

Board Elections

The Council of Canadians' 16-member Board is composed of 12 Directors-at-Large elected by the membership and four Regional Directors elected by Chapter members in each of the four regions of the Council. The term of a Board member is two years with a limit of three consecutive terms (effective 2021). Staggered elections ensure both continuity and change in the Board.

There are currently five (5) candidates running for Directors-at-Large seats for the Board of Directors. Alongside equity considerations, Board members should have a demonstrated experience in issues relevant to the Council's values, vision and mandate, especially within membership-based social movements and organizations whose aims intersect or overlap with those of the Council's. In addition, Board management skills would be an asset.

Meet the candidates:

- Nita Grass
- Joe Mihevc
- Navjeet Sidhu
- Deedee Slye
- Steven Staples

Nita Grass

When I was taking the Indigenous Governance course at the University of Victoria, my instructor made a statement that defines my activities. He said, “When you are born as an indigenous person, you are born into politics.” This statement aligns with my commitment to make the world a better place for my children and grandchildren.

I spent seven years in a Roman Catholic Residential School. I was a drop-out before high school. I went back to school as an adult in my early thirties and had to deal with a lot of racism and prejudice.

Once I graduated I took on numerous roles in the community addressing racism and injustice. I volunteered with several social justice groups. I wrote many letters to the editor during the years before the internet when there was no voice for indigenous issues. I feel very strongly that the CofC board should have at least one indigenous member because many campaigns deal with land, water and environmental issues.

I am strongly committed to participating to the best of my ability to the board. When I was first elected to the CofC board two years ago, I spent many hours reading the binder that was given to me in order to understand my role as a board member. During the past two years I have taken the time to read the documents required for the meetings ahead of time. I have only missed one or two meetings.



Joe Mihevc

I am interested in continuing on the Board of the Council of Canadians to continue my career's work in fostering a Canada that is more socially just and sustainable.

I have been active on a host of global and local social justice and environmental issues for my entire adult life.

In my earlier years, my focus was more on the global south and issues of human rights in Latin America, apartheid in South Africa, the debt and financial crisis. My earlier engagement was rooted in the progressive side of the Canadian church community.



For the last 27 years, I continued that same work while focusing on local urban expressions of global issues. All the global issues have a local expression and as a City Councillor, I worked on everything from Sanctuary City, refugee, urban poverty, social inequity, environmental, human rights and social inclusion, public health and mobility issues.

I believe that my contribution to the Board would continue to be rooted in the perspective that comes from local communities and urban areas. As cities continue to grow at alarming rates, the problems and solutions to global crises will have a strong urban component. I want to contribute to the conversation and action strategies from that perspective. To be able to build campaigns on a pan-Canadian level with actors across the country, while giving voice to the local movements and struggles, would be a marvellous opportunity for collaboration with the Council of Canadians.

In my other work, I will be teaching at a university for the next while. This will facilitate access to best practices around the world and in North America of ideas and strategies to build more socially just and sustainable communities. I look forward to integrating university research into the board work of the Council of Canadians.

Navjeet Sidhu

During my past term on the Board of Directors of the Council of Canadians, I have felt privileged to be able to work alongside a group of dedicated activists from across the country, learning from them and being inspired by them. It continues to be a rewarding experience to contribute to a renowned organization that remains a strong progressive voice on critical social, economic and environmental issues affecting people across the country.

I also understand that the Council has been facing rapid changes and has faced several challenges over the years.



Having worked in several non-profit organizations, I know that tumultuous change can often happen all at once. However, these are also moments of opportunity for growth and renewal. They provide time to reflect on what has been accomplished, the challenges ahead and developing plans and strategies of effectively responding to them. I feel the Council is entering a phase of greater stability. Our refreshed identity signals that we are open to change and that we are looking to reach out to a whole new generation of activists to meet the national and global challenges of the 21st century. I am eager to continue contributing my efforts and skills to this work that I have developed in the nearly two decades of doing social justice work. I bring an array of skills from research, policy analysis, communications, community organizing and nearly 10 years of organizational board experience.

As the organization continues on its path of renewal, we are seeing an influx of new staff and members. This speaks to the fact that, not only does our work remain relevant, but that there are no national organizations doing the type of coordinated grassroots organizing, social justice work and national-level political advocacy that we do. As such, it is imperative that we continue working together in order to be a stronger and united national voice to resist the ongoing threats of corporate capitalism that are destroying the environment, our health, public services and our social bonds.

Deedee Slye

I would like to be on the Board because I think I would do a good job helping to define our strategic role going forward. I've already started to be engaged with this process and would love to see it through for another two years. My communications background means I bring certain skills to the table with regard to campaigns and planning. I also believe that I play a strong supportive role for positive ideas and energy. The Council is a force for equality and justice and the environment. Our members are fighting for these things in communities across the country. I see the Board supporting this work and developing campaigns that take these issues to another level.



Steven Staples

I am delighted to stand for election to the Council of Canadians' Board of Directors, and to reconnect with many friends and activists with whom I have worked alongside for many years.

Having joined the Council of Canadians while at University in the early 1990s, I was very proud to be hired as the organization's first regional organizer, opening an office in Vancouver in 1997 (the first outside of Ottawa).



After a period of tremendous chapter growth, and the advent of the anti-corporate globalization movement in the streets of Seattle at the WTO meeting in 1999, I was asked to relocate to Ottawa as Issue Campaigns Coordinator. In the years that followed we launched the water campaign, challenged Monsanto and continued to open offices across the country, building on our success in BC.

Later, I started a post-9/11 project on militarism and globalization with Tony Clarke at the Polaris Institute. Our online network, Ceasefire.ca, became a vital network to win the campaign to keep Canada out of Bush's missile defence scheme in 2005 (a story I retold in my book the following year).

In 2006 I used the training I had received to set-up the Rideau Institute on International Affairs, a research, advocacy and consulting organization in Ottawa. The Institute achieved many victories with allies in the ensuing years, including derailing the F-35 stealth fighter and stopping the first foreign take-over of a Canadian company under the Investment Canada Act.

More recently I have worked with many organizations through Public Response, including unions, first nations communities, environmental groups, and many others. I spent several years at the Ontario Federation of Labour, including during the campaign that defeated Tim Hudak and his US-style anti-union "right-to-work" agenda in the 2014 election.

Today I work at the Canadian Health Coalition, and was proud to partner with the Council of Canadians for the April 27, 2021 day of action on long-term care entitled, "Profit Doesn't Care."

I volunteer on several boards, including the Geneva-based International Peace Bureau, and the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives' Members Council as one of four elected members

I look forward to the opportunity to "give-back" to the Council of Canadians by serving its members and activists as a Board member.