



On-the-Job Canvass



The Canvass

The main idea of the canvass is to have women talking to other women in our workplaces, unions and communities. The canvass will play an important role in the upcoming election campaign.

Why We Need This Campaign: Women Vote '07

- To put women's issues and concerns front and centre on the political agenda.
- To ensure women are committed to registering their vote.
- To draw more women into the election process.
- To provide a tool for women to address their issues in the campaign.

Why Now?

We know that there will be an election on October 10, 2007. Women have seen some progress since the defeat of the Harris/Eves government and the election of the McGuinty Liberal government. But the progress has been painfully slow and totally inadequate in terms of fixing the devastating impact of the previous government's policies. In the pre-election and election periods, it is critical that the women of this province send a strong message to politicians that real change is needed.

Once an election is called, we likely have only 29 days to ensure that women's issues and concerns are on the agenda as a priority. The pre-election period gives us time to mobilize women and to put political pressure on all parties to address our concerns.

The time is now: organize, mobilize, speak up and speak out!

Will It Work?

You bet! The Women Vote '03 campaign mobilized women across the province, from all walks of life, with the common goal of protecting our society and ensuring our rights. We can organize for change one-on-one: be it at a neighbour's kitchen table, the grocery store or lunch break at work. We don't need thousands of women on the street to make an impact. We just need to make certain that politicians know that women are taking an active role in the election, and know they will be taking to the streets on Election Day – straight

to the ballot box. We know that our fight-back helped change the face of politics in the last election. Promises were made, aimed at correcting the Harris/Eves Conservatives' brutal policies that hurt women, their families and communities. Some of those promises have been kept but many were broken. We need to let all three parties know that women are not easily fooled by kinder, gentler language and that we will be paying close attention to their actions.

How Does the Canvass Work?

This canvass has been designed by women for women. The kit has information sheets on key issues facing women, pledge cards and tips for canvassing. At the end of your canvass, or in the follow-up, it is our goal that women will commit to at least one action. There are many ways they can get involved – volunteering to help a candidate, sharing this kit with others and helping get the vote out on Election Day – to ensure we elect politicians who are committed to our issues.

The information sheets are not meant to cover every issue in exhaustive detail. We have chosen to focus on nine key areas important to women. These issue sheets are useful tools to help you begin your discussions and question local candidates on where they stand on these key issues. It is important to build the links between the issues and the real day-to-day experiences women are facing in their lives.

The pledge card has been designed to acknowledge the realities of women's busy lives. In a 29-day campaign period many women can find a couple of hours to commit to participate in the Women Vote '07 campaign. The goal is to get a commitment on a signed pledge form at the end of the canvass. However, if that is not possible, leave the pledge form with the sister and do a follow-up soon after.

For more material or canvass information contact:
Ontario Federation of Labour
Carrol Anne Sceviour
Director of Women's Issues and Canvass Co-ordinator
416.443.7670
or toll-free at 1.800.668.9138
or e-mail csceviour@ofl.ca www.ofl.ca and click on
WomenVote'07

**PLEASE FEEL FREE TO PHOTOCOPY ANY PART OF THIS KIT OR
DOWN LOAD FROM THE OFL'S WEBSITE.**



Face-to-face Communication Workplace Canvassing



The most important way for us to get the message across to our members is through face-to-face communication. We talk to our sisters in all kinds of situations:

- ♀ Informal discussions online, in the office or cafeteria, or on the job. These are often the most frequent opportunities we have to speak with our co-workers.
- ♀ Discussions we have in the course of grievance handling or investigating a grievance.
- ♀ Specific time that we have negotiated from management or time that we have carved out of our free time in order to discuss a specific issue with our co-workers.
- ♀ Before or after work.
- ♀ At local union meetings or meetings called to discuss a particular subject.
- ♀ At Women's Committee or Political Action Committee meetings.
- ♀ Women's and other union conferences.
- ♀ Local women's or community coalition meetings.
- ♀ Informal discussions outside of work such as school meetings, social and recreational gatherings.

Each of these situations presents opportunities to have the kind of discussions we need to organize and mobilize women.



Tips for Canvassing



1. Be Yourself

- You know best who you will be canvassing.
- Develop an approach that you feel comfortable with.
- Use the kind of language you use every day.
- Know how the issues affect the women you are canvassing.

2. Let the Material Do the Talking

- Briefly introduce the issue sheets, explaining the reason for the canvass.
- Let the issue sheets present the issues - discuss the connection to women's lives.
- Ask them to take the issue sheets home and consider them; let them know you will follow up.
- Talk **with** them, **not** at them.

3. Be Frank

- No one expects you to be an expert.
- If you don't know the answer to a question, don't try to bluff.
- Offer to get back to the sister with an answer.
- Contact your co-ordinator or the OFL for an answer.

