



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