

ELECTION QUESTIONS

February 6, 2018

On June 7, 2018, Ontario will have an election. For information concerning ridings and voting, please see Elections Ontario <https://www.elections.on.ca/en.html>.

Below are some possible questions for your use prepared by the Ontario Council team.

Online at www.cfuwontcouncil.org under Advocacy – Take Action you can find a guide to help you *Organizing an All Candidates Meeting*.

To create your own questions, a great project for an Issues Group, remember the basic questions of **why? what? who? when? where? how?** should be answered. Check your sources and your facts.

- **What** are the facts? Do have up to date information if possible; is there data and research available?
 - **What** is the history of the issue and the context it is situated in?
 - **What** has been done on the issue already? What needs to be done?
 - **Which** level of government is involved, if any? Make sure that this is a provincial issue?
 - **Who** is making decisions related to your issue?
 - **How** are the decisions being made?
 - **When** will decisions be made?
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SUBJECT AREAS COVERED:

- Links to the parties' platforms
 - Domestic Violence/Femicide
 - Early Years and Child Care
 - Education:
 - Funding Issues
 - School Closures
 - Supporting Students
 - Gender-based Analysis
 - Health
 - Housing and Homelessness
 - Indigenous children
 - Poverty
 - Women and Work:
 - Gender Wage Gap
 - Sexual Harassment #MeToo #TimesUp
 - Women and Leadership
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LINKS TO THE POLITICAL PARTIES

Green Party of Ontario
Liberal Party of Ontario
Ontario New Democratic Party
Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario

<https://gpo.ca/>
<https://www.ontarioliberal.ca/>
<https://www.ontariondp.ca/>
<https://www.ontariopc.ca/>

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE/FEMICIDE

During January 2018, five Ontario women have been killed allegedly in a domestic violence.

The newly established Canadian Femicide Observatory for Justice and Accountability established by the University of Guelph in 2017 says, “femicide is preventable” and so is domestic violence.

On a single day in 2017, 193 transition houses and shelters were housing and helping 1432 women and 1025 children through programming, groups, and services. An additional 1712 women and 398 children were supported through outreach programs, without staying in the shelter itself. But 75% of the new requests for residential services could not be accommodated that day (Shelter Voices, 2017)

All Canadians pay a steep price for violence against women. It’s estimated that each year, Canadians collectively spend \$7.4 billion to deal with the aftermath of spousal violence alone, according to the Department of Justice. This figure includes immediate costs, such as emergency room visits and related costs, such as loss of income. It also includes tangible costs such as funerals, and intangible costs such as pain and suffering. (Canadian Women’s Foundation)

In February 2017, after a 20-month investigation, The Globe and Mail found that one in five sexual-assault allegations reported in Canada is dismissed as “unfounded”, a police term that means that the police do not believe that a crime was committed. Thankfully the reaction to the series was dramatic, and files are now being reopened and reviewed – at last count over 37,000. In many areas, review teams are being created which involve both police and front-line community-based Violence Against Women (VAW) advocates, following a system called the Philadelphia Model.

Background:

Canadian Women’s Foundation <https://www.canadianwomen.org/the-facts/gender-based-violence/>

Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses (OAITH) <http://www.oaith.ca/>

Women’s Shelters Canada <http://endvaw.ca/>

Robyn Doolittle, Globe and Mail

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/investigations/unfounded-what-is-your-police-service-doing-about-sexual-assault/article37245075/>

As public education, violence prevention programs and a strong criminal justice response can bring an end to violence against women, what are your party’s plans to stop domestic violence?

How will you ensure that sexual assault/misconduct cases are appropriately investigated and followed up by the police?

EARLY YEARS AND CHILD CARE

Ontario Council has been pleased to see the changes that have occurred this year with the provision of child care, an essential part of economic empowerment for women – a commitment to 100,000 new spots over 5 years, support to licensed home child care.

But the costs are astronomical, for example, in Toronto up to \$2100.00/month for infant care; availability involves 18 month waiting lists in some cases, and most services are only available Monday to Friday during traditional working hours.

Quebec has, as of Jan. 1, 2017, a sliding scale starting at \$7.75 per day per child up to a maximum of \$21.20/day. Alberta has a pilot project of \$25.00/day at 100 licensed centres as of Jan.1, 2018.

