



VOTE '18
SISTER-TO-SISTER
CANVASS KIT



WHAT'S IN THIS KIT?

**Introduction Letter
OFL Secretary-Treasurer Patty Coates**

Canvass Kit / Introduction

Women Organizing for Change

Woman-to-Woman Communication Tips

Activist Actions

Social Media: Building Support and Engaging Activists

Historical Voting Facts

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April 2018



Greetings Sisters,

Welcome to the **Women Power ON: Vote '18** election canvass. This kit, which has become an important vehicle for ensuring a woman's voice in Ontario elections, has been developed by the Ontario Federation of Labour Women's Committee.

Ontario women need a government that will change things for the better. That's why the Ontario Federation of Labour is mobilizing unionized workers across the province to raise their voices and elect a government that will make changes that work for real people — and build a more caring, equal, and prosperous Ontario.

In this booklet, you will find information about what Ontario women workers need. You can use it to talk to your friends, family, and coworkers. Together, we will win change that works for Ontario.

The past year featured an historic number of women engaging in the political process — including running for office — and it is vital that women and their allies continue to take an active role in 2018 elections.

Sisters, we are the leaders we have been waiting for. The upcoming Ontario election is critical for working women, our families and our communities. It comes at a time when the political and economic climate for Ontario women has undergone many drastic changes. The mobilization and success of Make It Fair Campaigns for employment law reform and \$15 and Fairness raising the minimum wage. Women's March, #MeToo, #Times Up and #donewaiting created powerful movements that has ignited thousands of activists and new leaders. In 2018, we must turn our work into action leading straight to the ballot box.

We all know that social spending has a dramatic impact on women. The burden of filling the gaps left by lack of government programs falls disproportionately on women, increasing our load of unpaid care-giving work and decreasing our access to supports such as affordable child care and housing, health care, violence protection and prevention services. Women are also experiencing an erosion of workplace rights such as access to good full-time jobs, pensions, and pay equity.

Lack of services have put in place insurmountable barriers for thousands of Ontario women. Especially impacted are Aboriginal women, lesbians, trans-identified, immigrant and racialized women, women living with disabilities, senior women, single parents, rural women and low-income households. So many obstacles are in place by lack of government policies that all these women have been affected socially, economically and politically.

In the upcoming election, Ontario women find themselves at a crossroad. We have a lot at stake. In an election period, politicians do a lot of talking about women's issues but after the polls close, commitments to women are often broken. Our future and that of our families and communities deserve more than lip service and empty promises.

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Our goal is to mobilize women voters to use their voting power to influence the election agenda and determine its outcome. The purpose of **Women Power ON: Vote '18** is three-fold:

- **Putting women's issues and concerns front and centre on the political agenda.**
- **Obtaining a commitment from women to vote.**
- **Drawing more women into the election process.**

Our campaign has two phases: a pre-election canvass and the mobilization of women during the election period to get out the vote.

This election is about basic kitchen table economics! Women are working longer and harder for less and less and are worried about making ends meet. We are worried about putting food on the table. We are worried about sick kids and sick parents. We are worried that the government will continue to balance the budget on our backs while they hand out tax breaks to their banker and corporate friends. Too many women sit down at the kitchen table at night to juggle the bills while carrying the burden of worrying about whether our jobs will be there in the morning.

Women know what matters in this election. Education and child care matter. Health care matters. Ending violence against women matters. Good jobs and pay equity matters. Obtaining and keeping pensions and benefits matter. Rights at work and the right to join a union matters. The future could be different for women. We make up 51% of Ontario's electorate! This election, women have the voting power to set the future political direction of Ontario.

Women Power ON: Vote '18 is about giving voice to women's concerns about our families, our future and our fate as workers in a volatile economy. Together – mother-to-daughter, sister-to-sister, friend-to-friend, worker-to-co-worker - **Women Have the Deciding Vote.**

In Sisterhood and Solidarity,

PATTY COATES

Secretary-Treasurer

Ontario Federation of Labour

Please note that this material is solely intended for members of the Ontario Federation of Labour.

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CANVASS KIT

INTRODUCTION

The goal of the canvass is to have women speaking with women in our workplaces, unions and communities. The purpose of **Women Power ON: Vote '18** is three-fold:

- **Putting women's issues and concerns front and centre on the political agenda**
- **Commitment from women to vote**
- **Drawing more women into the election process**

Why Now?

Over the last three years, women have seen some progress in their day-to-day lives – whether it is in the home, workplace or community. But it has been painfully slow. Most often we feel like we take two steps forward and one step back. In this election period, it is critical that Ontario women send a strong message to the politicians that “Enough is Enough!” The reality is that if we are to continue to move forward, we must bring political pressure to bear on politicians and carry that pressure all the way to the ballot box.

Will it Work?

You bet! In the past three years, women continue to mobilize across the province, from all walks of life, with one common goal – the protection of 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 the lunch break at work. Politicians need to know that women are taking an active role in the next election and know our pathway is straight to the ballot box.