4. Canvass at the Right Time

- You can canvass during lunch breaks, coffee breaks, before or after work, at union functions, or any other convenient non-work time.
- You can canvass in areas like the lunchroom, parking lot, or change room.
- Think about whom you can get support from. Approach workplace, union and community activists first and explain what you are doing.

5. How to Handle Responses

- Take time to listen.
- Ask women to talk to family and friends about the issues.
- Stress the benefits of collective action.
- If you receive an unfavorable response, don't argue.
- Thank everyone for their time, even those who refuse to participate.

6. Keep in Contact With Your Canvass Organizer



Why Should Women Vote Yes for Election Reform



On October 10, 2007, Ontario voters will decide whether or not to adopt a new system of voting in provincial elections.

The government passed legislation in 2006 which mandated the establishment of a Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform. Between September 2006 and April 2007 the Citizens' Assembly – 103 randomly selected Ontarians – heard submissions at province-wide public meetings, on-line submissions, and were instructed by academics versed in electoral systems world-wide. At the end of the process, their mandate directed them to recommend either keeping the present system or adopting a new one.

On April 15 the Citizens' Assembly made their recommendation to change our voting system to a Mixed Member Proportional (MMP). This system would reflect voter wishes by ensuring the make-up of the provincial legislature would be in proportion to the votes received by each party. The last election saw the Liberals win 70% of the seats with only 46.5% of votes cast – an MMP system would mean they would have 46.5% of the seats in the legislature.

Under a MMP system voters would have two votes. The first would be the same as now, voters would vote for a MPP to represent their riding for a total of 90 seats. Then a second vote would identify support for a particular political party. These MPPs would be elected based on each party's share of the popular vote for a total of 39 seats. Each party will have a list of candidates from which to select these MPPs.

Winning Electoral Reform isn't going to be easy. Rather than a simple majority of voters supporting the new system for passage, the McGuinty government has built in a barrier. In order to pass, the referendum requires that 60% of voters support MMP - along with more than half the voters in 60% of the ridings. This is called a super majority.

It is critical that women come out and vote. We have the power to get the 60% double majority that is needed to force the government to make the proposed changes.

Women in Canada are being left behind in the struggle for political equality. In 1943, Agnes Macphail was one of two women first elected to the Ontario Provincial Parliament. Today, there are only 18 female MPP's at Queen's Park. At the rate we are going, it will take 123 years to get up to 50% female representation of women in the Ontario legislature. While it is clear that many of the barriers to women and visible minorities relate to the internal machinations

of the parties, research shows that our First-Past-the-Post system performs the worst of all electoral systems in electing women (averaging 18%). Right now the Liberals have **25.0%** women, the NDP have **33.3%** and the PCs have **21.7%**. By contrast, the switch to MMP in New Zealand increased the number of women legislators to **32%**.

Why should women care about voting system reform?

- Fair representation for women and for minorities and Aboriginals will reflect the diversity of our society.
- We have reached a "glass ceiling" of approximately 20% representation of women in parliaments across Canada.
- At the rate we are electing women, it will be over a hundred years before we reach parity.
- Canada ranks 49th in the world in representation of women in parliament.
- Because of this, national, regional and local priorities—i.e., how resources are allocated—are typically defined without meaningful input from women.
- The United Nations has stated that we need at least 30% representation for our voices to be heard.
- Studies of proportional representation reveal that it sufficiently alters the political structure to enable women to transcend the 'winner-take-all' competition for votes we now see in Canada.

What Do Women Want?

Women want a voting system that will encourage the removal of barriers to their representation in parliament. They want to see fair representation and a true reflection of society by electing more women, aboriginals and racialized minorities.

Women want to see the number of women MPPs increase to fairly represent the different priorities of the female half of the population, be it child care, pay equity, anti-violence measures, housing, or health care.

For more details on how this system works go to the following websites:

The Citizens' Assembly: www.citizensassembly.gov.on.ca

Equal Voice: www.equalvoice.ca

Fair Vote Ontario: www.fairvotecanada.org.en.Ontario

Vote Yes for MMP Campaign: www.VoteYesForMMP.ca



Child Care



Currently in Ontario, less than 11% of children under the age of 12 have access to high quality, regulated child care. Ontario's investments in early learning and child care services were slashed by \$152 million under the Harris/Eves government. In the 2003 election, Dalton McGuinty promised to invest 300 million in provincial dollars. Despite an escalating crisis in the child care system and repeated calls for that promise to be kept, the provincial government failed to meet its commitments. Communities across Ontario continue to have inadequate child care funding today – with increasing parent fees, cuts to program funding, and uncertainty that existing spaces will remain viable for much longer.