Backgrounder: <http://cfuwontcouncil.org/2017/11/21/early-learning-and-child-care-update-2017-2018/>

What will your party do to bring down the costs of child care?

How will you support decent wages for child care workers, many of whom have college diplomas in Early Childhood Education?

EDUCATION

Education Funding Issues:

In her 2017 Annual report, the Auditor found that the Ministry of Education had failed to follow through on a key recommendation from an independent task force appointed by the government in 2002. The Education Equality Task Force called for comprehensive reviews of the education funding formula every five years. According to the Auditor, there have been no such reviews.

As well other reports have said that special education, ESL programs, students at risk and school maintenance have been underfunded since 1997 (Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario).

People for Education have noted:

- Highest population base receives sufficient funding for specialty teachers--guidance, music, teacher librarians;
- Location in Ontario plays a major role in access to psychological services, wait lists for special education support;
- Fundraising in schools:
 - For some schools this is for basic student needs such as nutrition;
 - For others it is for advanced technology

Background:

Auditor General of Ontario. 2017 Annual Report.

<http://www.auditor.on.ca/en/content/annualreports/arbyyear/ar2017.html>

People for Education <http://peopleforeducation.ca/>

Will your party commit to a review of the Funding Formula in a way to ensure that schools in northern, rural and less-advantaged communities have access to the same services and specialty teachers as those in well-advantaged communities?

Will your party support that First Nations communities are given special consideration for funding to support hiring of specialty teachers?

School Closures:

Currently there is a moratorium on any new school closure reviews, but there are still more than 100 schools destined to be closed, mainly in rural communities. (Toronto Star, June 28, 2017)

The current government has begun a process of Community Hubs - multi-use buildings that meet diverse needs in the community-school, daycare, community centre, etc.

Background:

Community Hubs <https://www.ontario.ca/page/community-hubs>

Are you prepared to overhaul the decision process involved in school closures, with special consideration for rural and northern schools and those that serve Indigenous populations?

Will you endeavor to work across Ministries to implement School Hubs--multi-use buildings that meet diverse needs in the community-school, daycare, community centre, etc.

Supporting students:

In 2015, 85.5 per cent of students graduated with an Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) within five years of starting high school. The percentage of students graduating within four years was 78.3 per cent.

Children from low-income families still have worse literacy and numeracy outcomes in a Queens's University study done in 2012 using the Early Development Instrument. (The Early Development Instrument, developed by the Offord Centre at McMaster University, is used to study children's readiness for school in 5 areas of risk: socioeconomic status, family structure, child health, parent health, and parent involvement in literacy development.)

In a recent study only 40% of grade 9 students in applied courses graduated after 5 years in Toronto District School Board. (People for Education, *Applied or Academic*, 2015)

School Boards are also questioning the value of the testing by The Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) and its sole focus on math and literacy.

Background:

Ontario. Ministry of Education. <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/gettingResultsGrad.html>

The Globe and Mail, Nov.1, 2017

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/education/ontario-school-boards-want-eqao-testing-halted-amid-review/article36802450/>

What will you do to address the high dropout rate?

How will you bring equity into our education system? How will you address student poverty--lack of good nutrition, unequal access to learning materials such as computers?

What changes are you prepared to make to the Ontario curriculum to include competencies such as social emotional learning, creativity, health--going beyond current indicators of success?

Are you prepared to make major changes to the provincial assessment (EQAO) and what would those be? Will you address the inappropriate "rating" of schools by test results.

GENDER-BASED ANALYSIS

As we realized with many things, services appropriate for women are many times different than men. In order to support the needs of women, it is essential to have a gendered-based analysis of programs and services offered by the government.

Background:

Status of Women Canada <http://www.swc-cfc.gc.ca/gba-acis/index-en.html>

What commitment will your party make to having a gendered-based analysis of government services and government decision-making? And will this commitment go to all services not just those run by the Ministry of the Status of Women?

Will your party commit to continuing the Ministry of the Status of Women as a separate full Ministry?

HEALTH

This winter there have been constant concerns about overflowing emergency wards, and hallway medicine due to insufficient number of beds.

