



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Voters with Disabilities Call on Federal Party Leaders to Prioritize People with Disabilities at Major Candidates Debate on Disability Issues

**April 10, 2025 TORONTO:** On April 8, 2025, a national coalition of major nonpartisan disability organizations held a federal election Candidates Debate focused on issues important to over 8 million Canadians with disabilities. The debate was held at CNIB’s Toronto headquarters and streamed nationally, attracting more than 300 virtual attendees and over 50 in-person participants.

Organized by a consortium of 13 organizations—including the [AODA Alliance](#), [Autism Ontario](#), [Reena](#), [Community Living Toronto](#), [Ontario Autism Coalition](#), [OASIS](#), [ARCH Disability Law Centre](#), [CNIB](#), [CILT](#), [Easter Seals](#), [EKO](#), [March of Dimes](#) and [Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital](#)—the event provided a unique platform for Canadians with disabilities and their families to speak directly to federal candidates.

Federal candidates in attendance were George Wedge, NDP, Scarborough-Woburn, Mike Morrice, Green Party—Kitchener Centre and Liane Kotler (virtual), and Liberal Party—Thornhill. The Conservative Party and The Bloc Quebecois were invited but declined to send a representative.

David Lepofsky, chair of the AODA Alliance and a disability rights advocate, opened the evening. Veteran Toronto Star reporter David Rider moderated the debate. Over 150 questions pre-submitted from across Canada raised urgent topics such as the critical shortage of accessible housing, the pressing need to effectively address rampant poverty among hundreds of thousands of people with disabilities, the recurring horrific mistreatment of air passengers with disabilities by Canadian airlines, the need to speed up the sluggish implementation of the Accessible Canada Act, and the danger that liberalized medical Assistance in Dying (MAID) poses for vulnerable people with disabilities.

“This election represents a crucial opportunity for Canadians with disabilities, whose voices have long been underrepresented in federal policy,” said David Lepofsky. “We challenge all parties to make disability rights and inclusion a national priority.”



The debate was supported by ASL interpretation, real-time captioning, and on-site social work support, reflecting a strong commitment to full accessibility.

The [AODA Alliance's YouTube channel](#) has a full recording of the debate. Voters are encouraged to raise disability issues with their local candidates and to participate in the upcoming federal election.

We encourage all Canadians to raise disability issues with their federal candidates in the lead-up to the election and to vote on April 28th.

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