

SURVEY RESPONSE
CONSERVATIVE PARTY

Organization: Women Shelter's Canada
Date: September 14th, 2021

Can you give some concrete examples of how the Conservative Party will take action to end violence against women?

Domestic violence continues to be an urgent issue in Canada. COVID-19 has accelerated this trend. Statistics Canada reports that cases of domestic violence increased by over 54 per cent between mid-March and early July 2020. These statistics are even worse for racialized and marginalized women.

We believe Canada should impose tough sentences on those who assault their spouse or partner. Conservatives will amend the Criminal Code so that it is an aggravating factor on sentencing for assault where the victim is in a domestic or dependent relationship with the person.

We will further add a provision to the Criminal Code that specifies the offence is an indictable offence. It will provide for a mandatory minimum penalty of two years where the Crown can show that an assault causing bodily harm, assault with a weapon, or aggravated assault is part of a pattern of conduct with the victim. The Crown will be required to give notice before the trial of its intention to seek this elevated sentence.

Conservatives will also prohibit those under peace bond or the subject of a protective order from possessing a dangerous weapon, including a "firearm, crossbow, prohibited weapon, restricted weapon, prohibited device, ammunition, prohibited ammunition or explosive substance, or all such thing."

We further support making it easier for victims to escape their abusers and help survivors rebuild their lives. We will support victims by making it easier for women fleeing domestic violence to hide their new location from their abusers. We will also expand the Canada Child Benefit by \$500 per month per child for the first year and \$250 per month per child for the second year for women with children living in women's shelters. This additional financial assistance will help them transition to more long-term housing.

Additionally, we will create a fund to incentivize educational institutions and private sector organizations to partner with women's shelters to provide career training for the women they serve.

Last but not least, we know too many abusers of pets go on to harm their spouse, partner, or children. We will add animal cruelty as an aggravating factor in domestic violence prosecutions to go after abusers who hurt their spouse by hurting their spouse's or partner's pet. We will also support pet owners fleeing violence by working with the sector to ensure that there are better options for women to leave abusive homes without having to abandon their pets.

Does the Conservative Party support the National Action Plan on Violence Against Women and Gender-Based Violence? Why or why not?

The Conservative Party supports the development of a National Action Plan on Violence Against Women and Gender-Based Violence.

Canadians have a right to be free from crimes of violence and exploitation. A Conservative government will make this right a reality for the millions of Canadians who have been touched by crime.

If the Conservative Party does support the NAP on VAW/GBV, are you committed to implementing the first three stops of the roadmap (ensuring proper governance and accountability through an Independent Oversight Body of Experts, harmonizing responses to MMIWG, and ensuring a stable VAW/GBV sector)?

Canada's Conservatives believe that women must be protected against violence against women and gender-based violence, including through a stable sector. We believe that a National Action Plan must take a comprehensive approach to tackling violence against women and gender-based violence, including through harmonization with other government strategies, including the response to the Calls to Justice of the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Inquiry, co-developed with Indigenous groups and communities, and proper governance and oversight.

How will the Conservative Party ensure that more safe, accessible, and affordable housing is available for women fleeing violence?

As mentioned earlier, Canada's Conservatives will support women fleeing domestic violence by expanding the Canada Child Benefit by \$500 per month per child for the first year and \$250 per month per child for the second year for women with children living in women's shelters to help them transition to more long-term housing.

Does the Conservative Party support the addition of coercive control to the Criminal Code of Canada?

Yes. In April 2021, the House of Commons Justice Committee completed a report entitled "The Shadow Pandemic: Stopping Coercive and Controlling Behaviour in Intimate Relationships." Its first recommendation was "That the House of Commons acknowledge the significant harms coercive and controlling behaviour causes in intimate partner relationships, recognize that these harms are not captured in criminal law at present, and further recognize that physical violence in intimate partner relationships is almost always preceded by a pattern of coercive and controlling behaviour." Conservatives support this recommendation and we were proud to contribute to this report.

Will the Conservative Party commit to increased, long-term funding for women's rights and gender justice organizations, including grassroots advocates, to carry out their critical work?

Canada's Conservatives will continue to support the work of women's rights and gender justice organizations, which are helping women in communities across the country. We support these initiatives.