How it Will Work?

The canvass has been designed by women, for women. There are issue sheets and activists' action lists. At the end of the canvass or in the follow-up, it is our goal that women will commit to at least one action - get out the vote!

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The issue sheets are not meant to cover every issue in exhaustive detail. They have been designed to focus on 4 key areas: Ending Violence Against Women; Child Care; Pay Equity and Economic Equality. The campaign is designed to provide contact, a toll-free number and a website link to allow for distribution of more information on more issues. The action sheets are a useful tool to begin the discussion. In your discussions, build the links between the issue sheets and the experiences women are facing in their day-to-day lives.

The activists' action list has been designed to acknowledge the realities of women's busy lives. In a 28-day campaign period, most people can find 5 minutes, 5 hours and even 5 days to commit to an action. The idea is to get a commitment at the end of the canvass. However, if that is not possible, leave the kit with the sister and do a follow-up the next day.

For more information on issues link www.ofl.ca.

Knowing you have power means being able to negotiate from a position of strength. It means getting done what you want to get done, what you want to achieve for yourself and others. When we talk about power, we mean using it in a democratic way: empowering others. Power is a verb not a noun. Power is meant to be shared, that it is both for the individual's benefit and the common good. Power can't be bought but it may have to be fought for, and it does have to be claimed.

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WOMEN ORGANIZING FOR CHANGE

PLANNING AND ACTION

Our Vision

To build a more equitable and better Ontario that works for women and children by empowering women to exercise their right to have their voices heard through the vote. To elect a government whose leadership is accountable to all constituents, particularly working-class women and families, whereby they work to improve the standard of living for all residents of Ontario. Union women want to create a future where our elected officials reflect the Ontarians they represent by encouraging more women to seek positions of leadership.

Our Objectives

1. To empower the women of Ontario to recognize and exercise our political power!
2. Work collectively through the joint effort of union and community women to deliver an issue-based campaign to women in workplaces and to women in our communities through local strategies and actions.
3. Raise awareness by talking about issues facing women and children in Ontario in a non-partisan way to create accountability of political parties and leadership to every constituent.
4. Encourage women to exercise their political power by exercising their right to vote by securing verbal commitments to action from women.

TAKING ACTION – WHEN, WHERE AND HOW?

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OUTCOMES – GATHERING RESULTS

Expectations

Making a difference is what this election is about – women voting to create change. The stakes are clearly too high for anyone of us to be a spectator in the 2018 Ontario election. Today in Ontario women make up 51% of the electorate. We have a powerful force at our disposal.

Voting is our moment of power. **GET WOMEN TO THE POLLS!**

Measuring Results

FOLLOW-UP MEETINGS

Local

Community

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WOMAN-TO-WOMAN COMMUNICATION TIPS

The Approach

- Approach women in a way that makes you comfortable, be yourself.
- Introduce yourself and why you would like a couple of minutes of their time.
- Use everyday language and keep political jargon to a minimum.
- Think about who it is you are approaching, complete strangers or people you know.
- Remember that women's knowledge of the issues will vary, don't make any assumptions.
- Talk *with* women and not *at* them.

Timing - When to Approach and for How Long?

- At work – in the parking lot, while walking into work, during breaks, during lunches, at union meetings, in the change room, at training sessions or conferences, etc.
- In the community – when picking up children at child care, on the bus, at the grocery store, at functions or family events, at other social or recreational gatherings, etc.
- Canvass at any time you think is a good opportunity to do so.
- Keep it short 2-3 minutes, the shorter the conversation the more you will keep their attention.
- The faster and more authentic one exchange is the quicker you can get to another meaningful exchange with the next woman.
- Remember you are on their time and women value their time.

Ask Questions and Discuss the Issues

- To draw women into a conversation ask them a question such as:
 - **Do you vote?**
 - **Are you happy with the present provincial government's actions?**
 - **If you could change anything in government what would it be?**
- Be sure to read up on facts about the issues in this kit and familiarize yourself with the campaign materials.
- Introduce women to the campaign issues and point out that this is just the tip of the iceberg.
- Suggest that women read the materials for themselves.
- If women feel the issues do not affect them directly suggest that family or friends may be affected or try to connect the issues with other concerns they may have.

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Questions, Responses and Closing Comments

- You are not expected to be an expert.
- Take time to carefully listen to questions and responses.
- **Deflect tougher questions to the candidates and their political parties and encourage women to ask the candidates/parties tough questions.**
- Recruit women to do the same as you and encourage them to talk with other women, co-workers, friends and family about the issues.
- Don't argue with women who give unfavourable responses, be polite and thank them for their time (don't take it personally).
- Ask women to have a '**critical eye**' during the election campaign, question everything, including reports in the media.