Since 2003 the McGuinty Liberals:

- Blamed its lack of action on the cancellation of the 2005 Federal Liberal program brought in during the dying days of its government. However, there was no Federal program prior to 2005.
- In the last Provincial budget, the government announced the first provincial money allocated to child care since the Harris/Eves cuts – \$25 million this year and \$50 million next year – but this falls \$275 million short of the funding promised in 2003. While new provincial and federal dollars are welcome, they do very little to rebuild the damage of the past 12 years – including the \$152 million cut during the Harris/Eves years.
- Did not include in their 2007 provincial budget the \$97 million federal budget child care transfer monies.
- After months of pressure from child care advocates, announced the \$97 million federal transfer monies for child care will go directly into funding child care spaces and a small improvement in child care sector workers' wages.

What Women Need

Women need child care that is regulated, high quality, universal, accessible and non-profit. Women need a seamless, affordable, coordinated and inclusive service that meets a diversity of needs regardless of income, job status, geography and culture.

Ask Your Local Candidate:

- Do you and your party support an immediate increase in funding to build new child care spaces, sustain existing child care spaces, and assure reasonable salaries, benefits and working conditions for child care workers?
- Do you and your party support a publicly funded, regulated child care system that is seamless, affordable, coordinated and inclusive for all women?
- Do you and your party recognize early childhood education and care as a core public service and regard it as having the same status as health care and education?
- Will you and your party commit that all federal child care monies will go into creating and maintaining child care spaces and improving the salaries, benefits and working conditions of child care workers?

For more details go to the following websites:

Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care www.childcareontario.org

Code Blue for Child Care www.buildchildcare.ca



Income Security



Income security continues to be a major issue for women. The growing income inequality is a disgrace and is one of the McGuinty government's biggest failures. Ontario's poorest citizens were already severely punished during the Harris years, but with inflation taken into account, they are actually now worse off than they were when McGuinty was elected in 2003.

Over one million people in Ontario earn less than \$10 an hour. Most low wage jobs, 71%, are with fast food chains, retail giants, or temp agencies. 61% of Ontario's minimum wage earners are women; 31% of all women earn poverty wages (less than \$10/hr.) and 38% of women of colour are among the working poor. Aboriginal and recent immigrants make up a disproportionate share of low-wage earners. The Ontario government, under the McGuinty Liberals, recently voted themselves a 27% salary increase. Think about it – the raise alone is more than a full year's income of a worker earning minimum wage in Ontario.

More and more women are working non-standard (part-time, temporary, sub-contracted) jobs generally without benefits and with little or no security. The existing *Employment Standards Act* is outdated and allows 1 in 3 workplaces in Ontario to violate the *Act*.

Far too many women are still being forced to choose between paying the rent or feeding their children and are living in deprivation and isolation. No one in our rich province should be deprived of adequate nutrition, safe housing or a decent standard of living. The reality is that more than 1.6 million people in Ontario today do, and the majority of these are women and children.

Since 2003 the McGuinty Liberals:

- After a massive grass roots campaign to increase the minimum wage from \$8 to \$10, McGuinty announced an increase – but phased in over three years.
- Brought in the Ontario Child Benefit to replace child welfare benefits and the Ontario Child Care Supplement for all children under 18 years of age. But it will be phased in over 5 years, starting at \$250 per child in 2007, increasing to \$1,100 per child in 2011.

- In 2003 the Liberals promised to stop the clawback of the National Child Benefit Supplement to families on social assistance. That promise has been broken - only a fraction of that benefit is being given to the poorest families in the province.
- Social assistance rates have increased by only 5%.
- Moved to restrict the availability of funding for special diets for social assistance recipients.
- A \$3.6 million budget increase for employment standards enforcement but no movement to reform an outdated system.
- As a result of the slow progress on increasing welfare rates and the minimum wage, thousands of people continue to rely on food banks. In Toronto alone, 140,000 people use the Daily Bread Food Bank every month, and many of these are female, seniors and children.

What Women Need

Women need an increase in the minimum wage to \$10 an hour **NOW**. We need a range of quality programs so women can get the education and training required to secure a good job with decent wages, benefits and working conditions. Women can gain economic freedom and earn a living wage if these programs, affordable housing and child care are accessible.

Ask Your Local Candidate:

- Do you believe that a living wage is a basic human right and would you increase the minimum wage to \$10 an hour immediately?
- Are you in favour of ending the entire clawback National Child Benefit Supplement immediately?
- Are you in favour of raising welfare rates and fully reinstating the funding for special diets for social assistance recipients?
- If elected, will you work to reform employment standards so that they protect women working in non-standard jobs?

