

Opening campaign statement by Stephen Harper Leader of the Conservative Party of Canada ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

For the past two years, while ordinary Canadians have worked hard, paid their taxes, and played by the rules, the Liberals have been preoccupied with damage control lurching from one scandal to another, recklessly promising to spend money, desperately trying to avoid the people's verdict but no longer.

We need to turn the page and make a change. We need change to make government more honest, accountable, and democratic. We need change so hardworking taxpayers can keep more of their own money. We need change to get tough on drugs and crime and make our neighbourhoods safe once again. We need change so patients can receive the medical treatment they need when they need it. We need change to give families more choice in child care and protect seniors who depend on hard-earned pensions....

Canada needs change, and Canadians want change but we won't get the change we need unless we start by changing the government. We all know the things we need to change away from, but Conservatives know that Canadians need a positive vision to change towards.

On January 23rd Canada faces a clear choice _ a choice between old and new; a culture of entitlement and a commitment to accountability; benefits for a few and a government for all. Only a new Conservative government can deliver the change that's needed to bring accountability to Ottawa.

On January 23rd, I am asking you to stand up for accountability, stand up for change, and stand up for Canada.

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