



Federal Election 2011

Questions for Candidates

Child care

YWCA Canada advocates for a national strategy for comprehensive early learning and child care services that are accessible, publicly managed, high quality, not-for-profit and an integral part of social structure.

Q: Does your party support a federal government role in leading development of a national strategy for child care services?

Q: Will your party commit significant dedicated funding to provinces and territories to build universally accessible, publicly-managed, high quality, not-for-profit child care systems?

Q: Will your party increase dedicated federal transfers for child care, starting with an additional \$1 billion investment?

Q: Does your party support adopting federal early learning and child care legislation to ensure these funds are used to build a non-profit child care system?

Women and the Law & Order Agenda

YWCA Canada works to create safer lives for women and end violence against women and girls. The law and order agenda shifts billions of dollars into expanding prison capacity at the expense of prevention and rebuilding the social safety net.

Q: Will your party repeal all law and order agenda legislation increasing penalties, creating mandatory minimum sentences and increasing lengths of sentences?

Q: Will your party shift funds from expanding prisons into expanding social infrastructure?

Q: Will your party re-fund the Aboriginal Healing Foundation and the Sisters in Spirit project of the Native Women's Association of Canada?

Women in prison are younger, more likely to be single, without a high school diploma and unemployed than women in Canada generally. Correctional Services Canada describes an "average" Aboriginal woman in prison as 27, with limited education, unemployed at the time of arrest and a sole support mother of two to three children.

Q: What concrete actions will your party take to ensure that community-based sentencing and release options exist for people who are criminalized and/or exiting prison?

Q: Will your party adopt the recommendations of the Canadian Human Rights Commission on the need for a complete review of the assessment and classification of women offenders and of services and programs provided in prison and in the community?

Q: Will your party support the use of non-prison sentencing options for the 80% of women convicted of poverty-related offences?

Gun Control and Violence Against Women

As the nation's largest single provider of shelter to women and children fleeing violence, YWCA Canada knows the long gun registry is a public safety tool that makes women's lives safer. Across the country, our shelters tell us the long gun registry is useful and needed. Our rural shelters tell us police consult the long gun registry *every time* they go to a domestic violence incident.

Q: Does your party support preserving the long gun registry as a public safety tool assisting police and women living with violence?

Q: Are you aware that long guns are the guns most often used in domestic violence?

Q: Do you know the long gun registry is strongly supported by all of Canada's national police organizations?

Q: Are you aware that eliminating the long gun registry would save only \$4.1 million a year, slightly more than the cost of several complex murder investigations?

Violence Against Women, Women's Homelessness and Housing

Violence against women is a \$4 billion a year problem in Canada and the leading cause of women's homelessness in this country. Every year, violence and abuse drive over 100,000 women and children out of their homes and into emergency shelters. Women need access to shelter and to a safe place to live beyond shelter. No woman should have to live on the street.

Q: Will your party develop and implement an effective national strategy to end violence against women, in consultation with service provider associations and Aboriginal anti-violence agencies?

Q: Will your party develop a national housing strategy with emergency, second stage and permanent housing for women?

Q: What measures would your party implement to end women's homelessness, particularly street homelessness?

Q: Will your party substantially increase legal aid funds dedicated for family law?

Q: What will your party do to address violence against women and homelessness in Northern Canada?

Women's Economic Security

Women make up a disproportionate share of low-income Canadians and are particularly vulnerable in any economic crisis. Women account for 70% of part-time employees and two-thirds of Canadians working for minimum wage. With the highest levels of working mothers in our history, 36% of mother-led families still have incomes below the poverty line and 43% of children living in a low-income family live with a single, female parent. The median income for single moms is more than a third lower than for single dads.

Q: Does your political party have a policy to ensure Canadians have a living wage?

Q: What measures would your party implement to improve the economic status of women?

Q: Will you implement the recommendations of the Pay Equity Task Force through legislation?

Q: Is your party committed to adopting a national poverty reduction strategy with targets, timelines and a gender lens?

Q: Will your party implement Gender Budget Analysis to ensure taxation and other general government policies do not disproportionately disadvantage women?

Q: How will your party improve access and benefits for women under the Employment Insurance system?

Q: How do you propose ending family poverty in Canada? Will you work towards increasing the Child Tax Benefit to \$5,100 per child?

Democracy, Women's Equality and Women's Leadership

After almost a century of women voting, our gaping democratic gender deficit means women made up 21% of MPs when the election began. The UN advocates for a minimum of 30% representation as a critical threshold for decision-making positions held by women at the national level, a threshold that has not been reached by women across any level of Canadian government. The only woman leading a national party leader has been excluded from the televised debate.

Q: What does your party do to recruit, nominate and support more women to be candidates in winnable ridings?

Q: What will your party do to make sure the national leaders' debate is not a men-only event?

Federal government changes have eliminated funding for key activities promoting women's equality in Canada and abroad.

Q: What will your party do to rebuild Status of Women Canada and women's equality-seeking organizations that do advocacy and research?

Q: Will your party reinstate full funding for the Court Challenges Program and improve access to legal assistance for women?

Q: Will your party re-introduce increasing gender equality as a mandate for CIDA and Canada's international development work?

Sources:

Ad Hoc Coalition for Women's Equality and Human Rights,
<http://www.womensequality.ca/election2008Questions.html>,
<http://ywcacanada.ca/en/advocacy/research/new>

Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies, Election 2011: Questions for Candidates,
http://www.elizabethfry.ca/caefs_e.htm

Make Poverty History, Guide for Organizing an All-Candidates Meeting: A Job Interview for "MP to Make Poverty History", <http://www.makepovertyhistory.ca/vote/resources/candidate-meeting-guide>