At the same time those awaiting long term care or other health services occupy hospital beds waiting for space elsewhere. This has become so widespread that it has a term and protocol – Alternate Level of Care. Not only are these patients holding beds, but they are being improperly served within an acute care setting. They usually require stimulation and care, perhaps rehabilitation.

Currently according to the Ontario Long Term Care Association, there are more than 30,000 seniors waiting for long term care.

In 2015 the Auditor General criticized the home and community as being insufficient for reasons of funding, location, lengthy wait-lists.

Care for family members is still primarily women's work. Many women in Canada work part-time because of family responsibilities. This is of such concern that providing "sufficient capacity in the long-term care system, home and community care services for Ontarians" was one of the recommendations of the Gender Wage Strategy Steering Committee's report in 2016.

Background:

Ontario Long Term Care Association <https://www.oltca.com/OLTCA/>

Ontario Hospital Association <https://www.oha.com/>

What is your party's position on supporting hospitals for long-term financing now that they are facing over capacity?

What are your plans to remove the Alternate Level of Care patients to more suitable health care facilities?

What are your plans for community care? Will you continue to support the newly announced Personal Support Services Ontario?

HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS

The 'housing crisis' has affected many different segments of our society: middle income families; refugee families; women fleeing domestic abuse or human trafficking in need of stable transitional housing; low income elderly. Immediate needs identified include more shelters for the homeless; more supportive housing; repair of the stock of social housing, which house one third of low income people in Ontario; more affordable rental units, including those that can accommodate families, both in new development and redevelopment projects; more mixed income housing in our urban communities.

Ontario policy development and strategies, are under the umbrella of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, <http://www.mah.gov.on.ca/> . Key strategies include:

- The Poverty Reduction Strategy, under the Minister of Housing,
- The Long Term Affordable Housing Strategy Update,
- The Fair Housing Plan.

In addition, consult the National Housing Strategy: A Place to Call Home: <https://www.placetocallhome.ca/> .

Implementation and fulfilling the projected funding for these strategies into 2018 and beyond are essential to keep up the momentum. It is recognized working with the Federal Government, the municipalities and private and public sector partners is essential.

What strategies does your party have to reduce homelessness in our city (or riding or province)?

There is a shortage of affordable housing for middle to low income earners for families, young singles, seniors - both rental and home ownership options. What strategies do you (your party) support(s) to increase available affordable housing in our urban areas / our city / our riding?

How will your party support the housing needs of economically vulnerable women? - elderly low income women; women who have fled abusiveness relationships or sexual trafficking; women with mental health needs; immigrant women often racialized and isolated with children to care for.

On our city / riding the social housing inventory is problematic: not enough, over crowding and in poor repair. If elected, will this be a priority? What is your policy / strategy for maintaining the public housing stock/inventory we already have?

INDIGENOUS CHILDREN

There is a disproportionate number of Indigenous children in the child welfare systems of all the provinces. The federal government has committed to fully fund the Indigenous child-welfare agencies (as of 2018 budget).

What will your party do to assist that this becomes child-centred, culturally appropriate, and keeps children safe?

The majority of Indigenous students attend provincially funded schools, therefore it is incumbent upon the provinces to provide culturally appropriate learning tools both for Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, and to follow the guidance of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

What will your party do to enhance the learning opportunities for Indigenous youth, and for the increase in awareness of Indigenous culture by non-Indigenous students?

POVERTY

One in 6 children in Ontario under 18 live in poverty. Although this is a slight decrease since 2008, Canada as a whole ranks 25th on children's well-being. 13.4% of Ontario families were living in poverty. Of that, 29% were lone parent families, and 84% of those were headed by mothers.

This year the government created Basic Income pilots in Hamilton, Brant County, Lindsay and Thunder Bay.

Also *Income Security: A Roadmap for Change*, the report of the Income Security Reform Working Group, the First Nations Income Security Reform Working Group and the Urban Indigenous Table on Income Security Reform was prepared. This report has been supported by NGOs.

Background:

Campaign 2000 Ontario 2017 Report Card on Child and Family Poverty in Ontario

<https://campaign2000.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/ReportCardOntarioNov212017.pdf>

Canadian Women's Foundation: <https://www.canadianwomen.org/the-facts/womens-poverty/>

Social Planning Network of Ontario <https://www.spno.ca/>

What will your party do to assist these families?

What is your party's position on the \$100/month Healthy Food Supplement?

