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Can they pay for what they say? A pre-election comparison of the Conservative, Liberal, and New Democratic platforms

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Excerpts from the press release:

The study adopts revenue estimates accepted by each of the three parties, as presented in the 2004 Federal Budget. The authors have also adopted realistic assumptions for program expenses and public debt charges to come up with a status-quo cumulative budget surplus of \$78 billion between 2004/05 and 2008/09.

Key findings include:

- When the impacts of the Conservative platform are added to the status-quo base case, the party would run a cumulative deficit of \$11.4 billion over five years. In implementing their platform promises, the Conservatives would run annual deficits of \$0.7, \$3, \$4 and \$5.6 billion.

- Between 2004/05 and 2008/09 the Liberal platform would produce a cumulative surplus of \$24.2 billion--consistent with the Liberal government's practice of generating large surpluses and using them to pay down the debt.

- The NDP platform would result in a cumulative surplus of \$14.6 billion, which is considerably more than the \$5.3 billion in cumulative surpluses that the party claims in its platform.

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