



**YWCA**  
TORONTO

A TURNING POINT  
FOR WOMEN



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## YWCA TORONTO RELEASES PARTIES' RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS ON WOMEN'S ISSUES

*Oct. 3-* With three days to go before voters head to the polls, the YWCA is encouraging voters to consider the parties' commitment to women's issues. The YWCA has released the results of its survey of the three main political parties.

"We asked questions about addressing violence against women, women's poverty, affordable housing and employment training," said Heather McGregor, CEO, YWCA Toronto. "We received detailed responses from the Liberals and the NDP. We received a letter from Mr. Hudak that does not address the questions we posed."

The Conservative leader referenced his party's commitment to continue the introduction of full day kindergarten and "make it fully operational for all 4 and 5 year olds, by 2014" matching other parties on the issue.

"We see a commitment across the Liberals, NDP and Conservatives to continue to implement full day kindergarten. But we need supports to ensure we don't lose current child care spaces. Children and parents need stable child care – not a continuing crisis," said McGregor.

A letter from NDP leader Andrea Horvath said her party "would invest \$250 million over two years to freeze child care fees and maintain existing spaces." The Liberal response referred to funding to "help support centres in their transition to serving younger children" (\$51 million annually by 2014) and \$12 million over five years to help retrofit and renovate child care centres to serve younger children.

On violence against women, the Liberals cited implementation of the Domestic Violence Action Plan, the Sexual Violence Action Plan and the pilot program of Family Court Support Workers, which are positive steps on violence against women.

"Family Court Support Workers are useful and important, but this pilot program needs to be permanent. We need a legal environment that supports women who have experienced violence – and we're not there yet," said McGregor. The NDP promised "stable and consistent funding" for Family Court Support Workers, while the Liberals "committed to success of the program."

The NDP platform has specific commitments on affordable housing, much needed by women who are homeless and living in shelter due to violence and poverty, including a promise of \$1 billion in investment over the next decade to produce 50,000 affordable housing units. The Liberals' housing policy centres on their previously-announced Long

Term Affordable Housing Strategy; the Liberals have also asked the Social Assistance Review Committee to consider housing benefit options. Both the Liberals and the NDP

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promised to give strong weight to the Social Assistance Review Committee’s recommendations.

The Liberals lead in the number of women nominated with 42 female candidates (39%). The NDP has 39, including the only woman leader, Andrea Horvath, and the Conservatives just 24.

For more information, call Sarah Blackstock, Director of Advocacy & Communications, at 416-892-6845. To see the survey results, visit [www.ywca-toronto.org](http://www.ywca-toronto.org).

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