

The Facts:

- 67% of all Canadians say they personally know at least one woman who has been sexually or physically assaulted.
- On average, every six days a woman in Canada is killed by her intimate partner.
- On any given day in Canada, more than 3,300 women (along with their 3,000 children) are forced to sleep in an emergency shelter to escape domestic violence. Every night, about 200 women are turned away because the shelters are full.
- There are approximately 1,200 Aboriginal women who have gone missing or were murdered in the past 30 years in Canada. Both Amnesty International and the United Nations have called upon the Canadian government to take action on this issue. According to the Native Women's Association of Canada, "if this figure were applied proportionately to the rest of the female population there would be over 18,000 missing Canadian women and girls."

The Issues:

- The Conservative government passed Bill S-7, Zero Tolerance for Barbaric Cultural Practices Act in 2015, even though women's groups and UNICEF decried the language used.
- The Conservative government is challenging the right of a woman to wear a face veil (niqab) during a citizenship oath (while fully showing her face to female officials immediately prior to the oath ceremony to confirm her identity) despite a Federal Court ruling which found it was lawful to do so. The Supreme Court of Canada has also previously ruled that religious freedom guarantees a woman's right to wear what she wants and that this can only be curtailed in very specific situations.
- The Conservative government cut major funding to many women's causes and organizations that existed to help advance women's rights and issues.

The Parties:

Conservatives:

Women nominated (in this federal election):
58/315 Candidates = 18%

- The Conservative government instituted policy on banning face coverings in citizenship ceremonies in 2011.
- Ban was found unlawful by the federal courts in 2015; the Conservative government is appealing the decision.
- Conservatives pander to Islamophobia
- Conservative MP Larry Miller, when speaking about women wearing face veils in citizenship ceremonies, stated: "stay the hell where you came from".
- Citizenship and Immigration Minister Chris Alexander conflated both the hijab (head covering) and *niqab* (face covering) on Twitter and in a press release during the citizenship oath debate.
- Would continue implementation of the Action Plan for Women Entrepreneurs, which includes a \$700-million fund for women to access capital to grow their businesses.
- Would encourage gender diversity on corporate boards.
- Would protect women's rights abroad by fighting groups like ISIS.

Liberals:

Women nominated: 97/315 Candidates = 31%

- Oppose the ban on *niqab*.
- Criticized some of the rhetoric around the Zero Tolerance for Barbaric Cultural Practices Act, but ultimately voted for it.
- Call for an inquiry into the cases of missing and murdered Aboriginal women.
- Previously criticized the Conservative government's use of the word "barbaric" in its citizenship guide however Justin Trudeau had to apologize when he was painted as supporting violence against women for his objection to the use of that terminology.
- Call for an increase the tax-free child benefit payment, to up to \$533 per child per month.
- Would appoint an equal number of men and women to cabinet.
- Would commit to gender parity in government appointments.
- Would call an "immediate" inquiry into missing and murdered aboriginal women.
- Would ensure all Liberal MPs support abortion rights.
- Would create more flexible employment benefits. for people caring for sick family members.

NDP:

Women nominated:
119/281 Candidates = 42%

- Criticized the *Zero Tolerance for Barbaric Cultural Practices Act* and voted against it.
- Defended the right of women to wear niqab in citizenship oaths.
- Would create one million new child care spaces, costing no more than \$15 a day.
- Would call for an inquiry into missing and murdered aboriginal women within 100 days of taking office.
- Would draft a national action plan to end violence against women.
- Would ensure equal access to safe, fully funded reproductive health services for all women.
- Choose women for half of government appointments.

Green:

Women nominated: 55/173
Candidates = 32%

- Criticized the ban on niqab, said the discussion creates a 'hostile, emotionally charged and difficult environment' and could hamper anti-radicalization efforts.
- Pass equity legislation as recommended by the Pay Equity Task Force, and immediately implement pay equity for women working in the federal sector.
- Call an inquiry into missing and murdered aboriginal women.
- Re-establish funding for organizations advocating for women's rights.
- Apply equal opportunity criteria to government appointments.
- Create job re-entry programs for mothers returning to work.
- Create a universal child care program and provide tax incentives for employers to create more child care spaces.

Questions to ask candidates:

- Why should or shouldn't there be an inquiry into the cases of and murdered Aboriginal women?
- How will your party work with women's groups and communities to combat violence against women?
- What will your party do to ensure that Canadians can exercise their religious freedom, even if it means wearing something that is unpopular?

Sources:

www.canadianwomen.org/facts-about-violence
<https://cfuwadvocacy.wordpress.com/2012/05/25/major-federal-government-cuts-impacting-women-in-canada-since-2006/>

The Toronto Star

