



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO POLICYTHON

MARCH 9TH - MARCH 12TH

2023

PROMPTS PACKAGE

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

UTP wishes to acknowledge this land on which the University of Toronto operates. For thousands of years it has been the traditional land of the Huron-Wendat, the Seneca, and the Mississaugas of the Credit. Today, this meeting place is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work on this land.

CONTENT WARNING

We recognize that this content is sensitive, current, and personal to many UofT students, Policython members, and Policython participants. The Equity Team is here to support you or connect you with resources pertaining to mental health and advocacy. That being said, if you are uncomfortable with partaking in Policython because of these topics, please contact the Equity Team for a full refund within 24 hours. Please do not hesitate to reach out – any concerns which you bring to Equity can be confidential and dealt with privately if necessary.

PROMPTS

FOREIGN POLICY

THIS PROMPT CONCERNS THE CURRENT CONFLICT IN IRAN.

Canadian-Iranian relations have been relatively quiet since 2012, when Foreign Affairs Minister John Baird severed diplomatic ties with Iranian regime, citing several violations of international law. However, following the death of Mahsa Amini at the hands of the Iranian Guidance Patrol (also known as the morality police), Canada took further actions to defend human rights and stand in solidarity with Iranians protesting against the regime. In addition to a strong condemnation of the Iranian regime's killing of Amini and the subsequent crackdown on civilian protestors, the Canadian government issued sanctions against individuals and government entities in Iran including 10,000 members of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, the Morality Police, and many others.

Considering Canada's previous actions against the Iranian regime and in support of Iranian human rights, construct a policy brief suggesting what you believe Canada's next steps should be. Consider other kinds of sanctions Canada might impose, opportunities for international cooperation in support of Iranians, and other ways Canada can offer its support. You may also want to consider the following information when constructing your brief: In 2012, Iran did not comply with resolutions of the UN Security Council, notably those surrounding its nuclear program and regional policies. In response, Canada closed its embassy in Tehran and dismissed Iranian diplomats in Ottawa. Following the outbreak of domestic unrest, the Iranian government has used its increasingly centralized control over internet access in the country to orchestrate shutdowns, which the United Nations has identified as a human rights violation. The EU has placed sanctions on Iranian government entities and key individuals responsible for Mahsa Amini's murder and the subsequent internet shutdown. Sanctions include travel bans, asset freezes, and the forbidding of access to European funds and imported technology. The United States imposed sanctions on Iranian government officials and entities, but issued licenses exempting some tech companies so they can try increasing internet access for Iranians. Historically, US sanctions restricting Iranians' abilities to freely access the internet forced them to use the government-monitored services which are being censored and shutdown by the regime.

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

PROMPTS

ECONOMIC POLICY

The baby boomer generation got its name due to the surge in birth rates between 1946 and 1965. This prompt assumes that this generation of boomers face favourable conditions and attitudes towards retirement and intend to discontinue working around the retirement age of 65. Boomers, who currently make up 24.9% of the Canadian demographic, are approaching retirement age. What measures can the Federal government take to keep Canada's labour supply stable amidst demographic shifts?

Your task is to examine how this mass retirement will impact the Canadian economy and whether Canada is conditioned to overcome this change. Call to action. How can the federal government promote resilience within Canada's labour market amidst these demographic changes? What strategies and policies can allow the economy to retain stability within the economy?

To consider: existing approaches, previously adopted approaches by Canada or other countries, the impact of your suggested policies (inflationary, resource intensive, etc.).

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

In Canada, the conservation and the protection of natural areas has largely been a legislative fight. Laws like the Species At Risk Act or the Canadian Environmental Protection Act form the basis for protecting the environment in Canada. However, these laws reflect their time's understanding of the natural world. Additionally, they are limited in their enforcement, as the provinces hold jurisdiction over much of Canada's land. One possible solution to this issue is legal personhood for natural features. This framework has existed for decades, but has only recently begun to see use in the real world. Canada saw its first instance of this in 2021, when the Muteshekau-shipu River in Quebec gained personhood. It has the right to flow, maintain biodiversity, and be safe from pollution. Most importantly, it can sue if these rights are violated. Should Canada grant legal rights to its natural features? If so, via what route, and to what extent? Who will represent natural features in court? How will the federal government involve the provinces in the decision-making process? How should Indigenous peoples be involved?