For more details go to the following websites:

Ontario Needs A Wage Campaign: www.incomesecurity.org/campaign

Ontario Coalition for Social Justice: www.ocsj.ca

One Million Reasons Campaign: www.amillionreasons.ca

Step It Up Ontario: www.stepitupontario.ca and Campaign 2000: www.campaign2000.ca



Safe & Affordable Housing



In 1995, the Harris Conservative Government cancelled Ontario's affordable housing program, cutting off access to housing for tens of thousands of Ontario families and creating a huge housing and homelessness crisis. All social housing was down-loaded to municipalities without the transfer of funds to fix up deteriorating existing stock. Women and children – often single mothers, the elderly, aboriginal women, women of colour, women with disabilities, new immigrants and youth – bear the brunt of this crisis. Studies show the links between poor housing, poor health and premature death. Affordability, supply and discrimination are at the root of this problem. Long waiting lists for affordable housing leave women and their children in substandard housing and in temporary shelters for months, and sometimes even years. Discriminatory landlords abuse their eviction powers in order to get higher rents.

Despite the harsh reality of over 600,000 Ontario households being in "core housing need" more than three years into the McGuinty Government's term in office, provincial housing spending is frozen at its lowest level in more than two decades. The McGuinty Liberals campaigned in the fall of 2003 on a promise to rebuild Ontario's public housing supply. Their commitments included 20,000 new housing units for needy families, giving priority to the development of affordable housing on Ontario government-owned lands; the creation of a new "Ontario Mortgage and Housing Partnership" to provide competitive financing rates for non-profit co-operative and commercial developers who want to build rental housing in Ontario.

Since 2003 the McGuinty Liberals:

- Built only 2,122 new homes as of October 2006, and another 2,161 are under construction.
- Delivered only 6,670 rent supplements as of September 2006.
- Finally started to flow \$392 million in federal money that was allocated by the federal government in 2005.
- Partially uploaded social housing spending in the 905 regions, leaving out Toronto and other municipalities in the rest of the province.

What Women Need

Women need a long-term solution to the housing crisis with new money devoted to building new housing and fixing up existing social housing. After years of Ontario Conservative governments that put a priority on tax cuts rather than investments in people and programs, we have fallen way behind. Funding is needed for up to 18,400 decent and affordable new units annually with a full range of housing options: funding conditional on non-discriminatory rental practices, effective rent control and tenant protection, aboriginal housing under aboriginal control and housing for northern and rural communities.

Ask Your Local Candidate:

- Is safe and affordable housing for women and children a priority for you?
- Will you and your party commit to a long-term strategy to address the housing crisis and commit to the funding of new housing supplies?
- Will you commit to bring back real rent control and stronger protections for renters?
- Will you agree to up-load the remaining social housing to the provincial government?

For more details go to the following websites:

Ontario Coalition for Social Justice - www.ocsj.ca
Step It Up Ontario - www.stepitupontario.ca



Education



Public education is one of the cornerstones of Canadian society. Mothers understand that it builds the foundation for their children's equal participation in the economic, social, cultural and political life of our communities. Public education creates educated citizens. As the primary caregivers, women were the first to understand the terrible impacts of the cuts the Harris Conservative Government made to public education. Funding was cut to the point where many schools were struggling to meet students' academic needs and literally falling apart physically.

The election of the Liberal government in 2003 was supposed to have changed all that. Unfortunately, despite some important investments, the McGuinty government decided to ignore the fundamental problems with the Conservative funding formula. Instead of fixing it, they directed additional funding towards the specific program improvements promised in the election campaign. As a result, not enough money is being provided to enable school boards to cover the actual costs of teachers' and other education workers' salaries nor to cover the costs of maintaining school facilities or the cost of adult education. The new funding does not provide nearly enough resources to address the needs of students at risk.

The \$667 million in increased education funding for 2007-08 will do little to ease the funding crisis faced by many of Ontario's school boards. This inadequate funding has many negative implications, including larger class sizes for elementary grades, particularly Grades 4 to 8; fewer specialist teachers providing programs in music, physical and health education, and art; fewer elementary schools staffed with a teacher-librarian and fewer elementary schools staffed with a guidance specialist. There have also been cuts to support staff, including custodians, office-clerical workers, and professional staff to support at-risk students.

When it comes to post-secondary education, despite the outcry against the Conservative increases to tuition fees in the 1990s, the Liberal government cancelled Ontario's tuition fee freeze after its second year. This reversal in direction in the fall 2006, brought in some of the steepest tuition fee increases in recent history.

Since 2003 the McGuinty Liberals:

- Brought an end to the repressive and hostile attitude towards public education that characterized its predecessor.
- Increased funding to reduce class sizes and to provide additional teachers, but the formula still does not provide enough funding to pay staff, buy supplies and maintain buildings.
- Brought in initiatives aimed at improving education quality, particularly in the primary grades, but created a funding gap and class size increases in higher grades.
- Earmarked additional funding for smaller class sizes in primary grades.
- Provided special capital funding for renovations to address the backlog of deferred maintenance, but this is just a drop in the bucket in terms of the desperate state of our schools.