WOMEN HAVE THE POWER – WE HOLD 51% OF THE VOTE

Where to Get More Information

- Feel free to copy and distribute any of the information in this campaign/canvass kit.
- Elections Ontario 1-888-668-8693 or www.elections.on.ca (in campaign material):
 - All information about voting, registering to vote, polling stations and times, etc.
- Party information:
 - Attend debates and meetings of the candidates whenever possible.
 - Watch media – newspapers, television adds, radio stations.
 - Internet – access is available through local libraries.

**ENCOURAGE WOMEN TO VOTE BY
ASKING FOR A VERBAL COMMITMENT
AND
THANK WOMEN FOR THEIR TIME**

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ACTIVIST ACTIONS

Women have busy lives. Here are some ideas of how you can be an advocate whether you have 5 minutes, 5 hours or 5 days! On election day women have the voting power to set the future political direction of this province.

5-Minute Activist: 5 minutes in a 28-day election campaign can go a long way!

- Ensure you are on the voters list. While you are at it ask your friends and family to check the list too.
- Support social media campaigns.
- **VOTE!**

15-Minute Activist:

- Share canvass information with friends, family, co-workers and neighbours.
- Talk to candidates at the door on issues important to you and your family.
- Support social media campaigns.
- **VOTE!**

5-Hour Activist: Dedicate time all at once or throughout the month.

- Attend an all-candidates' meeting and question the candidates on their party's record on women.
- Send a letter to the Editor of your local newspaper voicing your views on issue/s important to you and your family.
- Participate in workplace leafleting.
- Participate in community leafleting - grocery stores, shopping malls, and day care centres.
- Join a women's walk or door-to-door canvass.
- Create a social event bringing family and friends to the polls.
- Door-to-door mailbox information distribution.
- **VOTE!**

5-Day Activist:

- Organize an event to raise support and awareness of our issues.
- Organize an all-candidates meeting.
- Sign up to volunteer at a campaign office.
- Support social media campaigns.
- **VOTE! VOTE! VOTE!**

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SOCIAL MEDIA: BUILDING SUPPORT AND ENGAGING ACTIVISTS

Building Online Community

- Always ensure your tactics support your strategy.
- Engage your audience and start conversations - they call it “social” media for a reason.
- Create new entry points to join your movement or cause.
- Use photos, social media through photo sharing/tagging on Facebook.
- Reciprocate! Reply to posts, retweet or share content and give other users props.
- Show the love! When someone new follows you, thank them and give them a shout-out!

Remember...

Tone is essentially your voice. Generally, for social justice advocates, the tone should:

- Be purposeful, deliberate and consistent.
- Be creative, and
- Have a prose style that engages and motivates your audience to enact your call to action.

Social media starts with people. To know your audience, it is important to:

- Identify them first.
- Understand general demographics.
- Dig into your community - connect with community and allies.
- Listen.

Tips for Writing Short, Punchy Messages

- Be USEFUL to the reader to build loyal followers.
- Be TOPICAL and fresh.
- Provide the reader with a sense of URGENCY.
- It is always better to be CLEVER than angry.
- Put your own SPIN on it.
- On Twitter, write hashtags into your tweets #onpoli, #elxn2018, #WomenVotesMatter.

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A Quick Note on Etiquette

- **If you wouldn't say it into a megaphone, don't post online!** Assume that anything you post on social media is public and permanent!
- **As a community builder, strive to be inclusive.**
- **Don't feed the trolls!** Participate in conversations and challenge reactionary ideas but know when to ignore toxic people.

*Social Media can fuel spontaneous, organic and grass-roots activism.
Activists can use social media to spread the word, mobilize support, educate the public
and put pressure on decision-makers at every level.*

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HISTORICAL VOTING FACTS

Did You Know?

The Federal Government determined who had the right to vote in federal elections; the provincial government determined who had the right to vote in provincial elections. Therefore, the struggle for women to win the right to vote had to be won at the federal level as well as province-by-province. The right of women to vote was obtained after 50 years of struggle. The first women's suffrage organization in Canada was the Toronto's Women's Literary League which was formed around 1886.

- ♀ Ontario was the fifth province where women won the right to vote in 1917.
- ♀ It wasn't until 1919 that women of Ontario could run for office.
- ♀ Women did not gain the right to vote in federal elections until 1918 and even then, not all women gained the right.
- ♀ Women were not legally recognized as persons until 1929.
- ♀ **First Nation women covered by the Indian Act** were prohibited by federal legislation from voting for band councils until 1951, and in federal elections until 1960.
- ♀ **Most women of colour** - Chinese, Hindu or East Indian and Japanese women were prohibited from voting at the provincial and federal level until the late 1940s.
- ♀ **To vote in Ontario today you must be:**
 - 18 years or older
 - A Canadian citizen
 - A resident of Ontario

Why Should Women Vote?

A woman exercising their right to vote demonstrates proactive action. We have the voting power to drive and set the political direction of Ontario, so let's create a government that works for us. Don't waste your vote – use it.

Get on The List - Elections Ontario www.Elections.on.ca

We Vote! We Win!

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