What is your party's position on the Basic Income pilot project?

WOMEN AND WORK

As an organization, CFUW was started many years ago to support young women getting a post-secondary education (society is succeeding with that), now it is incumbent upon us to help women use that education.

Gender Wage Gap:

The gender pay gap has shrunk, but still exists; women are more likely to work part-time and perform unpaid labour, and are still more likely to work in traditionally "female" professions.

The gap can be measured in various ways, but the most common method is to look at full-time, full year wages.

- Canadian women earned 87 cents an hour for every dollar made by men in 2015, according to Statistics Canada data; it has shrunk by 10 cents since 1981.
- Even women with Bachelor degrees earned an average of 90 cents for every dollar earned by men in 2015.
- Women worked fewer hours per week than men in 2015; and were more likely to work part time (18.9 per cent for women and 5.5 per cent for men), usually because they're caring for children or parents.
- The gap sharpens considerably based on race and origin. The pay gap for indigenous women is 57 per cent, for immigrant women it is 39 per cent, and for racialized women it is 32 per cent.
- Women make up the majority of minimum-wage earners and part-time workers.
- According to the Ontario Equal Pay Coalition, if a man retires at 65, a woman in Ontario would have to keep working until she was 79 to quit with the same earnings.
- Gender equality in work could add between 7-9% to Ontario's GDP by 2026. (McKinsey Global Institute, June 2017)

Background: <http://cfuwontcouncil.org/2017/12/15/the-gender-wage-gap-in-ontario/>

What steps would your party do to solve this economic problem?

Sexual Harassment #MeToo #TimesUp

Sexual harassment at work and in politics is being recognized as the very serious issue that it is. It destroys careers and work possibilities.

Sexual assault centres are being overwhelmed with calls doubling since October with wait lists for counselling increasing to 6 months and longer. Some of the clients are suicidal and depressed.

The Ontario government has had a vigorous campaign, both with legislation and with education, to stop sexual harassment.

Background:

Canadian Women's Foundation <https://www.canadianwomen.org/the-facts/sexual-assault-harassment/>

What will your party do to continue and build on this current work? How will places of work become safer environments for women?

What policies and protocols are in place for your party to protect staff members, volunteers, candidates and MPPs?

How will you support Sexual Assault Centres that are being overwhelmed with serious complaints?

What education programs will be developed for schools to address “consent”?

Women and Leadership:

According to the Osler, Hoskin & Harcourt report on 2017 Diversity Disclosure Practices of Toronto Stock Exchange listed companies:

- The average number of women directors per company is 1.13 (vs. 0.96 at this time last year).
- At 15%, the average percentage of executive officers who are women was unchanged in 2017; but
- The percentage of companies without any women on the board fell to 37% in 2017; a decline from 46% in 2016.

The pace is glacial.

“Countries that have instituted mandatory quotas have achieved a higher level of representation of women in the boardroom, and done so more rapidly, than countries that have opted instead to encourage gender diversity via a “comply or explain” approach” (Osler, 2017)

Backgrounder:

A. MacDougall et al., *2017 Diversity Disclosure Practices Report: Women in leadership roles at TSX-listed companies*. Sept.18, 2017. Osler, Hoskin & Harcourt LLP
<https://www.osler.com/en/resources/governance/2017/2017-diversity-disclosure-practices-report-women>

What is your party’s position to support women with leadership positions?

Indigenous children

There is a disproportionate number of Indigenous children in the child welfare systems in all the provinces, including Ontario. The federal government has committed to fully fund the Indigenous child-welfare agencies (as of 2018 federal budget), and First Nations want to take care of their own children.

What will your party do to assist to support this? To ensure that the federal government fulfils its commitment to fully fund the Indigenous child welfare agencies? To ensure that the transfer from provincial agencies to First Nations goes smoothly for the children affected?

The majority of Indigenous students attend provincially funded schools (People for Education). Also as a response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Ontario is working with Indigenous partners to develop a curriculum for all students relevant to the lived experiences of the indigenous community, from the treaties to residential schools. The first stage will be implemented September 2018, with a three-year annual investment of \$5 million.

Will your party support this project?

What else will your party do to enhance the learning opportunities for Indigenous youth, and for the increase in awareness of Indigenous culture by non-Indigenous students?