PROMPTS

PUBLIC HEALTH POLICY

Youth aged 15 to 24 are the fastest growing population in Canada requiring hospital services following opioid overdoses. Furthermore, COVID-19 has placed young people at even greater risk of non-medical opioid use. Most notable interventions concerning substance abuse amongst young people have taken place at the provincial level. Youth Wellness Hubs Ontario, for instance, offer mental and physical health services in tandem with drug abuse resources.

A policy paper is the federal government's most significant contribution to tackling the epidemic amongst younger Canadians. It was published to provide educational professionals with strategies to mitigate substance-related harms amongst pupils. The policy is too broad, including vaping and cannabis use within its scope and puts the responsibility of developing initiatives onto individual communities. Your task then is to construct a policy brief to inform the government on how to best address the opioid crisis amongst youth across the country.

Consider the following points before starting your brief: What are the unique challenges that youth face which renders them susceptible to non-medical opioid use? How can previous federal policies aimed at reducing cannabis and tobacco use amongst youth, as well as existing provincial interventions, inform policy making around the opioid crisis? How can we engage youth so that they are not passive receivers of policy, but active participants in prevention efforts? What role do institutions such as school, church, family, and community centers play in addressing the opioid crisis amongst youths?

You may want to review the following resource:

- [Government of Canada: Preventing substance-related harms among Canadian youth through action within school communities: A policy paper.](#)

PROMPTS

HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY

In 2019, Parliament adopted Bill C-97: the National Housing Strategy Act. This bill reaffirmed the right to adequate housing as a human right for everyone in Canada as outlined in the UN International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and Declaration of Human Rights. Yet, homelessness is still a human rights crisis, in one of the wealthiest countries in the world. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, at least 235,000 people experienced homelessness across Canada in any given year, and even more remain under-housed. Homelessness and the housing crisis have been further exacerbated by the pandemic's impact on affordability and the economy, with experts estimating the figures have increased significantly. Adequate housing is essential to one's sense of dignity, safety, inclusion and ability to contribute to the fabric of our society. Without appropriate housing it is often not possible to attain and keep employment, to recover from mental illness or other disabilities, to integrate into the community, to escape physical or emotional violence or to keep custody of children. Marginalized communities often bear the brunt of the burden brought on by homelessness in Canada, specifically Indigenous communities, those with disabilities, young people (20%), racialized communities, and women (27%). Because the specific experiences of homelessness will differ for each group, strategies to address homelessness must be tailored to these needs.

How can policymakers and the policy community alleviate the burden of Canadians experiencing homelessness? What strategies and programs could the government employ to enhance and realize the promise of the aforementioned UN agreements and the National Housing Strategy Act? Consider the causes and effects of homelessness for different marginalized groups. Your brief can focus on one or more of these communities. You may also want to explore existing policies and programs targeting the housing crisis, what they are missing, and ways to enhance them. Note that the brief should be focused on federal policies and programs, although your proposals can be carried out in conjunction with provinces and can be based on successful solutions at the local level. You may want to review the following sources when constructing your brief

- [Canadian Human Rights Commission](#)
- [Homeless Hub: Submission to the National Consultation of a Human Rights-Based Approach to housing](#)
- [The National Right to Housing Network](#)
- [Stats Canada: A portrait of Canadians who have been homeless](#)
- [Government of Canada: News Release on Funding to Address Homelessness](#)

GOOD LUCK!

Thank you for participating in
Policython 2023. We look forward
to reading your briefs!

CONTACT



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