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WOMEN
Vote!

VISIBLE MINORITY AND IMMIGRANT WOMEN
ELECTION BULLETIN

"OUR VOICES WILL BE HEARD"



The election campaign is racing to its close with scant attention paid to the concerns of visible minority and immigrant women. Underemployment is one of our major concerns: underemployment due to the lack of recognition of skills acquired outside of Canada, and underemployment due to racism, even when women's skills are acquired in Canada. Others have brought skills which may not be currently appropriate in the Canadian job market. Adequate training and re-training programs are needed for these women. Many immigrant women speak neither English nor French, and this affects their ability to obtain better employment, reach their potential and contribute to our society.

Immigration and refugee policies impact adversely on women. They are discriminatory, with many barriers for those who would become immigrants and for refugees seeking asylum in Canada, especially under Bills C55 and C84.

Women, many of whom are women of colour, who come to Canada as domestics are given temporary permits. Should they apply for landed immigrant status, a fee is imposed on them which most cannot afford. No other group is made to pay this fee.

The Free Trade Agreement, if it comes into effect in its present formulation will have serious consequences for visible minority and immigrant women who work in low-paying jobs in high risk industries - manufacturing, textiles, food processing, electrical and electronics. It will also impact on family reunification, as loss of jobs will make sponsorship of families virtually impossible.

In the closing moments of the campaign, we are asking you to focus on these concerns. We ask you to set aside ONE DAY when you contact your candidates and the leaders, if possible, to see how they will try to solve these problems. The following questions may be helpful:

- . Would you support the introduction of amendments to Bill C62 on Employment Equity to include provision for mandatory programs, goals, timetables, and adequate enforcement mechanisms? Further, would you also strengthen the federal Contractors' Program?
- . