

Advocacy Committee



Advocacy Chair:
Karun Singh
McMaster U



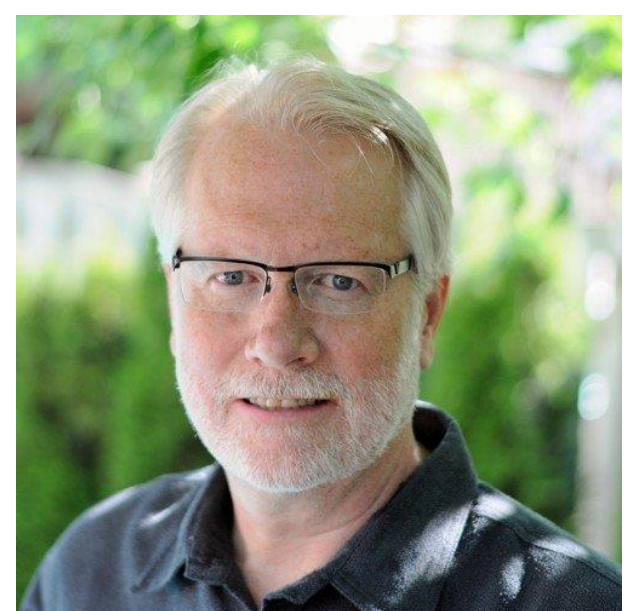
Chris Anderson
U of Manitoba



Lisa Saksida
Western U



Liisa Galea
U of British Columbia



Charles Bourque,
McGill U



Kurt Haas,
U of British Columbia



CAN President:
Katalin Toth
U Laval



Julie Poupart
CAN Advocacy
Officer

Support

All our advocacy activities are supported by funds from SfN and our members.

CAN gratefully acknowledges SfN's important contributions to our activities.



