

Fighting for human rights and equality

NDP **BACKGROUNDER**

At home and abroad, Canadians have been some of the world's foremost defenders of human rights and equality. And while they've managed to knock down many barriers, much work remains to be done to create the fair society we dream about.

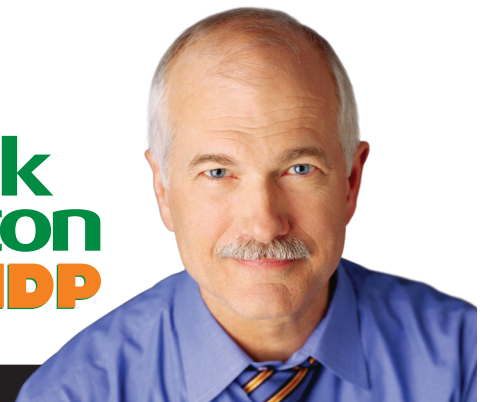
Women still don't earn equal pay for equal work. New Canadians fall into poverty at alarming rates. Aboriginal children are growing up in third world conditions. Two million Canadians with disabilities face the most stubborn roadblocks to success. Racist attacks are a disheartening reality. Visible minorities face racial profiling. And is Canada's government even championing human rights on the world stage anymore?

Instead of taking us forward, Stephen Harper cut funding to equality-seeking programs and pushed human rights further down the national agenda. But it doesn't have to be this way.

It's time for a Prime Minister who puts human rights first. A Prime Minister who will take concrete steps to build equality. Jack Layton will be that Prime Minister.

Don't let them tell you it can't be done!

**Jack
Layton**
NDP



Stephen Harper can't be trusted.

- He abolished the Court Challenges Program, launched in 1994 to fund important legal challenges that advance language and equality rights.
- His government closed 12 of 16 Status of Women Canada offices and changed the agency's funding rules to exclude organizations that directly promote women's equality.
- He extended the use of security certificates—an extraordinary measure that lets authorities detain non-citizens without charge or open evidence.
- He made Canada one of just four countries to vote against the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, passed by 144 other nations.
- He refused to implement the recommendations of 2004 Pay Equity Task Force—and ignored the 2005 Kelowna accord to invest in better living standards for Aboriginal communities.
- When he signed a free trade deal with Colombia, he negotiated a clause that allows paramilitary-linked corporations to simply pay a fine each time they kill a trade unionist.

Stephane Dion is not the change we need.

- After supporting security certificates in 2006, and condemning them in 2007, Dion had his Liberals pass Harper's bill extending their use to detain non-citizens without charge, open evidence or due process.
- With Dion at the Cabinet table, Liberal governments de-funded women's groups, ignored most of the recommendations of the 1996 Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, and never did implement the recommendations of the 2004 Pay Equity Task Force.

Jack Layton's New Democrats: Fighting for human rights and equality.

This election, Jack Layton and his team of New Democrats will present a plan to fight for human rights and equality, in Canada and beyond our borders. Already, Layton's team has led the way in Parliament:

- Introduced the six-plank **Fairness for Women** action plan to promote women's rights and equality in Canada and around the world.
- Passed a motion giving Parliament's support to the **UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples**—after the Prime Minister refused to do so.
- Unanimously opposed Harper's legislation extending the use of **security certificates** to detain non-citizens without charge.
- Tabled a motion to make poverty-reduction and human rights promotion the main **goals of Canada's international aid**.
- Secured all-party agreement to pass the **Seniors Charter** enshrining the rights to secure income, housing and health care
- Tabled legislation to create a **National Housing Bill of Rights** enshrining every citizen's right to safe and secure housing, in line with the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- Introduced the seven-point **Creating Fair Opportunities** plan to speed the recognition of New Canadians' work credentials.
- Tabled legislation to ensure that prisoners in Canadian Forces custody are never again transferred into situations where they could face **torture**.