

GENDER BASED VIOLENCE (GBV)

Freedom from violence and harassment in all forms for all people are basic human rights protected by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (December, 1948).

Nevertheless, [gender based violence \(GBV\) remains a predominant form of violence](#)

which persists, even in Ontario, affecting the safety and lives of women and girls and gender diverse people, making equality, equity and justice a pipedream for most of those affected.

What are the issues?

GBV is intersectional, encompassing education, housing, poverty, drug use, mental health, oppression, race, age, identity, and class stratification, amongst others. Solutions must be multifactorial and government committed.

In early 2018, the then Liberal Ontario government announced the launch of a [new strategy to end GBV](#) after hearing from more than 200 agencies that help people who have experienced GBV, as well as people with lived experience and Indigenous partners. The government proposed an investment of \$242 million to support and continue the work that it had launched in 2015.

The current government, elected June 2018, [disbanded this strategy](#) as well as the expert panel providing guidance and eliminated previously proposed investment. Since then, funds for public housing have been cut, tenancy rules have changed in favour of easier evictions, basic income pilot projects have been eliminated, and funding to mental health and addiction centres has been cut entirely or reduced.

These cutbacks adversely affect safety for women, girls and gender diverse people.

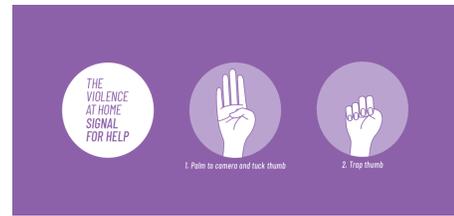
Sexual assault centres have [received \\$1million in additional funding plus](#) increases for specific geographic areas, for victim and sexual assault services and for Indigenous women in the [2021 Budget](#), but GBV has actually increased in Ontario (and worldwide) since the beginning of the pandemic (the shadow pandemic). In Ontario, [58 women and girls](#) have died violently from November 2020 to November 2021, representing over half of the women and girls violently killed nationally. Sexual assault statistics tell their own horrible story: [one in 10](#) reported sexual assaults results in a conviction and it is estimated that [only 5% of sexual assaults are reported](#).

Why now?

Covid has deepened every social, political, and economic inequality that existed before the pandemic. Social distancing and stay at home orders, along with less access to child care and income loss have created a situation where there is increased intimate partner relationship instability, increased mental health problems, increased drug and alcohol abuse and less access to already overburdened support services for victims of GBV.

It is not just a human rights issue, it is also an economic issue. In Canada, spousal abuse alone costs taxpayers [\\$7.4 billion per year](#) to deal with.

Resources: <https://sexualassaultsupport.ca/policy-political-action/> ; <https://www.learningtoendabuse.ca/>



GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

Key Message

An **Elimination of Gender Based Violence (GBV) Action Plan** must be developed, services to support those affected must be strengthened and strong laws against GBV must be enacted to create systemic change.

Questions for Candidates

1. Will your party support a provincial action plan for GBV that is comprehensive, intersectional, and well-funded? Why or why not?
2. What specific actions will you take to reduce GBV in this riding? What will your party do to lower GBV across the province?
3. How will you create a safer environment for victims reporting GBV? How will you promote more justice for victims of GBV? How will you increase holding perpetrators accountable?