Advocating for science in Canada during an election campaign

CANADIAN ASSOCIATION FOR NEUROSCIENCE

1. Direct engagement with political parties & candidates

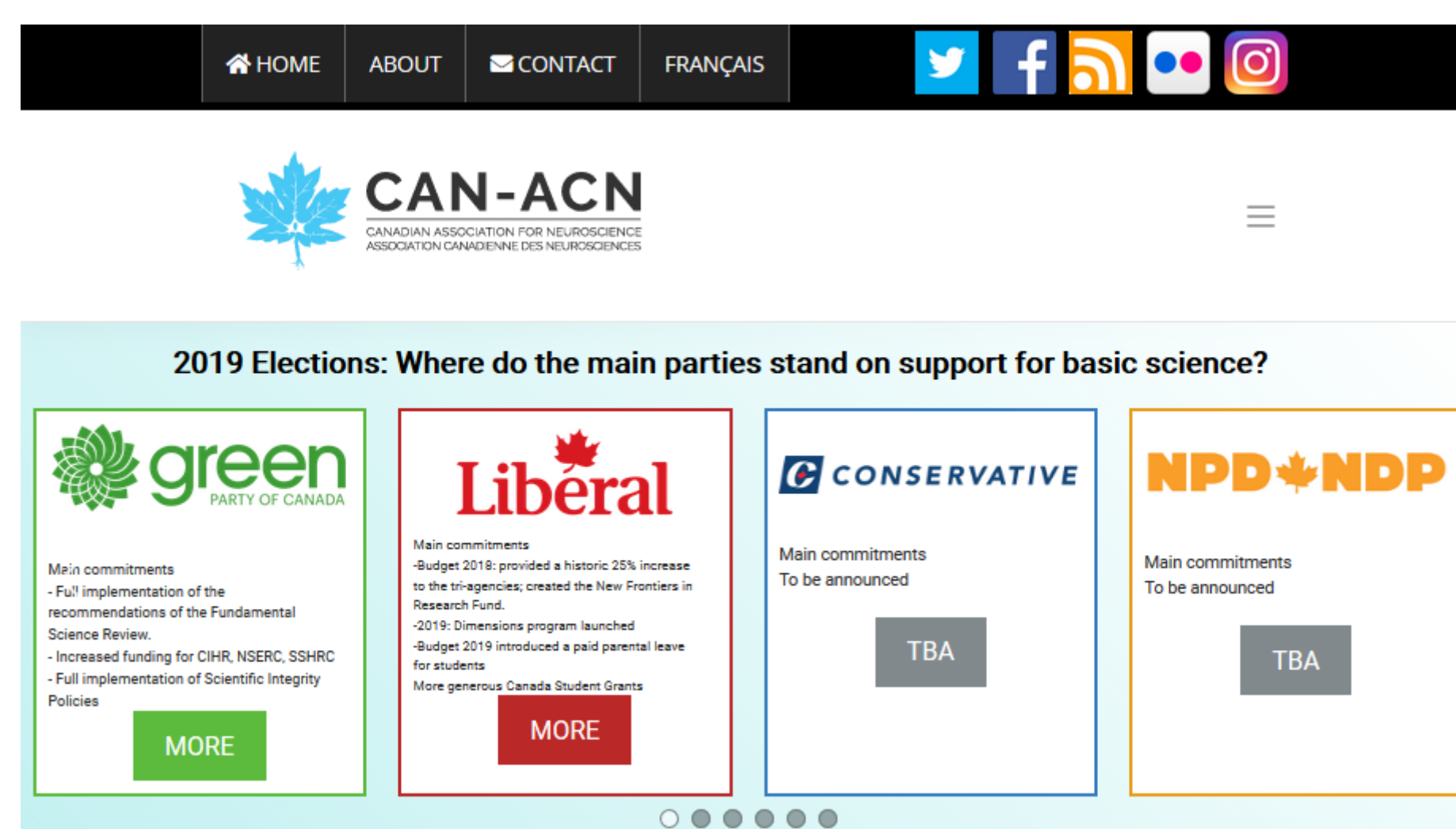
CAN directly engaged with the four main federal parties in Canada (Liberal Party, Conservative Party, New Democratic Party and Green Party) on issues relating to federal support of science. CAN developed and sent five questions about:

1. Science funding by the government
2. The role of government in research
3. The importance of basic research
4. Equity, diversity and inclusion in science,
5. Support for science trainees.

We received responses from the Green Party and the Liberal Party. The New Democratic Party sent an initial response but failed to follow through with an official response. The failure of the Conservative Party to respond to our questions was noted. The response, or lack of response of all parties was published on our website (screenshot below).

