

## National Liberal Women's Caucus Launches Pink Book III: An Action Plan for Canadian Women

Prime Minister Stephen Harper described Canadian women as nothing more than “a left-wing fringe group” in a recent speech to Conservative supporters in Sault Ste. Marie. This explains why he has gutted women's equality provisions at Status of Women Canada and has eliminated any funding for groups that conduct valuable research and advocate on behalf of Canadian women.

While Canada made great progress on women's equality in the last three decades, the actions of the current Conservative government is moving Canada backwards.

**As Chair of the National Liberal Women's Caucus, Maria Minna has fought hard against the Conservatives' ideological war against women's equality. Maria has listened to women right across the country on their ideas of how a Liberal government can change direction from the Harper government and work with women's groups instead of trying to shut them down.**



The result of these consultations and consultations conducted by her Liberal colleagues was the release of three volumes of the Pink Book. The latest, *Pink Book III: An Action Plan for Women*, released on October 21, 2009, proposes a series of measures that the National Liberal Women's Caucus knows will improve the lives of Canadian women and their families.

The Pink Book is a comprehensive policy document that aims to improve the lives of Canadian women and families in three major areas – Women's Economic Security, Women's Health and Safety, and Women's Equality. The following are just a few of the recommendations highlighted in the latest Pink Book.

### ***Pensions:***

One of the most pressing issues for families is pensions and retirement security. Because women are often in and out of the labour force because of family responsibilities, including caring for children or an ill or elderly parent, women often cannot contribute to CPP and cannot afford to contribute to a private pension plan. The National Liberal Women's Caucus recognizes that this is a serious problem and

recommends a complete pension review to ensure financial security for contemporary Canadian women and those not in the paid labour force.

### ***Early learning and child care:***

The National Liberal Women's Caucus has heard from families and educators right across Canada about the need for this important program. It is about the early development of the child and ensuring that they have the best start. It is an investment in our communities and our future. Even the most conservative economists agree that the best investment a government can make is in the early education of our children.

### ***Safe affordable housing:***

A lack of affordable housing is a major problem, not just in the City of Toronto, but right across the country. As a society, we must work to ensure that every family has a safe, quality, affordable roof over its head. The National Liberal Women's Caucus recommends that a new Liberal government implement a National Housing Strategy to provide a safe place to live and put those families on track to owning their own house in the future.

### ***Education and training:***

Women are often in and out of the labour force to care for their children or an ill parent and therefore need to upgrade skills and re-train to re-enter the workforce. Women have indicated to the National Liberal Women's Caucus that there are not enough training opportunities available to those with family obligations. A new Liberal government will make these training programs available because our best asset is a highly-skilled workforce and these programs will help to ensure the economic security of these women and their families.

### ***Care-giving:***

Approximately 80% of unpaid care-giving is done by women in Canada. This includes caring for children, but also caring for an ill or elderly parent. Women are far more likely to lose time from work than men because of family responsibilities. For this reason, the National Liberal Women's Caucus recommends that a new Liberal government work with the provinces and territories to develop a national care-giving strategy. In 2005, the previous Liberal government was investing \$1 billion in a national care-giver strategy, but that was later cancelled by Stephen Harper's Conservative government.

**The *Pink Book* also address the needs of the single mother who worries about how to pay for child care and feed her children, our seniors that often face elder abuse and income levels below the poverty line, and young women and girls that are victims of human trafficking that end up homeless or worse.**

Maria Minna and her colleagues on the National Liberal Women's Caucus worked hard over the summer, meeting with women and stakeholders right across the country, to put this policy document together. This comprehensive set of ideas will ensure that the next federal government is there for those women and families in need of that assistance.

To view Pink Book III, please [click here](#).