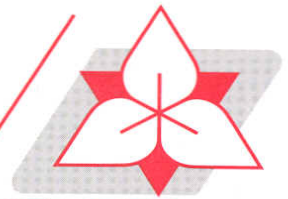




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OFL/FTO



July 2007

Women Vote '07

Greetings:

Provincial Election – October 10, 2007

Welcome to the Women Vote '07 On-the-Job Canvass of Women by Women. The Ontario Federation of Labour Women's Committee developed this kit based on its popular and successful Women Vote '03 Canvass Kit.

We believe our canvass puts women's issues and concerns front and centre on the political agenda. More women get drawn into the election process and more women commit to vote. The canvass provides information and links to other organizations who are seeking equality for women. Thousands of women across Ontario became involved in the 2003 Provincial Election. We hope to reach more women as we prepare to vote on October 10, 2007.

There is much at stake for women in this Provincial Election which will include a Referendum vote on the way the Ontario Government is elected. A government-established Citizens' Assembly recommended that Ontario use a mixed member proportional system for electing our Members of Provincial Parliament. This Women Vote '07 kit includes information about this. It is expected that if this system is adopted, more women will be elected. But in order to pass, the "yes" vote for the Referendum needs an overall 60 percent vote and approval in 60 percent of the Province's electoral districts. This requirement is a large barrier to get over, but we believe that women can win this if we work collectively and share this critical information with our co-workers, friends and family members.

This kit also includes information on some of the key issues which affect women's rights to equality: child care, income security, safe and affordable housing, education, health care, economic equality, ending violence against women, and our need for good jobs which offer good pay, benefits, pensions and are full-time or permanent part-time. We know that women who are union members statistically get better pay and working conditions.

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Yet provincial rules, which apply when women try to organize in a union, work more in favour of the employer. This imbalance in the rules was changed for male-dominated workers in the building and construction trades, but Premier McGuinty would not improve the rules in the industrial and retail sector where women, immigrants and racially marginalized workers mostly work. This kit gives more details on this very crucial issue.

The defeat of Ontario Conservatives in 2003 was a victory worth celebrating – finally, the Conservative Government was gone. This was a Government which took billions out of public services and made changes to hundreds of programmes and services which had drastic and negative impacts on women and their families. After years of voicing our opposition to the Conservatives through days of action, rallies, petitions and organizing efforts, it felt good to see the end of a Government which continually attacked women workers, seniors and students.

The elected Liberal Government came in on a platform of rebuilding Ontario. Our kit reports on that record. While we did not expect change overnight, we did expect to see more pay equity funding, child care funding, housing, measurable steps ending poverty and violence against women and balancing the rules to make joining a union a fair process for women, to name a few.

This election will see the Ontario Conservative party portray their leader and platform as a new, kinder, gentler, for the people agenda.

The New Democratic Party also has its record, when in government, and as opposition in fighting the Harris/Eves agenda and pressing the McGuinty government to carry through on their election promises.

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We urge all women in Ontario to look closely at these issues, the records, all the political party's platform and question the candidates. The goal of our Women's Canvass is to have women talking to other women in our workplaces, unions and communities. This canvass will be important in the election and to our continuing work for women's equality in Ontario.

In sisterhood and solidarity,



IRENE HARRIS

Secretary-Treasurer

IH/jc/cope343

For more detailed background, please go to the OFL website www.ofl.ca and click on Women Vote '07.