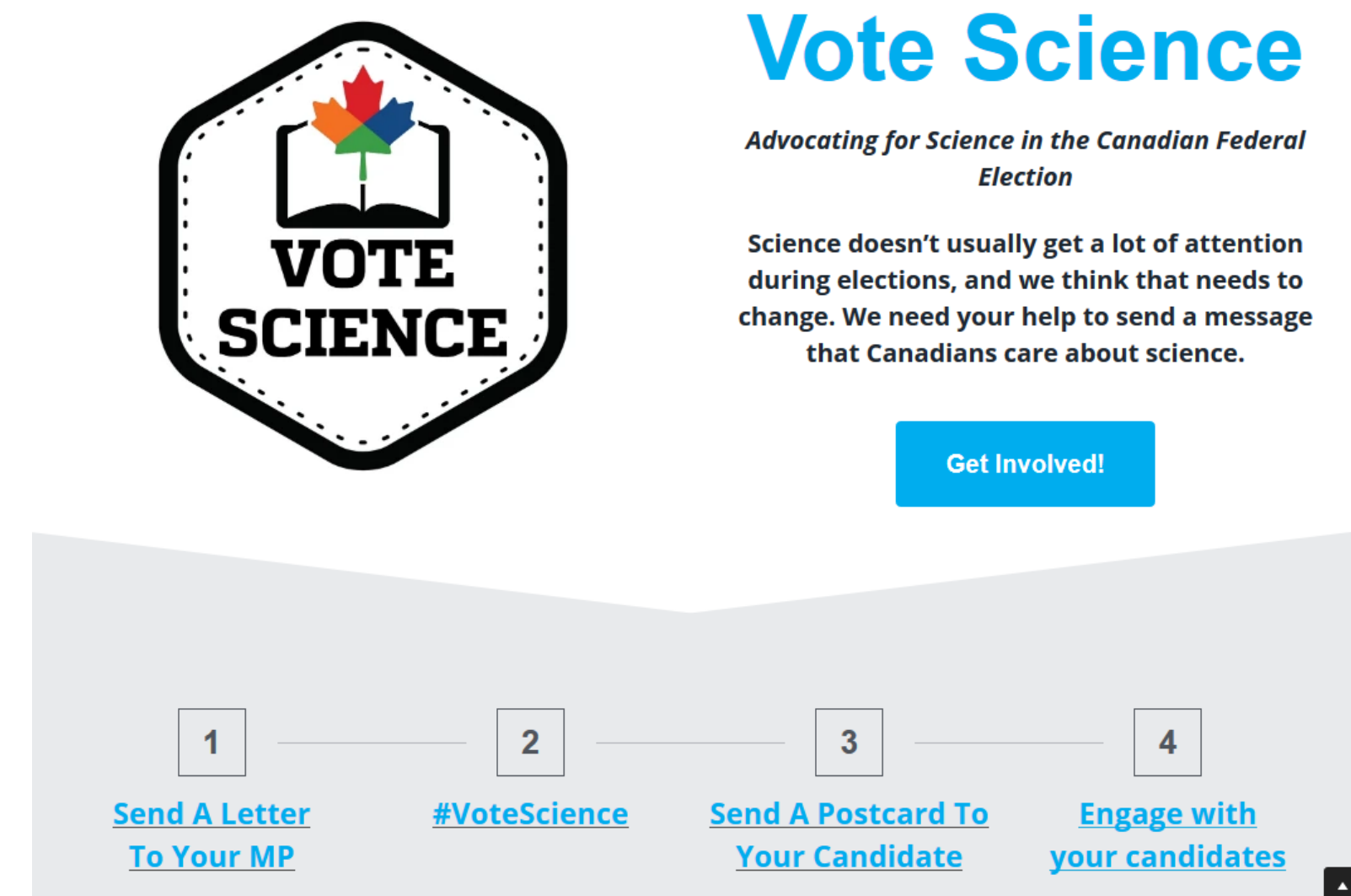
We also shared invitations to connect directly with local candidates, and opportunities to engage with party leaders, for example by sending questions for the televised leader's debate.

These opportunities were shared with our members and followers via email and through social media.