What Women Need

Women need an educational system that is adequately funded, accessible and dedicated to the needs of all students. Education should not be seen as an expense, but as an investment in our children and our future.

Ask Your Local Candidate:

- Is a fully funded and well-rounded public education system a priority for you?
- Will your party re-vamp the failed funding formula and fully restore the billions that have been cut since 1995 to ensure that adequate resources are available for all our children and for adult education?
- Will you support reinstating the tuition fee freeze at 2004 levels, while expanding operating transfers to replace revenue that is currently being provided from tuition fee increases?
- Will your party double the number of up-front, need-based grants?

For more details go to the following websites:

People for Education: www.peopleforeducation.com

Canadian Federation of Students/Ontario: www.cfsontario.ca



Health Care



Women have a lot at stake in what happens to health care in Ontario. Women are the majority of health care receivers and health care providers in the province. Approximately 80% of paid healthcare workers are women and women provide most of the unpaid health care in our homes. There can be no health care without people. The Ontario government must immediately and significantly increase staffing numbers in all sectors in order to address existing shortages and the consequences of the pending retirement of thousands of health care workers.

The implementation of a health care tax in Premier McGuinty's budget brought in billions of extra dollars. What is not clear is how much positive change these billions have really brought. The Liberals have been quietly restructuring our health care system and turning some service delivery into a big competition. As plans are likely to unfold in a much bigger way after the next election, the number and type of local services at risk is unclear, but given the current trends, we should be very concerned.

Since 2003 the McGuinty Liberals:

- Continued their own brand of the Conservative privatization of hospitals, saying it is efficient and saves taxpayers' money. But as the Brampton Hospital P3 nears completion, capital costs have almost doubled from \$350 to \$550 million while the size of the hospital has been drastically cut. At almost double the cost, the new hospital will open with 479, instead of the announced 608 beds.
- Brought in hospital restructuring including cuts and movement of services out of communities under the guise of the Wait Times Strategy.
- Given new powers to the ministry and the new Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs) to order restructuring and to find integration opportunities that include transfers of services, mergers and amalgamations without the input from hospital boards and community agencies.
- In 2003, promised to hire 8,000 new nurses, but are 30% short of that goal, and even further behind when it comes to permanent, full time positions.
- Have maintained a system of competitive bidding in homecare that has led to the closure of VON and Red Cross services, in favour of for-profit companies, which has damaged care and made working conditions worse for the predominately women care workers.

- Promised a "revolution" in long term care homes but have failed to deliver on minimum care standards that would protect residents and the health care workers who care for them (predominantly women, paid and unpaid).

What Women Need

Women are the majority of health care receivers and health care providers in Ontario. Health care affects women's health, work and financial well-being. Women need health care that is universal, accessible, comprehensive, publicly funded and publicly delivered.

Ask Your Local Candidate:

- Do you support preserving Medicare as a public, one tier system for all?
- Do you believe women's health issues are a priority?
- Will you commit to introducing a long-term care standard that will provide for 3.5 hours per day of nursing and personal care for residents in nursing homes and homes for the aged?
- Will you support taking competitive bidding for services out of health care?
- Will you commit to hiring more staff in all areas of health care, such as emergency services, home care, hospitals, long term care facilities, mental health and public health, including 12,000 new nurses by 2008?

For more details go to the following website:

Ontario Health Coalition: www.ontariohealthcoalition.ca



Economic Equality



Pay Equity is not a privilege or a frill. It is the law. The right of those doing "women's work" to be paid on the same basis as the value of those doing "men's work" is a fundamental human right for Ontario women. It is guaranteed by provincial law.

The Harris/Eves Tory government made every attempt to weaken and undermine pay equity legislation in Ontario and removed their responsibility to uphold the legislation by withdrawing funding.

The McGuinty government has done nothing to undo the damage or to ensure working women in Ontario receive fair pay. There has been no action on pay equity funding to women who work in all-female workplaces (proxy sector) such as child care workers or shelter workers (approximately 100,000 women).

There has been no action on increasing funding to the Pay Equity Commission for public education or enforcement. There has been only silence on women's fundamental right to equity pay.

Employment Equity is another keystone to economic equality. It is proactive legislation to ensure women have employment opportunities at every level of the workplace. The past two decades have witnessed dramatic growth in the participation of women in the labour force. Despite this dramatic increase, the road to equality remains full of obstacles for all women. After over two decades of voluntary workplace equity programs, the barriers of workplace harassment, violence, lack of training and promotions, and lack of affordable quality childcare still exists.

