

# **Strengthening Families**

Government & Family Policies

# Introduction

- For the last 100 years plus, the government (federal, provincial and municipal) has been involved in monitoring and assisting Canadian families...

Refund or balance owing

T1 GENERAL 2011  
Income Tax and Benefit Return

Personal information

Employment information

Income

Deductions and credits

Other information

Signature and date

CANADA  
ONTARIO

NAME - NOM  
PUBLIC, JOHN Q

DATE OF BIRTH - DATE DE NAISSANCE  
FEBRUARY 18, 1954

BIRTHPLACE - LIEU DE NAISSANCE  
TORONTO

DATE OF REGISTRATION / DATE DE L'ENREGISTREMENT  
MARCH 18, 1954

ISSUED IN THE PROVINCE OF ONTARIO / DÉLIVRÉ DANS LA PROVINCE DE L'ONTARIO  
APRIL 18, 1954

CERTIFICATE NUMBER / NUMÉRO DU CERTIFICAT  
12345678-009

SEX - SEXE  
M

REGISTRATION NUMBER / NUMÉRO D'ENREGISTREMENT  
1954-01-123456

Certificate of Marriage

This is to Certify that, on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ A.D. 19\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ in the Province of Ontario, I solemnized the Marriage of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

OSCAR MORAWITZ  
RUTH STAFFORD SHIPMAN

under Marriage Licence  
No. R 203696 issued on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ A.D. 19\_\_

Witnesses:  
\_\_\_\_\_ (Minister)  
\_\_\_\_\_ (Witness)  
\_\_\_\_\_ (Witness)



# Family Policy

- ❁ family policy usually focuses on pursuing collective goals and values to address problems of families in our society
- ❁ The biggest difficulty with family policy is that it is hard to agree on what families should be and do
  - ❁ So what should be left up to the individual families and what should be the responsibility of the government?
  - ❁ How do we define family? What should the goals for families be?

# Where do policies come from?

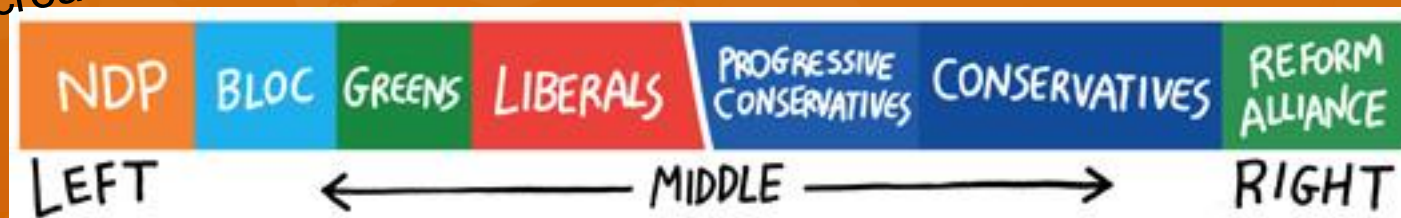
- ❁ Policies are not always based on informed knowledge about how people live
  - ❁ lots of times policies are made by policy makers based on their preconceived ideas about...
    - ❁ the importance of family in society, gender roles within families, parental responsibilities to children, and their assumptions about why some families need assistance
- ❁ Sometimes these ideas are connected to political viewpoints and where a person (policy maker) falls on the *political spectrum*



# Political Spectrum

- ✓ government programs assist society & social lives
- ✓ give some families help
- ✓ Families come in lots of different shapes and sizes
- ✓ families instill morals
- ✓ relationships built on respect and trust
- ✓ nurturing parenting is good
- ✓ learning is to ask questions, relate to and cooperate with others
- ✓ important qualities - empathy, sharing, equality, inclusive of diversity
- ✓ creating potential goal

- ✓ no government interference
- ✓ every family for themselves
- ✓ families are a married mom and dad with children
- ✓ families instill strength
- ✓ relationships built on respect and fear
- ✓ strict parenting is good
- ✓ education is to succeed, to compete, individualism
- ✓ important qualities – self defense, moral strength & self discipline
- ✓ traditions are good
- ✓ character building goal



# History?

- ❁ Most of Canada's policies were set by male politicians in the early 1900s when family life was very different from today
- ❁ Some have been amended but lots overstate the needs of the traditional nuclear family with dad as the breadwinner and a stay at home mom
- ❁ Where should we go from here?

# Where do we agree?

- ❁ Laws against incest, child sexual abuse
- ❁ Many agree families should be nurturing and children should be cared for – physically, emotionally, intellectually

# Where are we not so sure?

- ❁ What makes a legitimate family?
- ❁ What role should government play in supporting or assisting families?
- ❁ What responsibilities should be solely left up to individual families?
- ❁ Who deserves help? Who doesn't?

# 5 Key Restructuring Areas

1. Relationship rights for same sex couples
2. Expanding paid parental leaves
3. Reforming child tax benefits
4. Expanding childcare services
5. Child welfare reform

See student notes for highlights of each of these



# Socially Conservative Potential Areas of Focus for Government Policies

- ❁ Reinforce male breadwinner, female caregiver\*
  - ❁ Provide income support for low income mothers caring for children or frail elderly
  - ❁ Money for early childhood education part time but not for full time day care programs
- ❁ Money to encourage fertility like baby bonuses
- ❁ Less money for sex education or contraception
- ❁ Limit access to abortion
- ❁ Strict requirements for divorce and keep marriage for heterosexuals
- ❁ Strict requirements on who can adopt

\*except for poorer families – welfare mothers should work (typically) low paying jobs for sure to look after their family and not burden the system

# Centre Left Potential Areas of Focus for Government Policies

- ❁ More opportunities for mothers and fathers to be earners
- ❁ Paid parental leaves
- ❁ Subsidize full time child care, possible day cares that support shift work as well
- ❁ More supportive of pay equity and affirmative action programs
- ❁ Extend relationship rights and family benefits to same sex couples
- ❁ Still extend social benefits to male breadwinner of the family – keep everyone happy – equity for all

# To Sum Up

## Left Opinion

- ❁ Family patterns reflect personal preferences and societal pressures – diverse families
- ❁ Government needs to protect vulnerable family members & assist parents to combine child rearing with paid employment

## Right Opinion

- ❁ Families are deteriorating as the major institution in society
- ❁ Governments need to fight the rise of non family lifestyles and welfare dependency – encourage married heterosexual monogamous unit that is fully responsible for itself

Neither side trusts the other to develop a good set of family policies that are fair and beneficial to the state – both sides think the other has an *agenda* – **What do you think?**



**Where do you think  
you stand?**