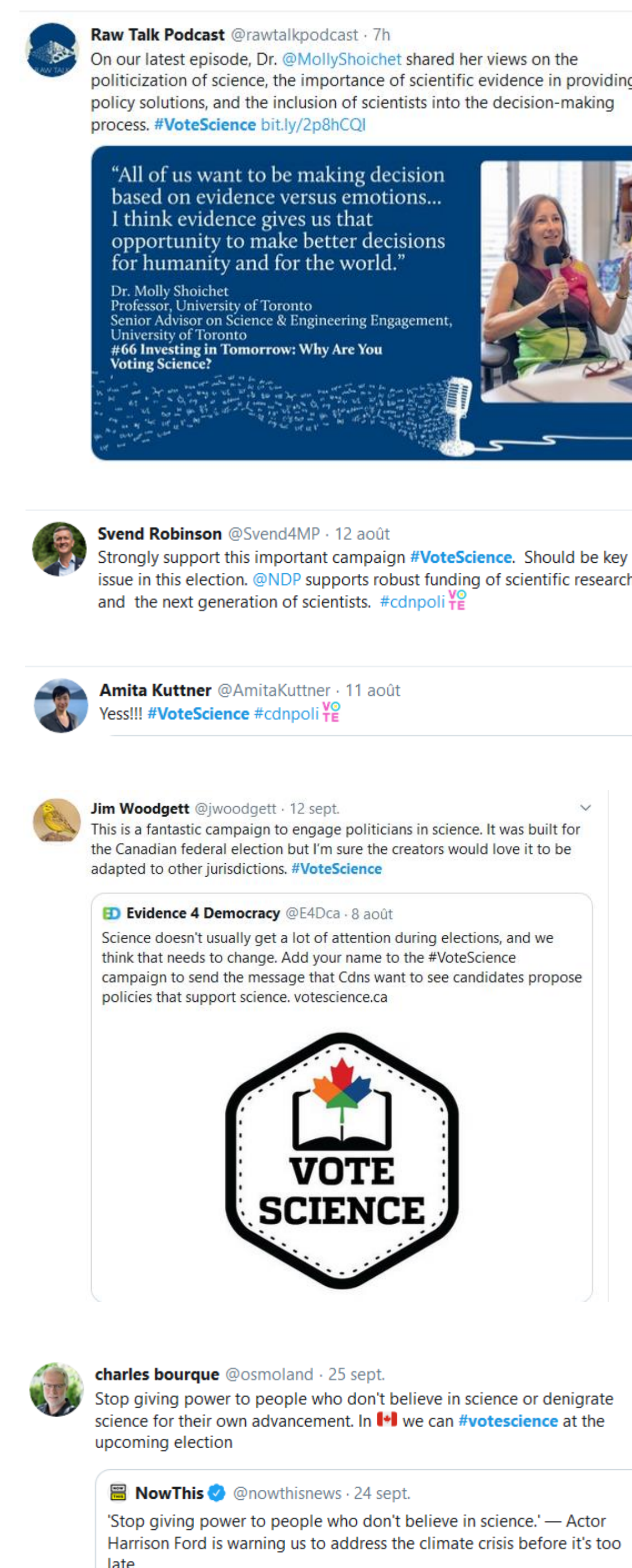
2. Working with partners

<https://www.votescience.ca/>



VoteScience is collaboration between 20 Canadian Science and Science Policy groups, with shared events, resources and initiatives.

The shared hashtag #votescience brought the community together.



Research Canada: Your Candidate, Your Health campaign

<http://yourcandidatesyourhealth.ca/>

In preparation for Election 2019, Research Canada developed a series of tools and resources to engage with Candidates, on the **Your Candidate, Your Health website** which we have shared with our members.

This campaign, which specifically advocated for health research investments, was supported by patient groups and pharmaceutical companies.

Publication of an Op-Ed with CSMB

An Op-Ed signed by the Presidents of CAN, Katalin Toth, and the President of the Canadian Society for Molecular Biosciences, Tarik Moroy, was written with the help of a public affairs firm. Its main message is that Scientific research is important for all Canadians – it is how Canada can face the issues and challenges we face today. Political leaders should commit to supporting science today.



The French version was published in the French-language newspaper Le Devoir.

The English version of the Op-Ed was sent to major English language newspapers, and was being considered for publication in the National Newswatch at the time of printing.

3. Getting the vote out!

Through social media and our mailing list, CAN encouraged all members and followers to vote by anticipation if they were traveling on election day. SfN also sent a reminder to all Canadian attendees reminding them to vote in advance.

Opportunities

Building relationships with all federal parties
Elections are a period when all candidates want to meet and interact with their constituents. Conversations that take place during the election period can highlight the issues that voters care about, and that a new government should take in consideration.

Strengthening relationships with partners
Advocating together during an election period is a good way to build a network of advocates.

Challenges

Competing with other government priorities
The government of Canada has identified its priorities as helping the middle class thrive and boosting the economy. How can we make funding for basic research part of these priorities?

Measuring the efficiency of our actions
The efficiency of any advocacy efforts is difficult to measure. In an election period, this is especially difficult. We did see some parties commit to increasing funding of science, while others simply highlighted past achievements. Advocacy efforts are a long game.

What next?

Canadian Hill Day, Spring 2020

More on our website:
can-acn.org/advocacy

facebook.com/can.acn
twitter.com/can_acn
instagram.com/canneuro