Harris' first act in government was to repeal the NDP's Employment Equity Act. He then eroded the effectiveness of the Human Rights Commission by slashing funding. The McGuinty government's response - silence on proactive employment equity legislation.

A fair wage is the third key to economic equality. Over one million people in Ontario earn less than \$10 an hour. Most low wage jobs, 71%, are with fast food chains, retail giants, or temp agencies. 61% of Ontario's minimum wage earners are women. 31% of all women earn poverty wages (less than \$10/hr.) and 38% of women of colour are among the working poor. Aboriginal and recent immigrants make up a disproportionate share of low-wage earners. The Ontario government, under the McGuinty Liberals, recently voted themselves a 27% salary increase. Think about it - the raise alone is more than a full year's income of a worker earning minimum wage in Ontario.

Since 2003 the McGuinty Liberals:

- Have done nothing to fund pay equity in all-female workplaces such as child care centres, women's shelters or children's services.
- Have done nothing to improve enforcement of the Pay Equity Act.
- Have done nothing to ensure women have access to employment equity.
- Introduced significant changes to the Human Rights System in Ontario, with a number of negative consequences.

Premier McGuinty only increased the minimum wage after a massive grass roots campaign for a \$10 minimum wage swept the province – but phased in over 3 years.

What Women Need

We need legal rights to eliminate wage discrimination based on race, ethnicity and disability. We also need a Pay Equity Commission and Tribunal that has the resources to ensure pay equity is achieved and maintained for all women workers in Ontario.

Women need a government that will implement and support strong human rights legislation. We need a government that will address discriminatory hiring practices through proactive employment equity legislation. Women need a government to provide the funding necessary to fully enforce human rights legislation and pay equity adjustments owed to over 100,000 women. Women need a \$10 minimum wage now.

Ask Your Local Candidate:

- Is fully-funded and strong human rights legislation for women in Ontario a priority?
- Will your party restore proxy pay equity funding owed to over 100,000 women?
- If elected, would you support legislation to address race-based wage discrimination?
- If elected, will you introduce and pass proactive employment equity legislation?
- Do you believe that a living wage is a basic human right and would you increase the minimum wage to \$10 an hour immediately?

For more details go to the following websites:

Ontario Equal Pay Coalition:
www.equalpaycoalition.org

Ontario Needs A Wage Campaign:
www.incomesecurity.org/campaign

Ontario Coalition for Social Justice:
www.ocsj.ca

One Million Reasons Campaign:
www.amillionreasons.ca

Step It Up Ontario: www.stepitupontario.ca



Ending Violence Against Women



Violence against women continues to be a major concern. This violence has a profound and devastating impact on women throughout their daily lives, at work, at home, and in the community. Each year women and children are being murdered. There is also a serious impact on health, justice and social services systems. It has a serious impact on our children, both today and in their future.

Violence against women is a women's equality issue. Women's safety and freedom depend on a comprehensive approach that addresses the root problem of women's social, economic and political inequality. Women and children have a fundamental human right to live free from violence. This is the law in Ontario and Canada. Despite statements by the Liberals supporting the need for a gender-based equality approach to ending violence against women, the Liberal government has not provided a comprehensive approach to end sexual violence, sexual harassment, racism, poverty and other forms of discrimination.

Since 2003 the McGuinty Liberals:

- Never restored funding and resources to second stage housing programs for abused women and their children. The funding for second stage housing was cut back radically by the then Premier Mike Harris. As one of his first acts as Premier, he announced the cuts to services during Wife Abuse Prevention Week.
- Never increased the funding and resources for rape crisis centres, whose funding was drastically cut back in the 90s and has been now frozen for 13 years. Premier McGuinty's most serious failing was that no action was ever taken on the recommendations by two Coroners' Inquests into the death of Teresa Vince and Gillian Hadley. The recommendations called on the government to restore and increase funds and resources to women's services.
- Provided little to support marginalized women and their children with funding for services specific to their needs and to counter the increased impacts they experience from violence, poverty, racism and other forms of discrimination.

- Introduced a 4-year "Domestic Violence Action Plan" that reduces the importance of women's services in favour of funding institutions such as child welfare and gender neutral victims' services
- Ignored or rejected the expertise and leadership of women's advocates at the provincial level and failed to provide core resources to provincial women's networks that work to end violence against women.
- Provided no additional annualized core funding for women's independent, community-based anti-violence services and women's centres.
- Ignored calls by unions and women's groups to include Workplace Violence Regulations and workplace harassment as a hazard under the *Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act*.

What Women Need

- Women's services and networks (women's shelters, rape crisis centres, women's centres, provincial women's advocacy networks) that are independent, community-based, controlled by women's equality rights advocates, that include and are accountable to survivors and provided with full core budget funding from government.
- Services and policies that specifically respond to the impacts of poverty and violence against women on women experiencing racism, ableism, homophobia and discrimination based on language, culture and age.
- Workplaces free from violence and harassment.

