

# Equality for Canadian women

NDP **BACKGROUNDER**

**Canadian women made important strides** toward equality throughout the 20th century—barely 80 years ago, women won legal recognition as “persons”. But today, after decades of significant gains, progress is stalling.

Canadian women earn just 70% as much as men do, and more than half of single women over 65 now live in poverty. At the same time, regardless of their job status, women remain the primary caregivers to children and the elderly. And half of all Canadian women will experience criminal violence in their lifetimes.

Women know what they need to take the next steps. But rather than ensure they have tools and opportunities to move forward, Stephen Harper has cut funding to essential programs. His government even removed “equality” from the mandate of the key federal agency that deals with women’s issues.

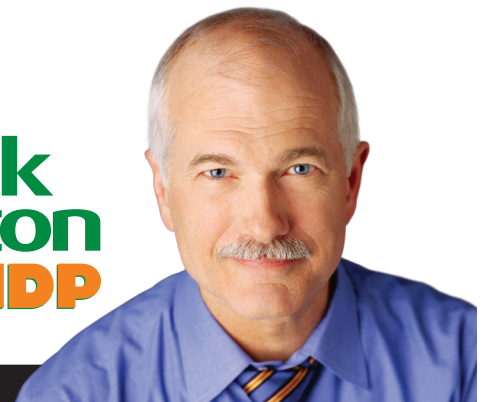
It doesn’t have to be this way.

It’s time for a Prime Minister who will fight for fairness, affordability, equal opportunity, decent living standards and the freedom to live without fear. A Prime Minister who will take this country forwards, not backwards.

That Prime Minister is Jack Layton.

**Don’t let them tell you it can’t be done.**

**Jack  
Layton**  
NDP



## Stephen Harper can't be trusted

- He closed 12 of 16 Status of Women Canada offices and changed the agency's funding rules to exclude organizations that promote women's equality.
- He failed to deliver on any of the initiatives that best support women's full equality—such as affordable child care, Employment Insurance reform, home care for loved ones, and affordable housing.
- He is flatly ignoring the Pay Equity Task Force's 2004 recommendations to promote fairness in Canadian workplaces.
- Even though only 11% of Conservative MPs are women (compared to 40% of New Democrats), he has no policy to seek or support more women candidates.

## Stéphane Dion is not the change we need

- With Dion in cabinet, Liberal governments cut funding to women's groups; changed Employment Insurance to leave barely 30% of women eligible for benefits; broke their promise for 12 years to create affordable child care space; and never did expand home care coverage—leaving more women caring for loved ones at home alone.

## Jack Layton's New Democrats: Moving women's equality forward

This election, Jack Layton's New Democrats have a plan for fairness and equality for women. And with a caucus that's 40% women—a historic high for any party—New Democrats have led the way in Parliament:

- Came within one vote of passing the landmark Early Learning & Child Care Act launching a **permanent national child** care program generating affordable, quality new spaces every year.
- Secured all-party agreement to pass the **Seniors Charter** enshrining the right to secure income, housing and health care for vulnerable seniors, most of whom are women.
- Tabled a bill to create a **National Breast Implant Registry** so researchers can track the real-world safety record of implants and quickly inform women of new health risks as they are discovered.
- Introduced legislation to reform today's distorted **Employment Insurance** system to improve women's access to unemployment benefits, including parental leave.
- Consistently called for the implementation of the **Pay Equity Task Force's recommendations** to promote wage fairness for women, workers of colour, Aboriginal workers and workers with disabilities.
- Earlier, rewrote the 2005 Liberal budget to cancel \$4.6-billion in corporate tax cuts and invest in ordinary Canadians priorities instead—including \$1.6-billion to build **affordable housing** for lower-income Canadians, disproportionately women.