as threatening "our sovereignty", to accept free trade agreements that protect Canada's economy "from the threat of potentially hostile foreign investors", and phase out development aid

Environment

The party's platform states that "it is an undisputed fact that the world's climate has always changed and will continue to change" but rejects what it calls "climate change alarmism". The party plans to withdraw from the global warming fight, abolish subsidies for green technology and scrap "the Liberal government's carbon tax", but allow the private sector and the provinces to address climate issues, and "invest [in] mitigation strategies" if negative effects result from climate change. The party's main focus would be on "implementing practical solutions to make Canada's air, water and soil cleaner".

Immigration

The party plans immigration reform, such as limiting immigration to no more than 150,000 people per year, by removing the parents and grandparents class from the family reunification program, focusing on economic immigration through the reform of the immigration point system, making temporary foreign workers noncompetitive with "Canadian workers", and banning birth tourism. They intend that all immigrants would undergo in-person interviews with immigration officials to determine whether their values and ideas accord with Canadian "societal norms". The party would declare the entire border a port of entry to make deportation easier, since new arrivals can be refused at ports of entry. They would build border fences at popular ports of entry crossings for migrants, rely on private sponsorship instead of government support for funding new refugees, but prioritize those "belonging to persecuted groups barred from neighbouring countries" and sexual minorities.

Multiculturalism

The party platform advocates for the cultural integration of immigrants, stating that it "enriches" Canadian society; in particular, the party criticized that the government "has pursued a policy of official multiculturalism that encourages immigrants to keep the values and culture they left behind instead of integrating into Canadian society and adopting Canadian values and culture." Some of the examples that they have listed as "distinct values of a contemporary Western civilization" are "equality between men and women", "separation of state and religion", "toleration and pluralism". The party classified Justin Trudeau's comments referring to Canada as "the first post-national state, with no core identity" as a "cult of diversity". It opposes the Canadian Multiculturalism Act, remarking that Canada's government should not help immigrants preserve their cultural heritage. The party intends to "repeal the Multiculturalism Act and eliminate all funding to promote multiculturalism".