Ask Your Local Candidate:

- Will your party restore and increase funding to rape crisis centres, women's shelters, second stage housing programs and women's centres?
- Will your party recognize the differential impacts of violence and poverty on Aboriginal women, women of colour, immigrant and refugee women, and women with disabilities and provide significant increases in funding to address their needs?
- Will you commit to working with and providing annualized core funding to women's provincial advocacy networks working to end violence against women from a women's equality rights perspective?
- Will you introduce Workplace Violence Regulations and include workplace harassment as a hazard under the *Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act*?

For more details go to the following websites:

Step It Up Ontario: www.stepitupontario.ca

Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses: www.oaith.ca



Women Need Good Jobs



Women are now 50% of the workforce. Good jobs that offer good pay, benefits, pensions and that are full-time or permanent part-time, are under attack. Public sector jobs have traditionally meant higher pay with benefits and pensions for women workers. It is one of the first sectors to come under attack by the pro-business forces. The Harris/Eves government implemented privatization and cuts to the public sector and downloaded many services to the municipal sector. The McGuinty government has not undone the damage and job losses that followed. His government has continued to privatize and cut public sector jobs.

The manufacturing sector is a source of good jobs providing women with higher pay, benefits and pensions. Women account for 27% of workers in this sector, in jobs like food manufacturing, auto, auto parts, aerospace and general manufacturing. Massive job losses in the manufacturing sector have a severe impact on women. Public sector workers are also affected when plants and mills shut their doors forever. Public services that all women and their families need are scaled back when decent jobs disappear. Loss of good manufacturing jobs means that families have less to spend on goods and services in their communities.

The way work is organized has changed drastically over the last 30 years. Governments are contracting out or privatizing jobs. The manufacturing sector is in a job loss crisis. The loss of well-paying manufacturing and public sector jobs and the growth of low-wage, part-time and precarious work, impacts on the standard of living for women workers and their families.

Ontario has 4,200 temporary agencies which have no licensing requirements. One in four people are now working part-time, are in temporary or contract jobs, and are juggling two or three jobs to pay the rent and feed our kids. Minimum wage jobs with no benefits and little or no job protection is becoming the economy's new job growth. The majority of workers in these "new" jobs are women, immigrants, youth and people of colour. Most are working for minimum wage with no benefits and little employment protection. The Harris/Eves government supported a pro-business agenda that left this vital sector to market forces. They weaken employment standard legislation and weaken enforcement. The McGuinty government has quietly carried on with the same agenda.

Study after study has shown that unionization is the key to good jobs. These studies also show that women want unions. The Harris/Eves government repealed and hacked away at Ontario's labour laws. McGuinty has left in place so many of Harris/Eves laws, and done so little to enforce existing laws, that women face many barriers to unionization.

Since 2003 the McGuinty Liberals:

- Continued their own brand of Conservative privatization of hospitals, used restructuring to include cuts and moving services out of communities, and maintained a system of competitive bidding in home care that favour for-profit companies.
- Taken a "don't worry, be happy" approach to manufacturing job loss. McGuinty speaks of the sector restructuring and job loss as being offset with the rise of "new" jobs. He doesn't say that many women are working 2 or 3 of those "new" jobs and still can't make the rent and feed the kids.
- No action on temp agencies, such as regulations and licensing requirements.
- Only increased the minimum wage after a massive grass roots campaign for a \$10 minimum wage swept the province. McGuinty announced an increase from \$8 to \$10 – but phased in over three years.
- Increased employment standards enforcement budget by \$3.6 million but no movement to reform an outdated system.
- No action on increasing fines for employers who violate employment standards by not paying minimum wage or paying wages earned.
- Introduced labour legislation, only in the building trades sector, to allow certification of a union when the majority of workers voluntarily sign union cards. Excluding many sectors of our economy that have women workers, such as clerical, sales and service jobs.

What Women Need

Women need a government that recognizes the importance of good jobs that can pay the rent and feed our kids. We need jobs that are secure, well paid, ensures that retirement does not mean living in dire poverty, and if we choose, unionized. Women want our right to employment standards protection enforced.

Ask Your Local Candidate:

- Will your government implement a good jobs strategy?
- Will your government create a Jobs Protection Commissioner?
- Will your government regulate temporary agencies?
- Will your government update Ontario's Employment Standards Act?
- Will your government remove barriers to women's rights to unionization?

For more details go to the following websites: Ontario Federation of Labour:
www.jobsworthfightingfor.ca; Workers' Action Centre: www.workeractioncentre.org
Ontario Need A Wage Campaign: www.incomesecurity.org/campaign



Women's Right to a Union



Their union booms:

The Organized Tailoresses to Hold an Open Meeting. The Tailoresses' Protective union held a very successful meeting in Temperance Hall last night. A number of new members were initiated, and it was decided that the next meeting should be an open meeting, and to invite the members of the sister organizations of bookbinders, shoe-workers and Women's Union League to be present. The Toronto Daily Star, 1894, Front Page.

(From page 10 of the OFL Book: "A Century of Women and Work")

For over a century, women have used organizing into a union as a vehicle to pull themselves out of low wage ghettos, increase their pay and improve their standard of living. In the year 2007, we find labour laws which continue to discriminate against women in low wage jobs, making it very difficult for them to exert their right to be in a union. In this year's Provincial election it is urgent that Parties which support this discrimination be held accountable.

Union representation matters to women. Studies continue to show that women and racially visible workers want unions. Women know that unionized workplaces have significantly higher wages and benefits than non-union workplaces. Union members make 26% higher wages than non-union workers. For full-time union members, wages are 19% higher than non-union and for part-time union workers wages are 66% greater than non-union. Unionized workers have significantly better access to dental, medical and pension plans, longer paid vacation and leave entitlements and human rights protection in the workplace such as protection from harassment and discrimination.

During the mid 1990s the Harris/Eves conservative government slashed the rights of workers to join unions. One key area of this attack was to abolish card certification. Card certification is a process where workers sign union membership cards as evidence they wish to join a union. Where the percentage of employees signing cards was between 40% and 55%, a secret ballot vote was held. This ballot was necessary because a clear majority of employees had not indicated their support for the union. However, where a clear majority of employees (55% or more) signed cards, the Ontario Labour Relations Board could certify the union as the bargaining agent for those employees. The Labour Board also had the power to order the certification of a union when it was proven that an employer interfered to the point where a fair vote could not be held because of a poisoned environment.

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The Harris/Eves Conservative Government abolished the of majority card certification process in 1995. Workers were forced to vote even if 100% of workers signed union cards. The effects of these changes saw employers increasingly successful in keeping unions out as they used intimidation and coercion to get their employees to vote against unionization.

Premier McGuinty had committed to improving labour relations in Ontario and to correct the imbalance created by the Harris/Eves government's anti-worker, anti-union policies. In 2004, the McGuinty government announced changes to the *Labour Relations Act* to restore majority card certification, but only in the construction sector. The changes were not extended to other sectors such as retail, health care and hospitality where the majority of workers are women.

Since 2003 the McGuinty Liberals:

- Restored majority card certification only to the male dominated construction sector.
- Brought in labour law of card signing and union vote that leaves in place significant barriers to women, racially visible workers and immigrant workers being able to access their right to a union.
- Brought in labour laws that leave women, racially visible workers and immigrant workers vulnerable to employers' intimidation and coercion during the time leading to a vote.

What Women Need

Women must have their democratic right to join a union restored. Women want to have the freedom to join a union without being vulnerable to employers' intimidation and coercion.

Ask Your Local Candidate:

- Do you and your party support working women's right to join a union without being vulnerable to employers' intimidation and coercion?
- Will you and your party commit to changes to labour law to prevent employers' interference with a worker's right to choose a union?
- Will you and your party commit to restoring majority card certification for all Ontario workers?

Women know that pre-election promises won't make up for years of chronic under-funding to the programs and services they need. Women know that health care matters, pay equity and employment equity matters, income security and safe affordable housing matters, ending poverty and violence against women matters, good jobs matter. In the 2007 election women have the voting power to set the future political direction of the province.



Pledge of Support



Women know that pre-election promises won't make up for years of chronic under-funding to the programs and services they need. Women know that health care matters, pay equity and employment equity matters, income security and safe affordable housing matters, ending poverty and violence against women matters, good jobs, matters. In the 2007 election women have the voting power to set the future political direction of the province.

WOMEN WILL GET THE VOTE OUT - THE DECIDING VOTE

Election Campaign

I pledge my support to the **Women Vote '07** campaign by volunteering for at least two hours a week during the 28-day election period in support of women's issues.

I Will:

- share canvass information with my friends, family, co-workers and neighbours
- attend 'all-candidates' meetings and question the candidates on their party's record on women
- participate in workplace leafleting
- participate in distributing leaflets in my community - grocery stores, shopping malls, day care centres.
- participate in a door-to-door women's canvass
- assist with mailings
- assist in my candidate's campaign office
- make phone calls
- participate in door-to-door mailbox information distribution
- display my Women Vote '07 decal at home and post others in my workplace, community centre, child care centre

Name _____ Union _____

Address _____ Contact # _____

Riding _____ E-mail _____

**For more information complete and fax to: 416.441.0722
e-mail address: www.ofl.ca and click on Women Vote '07**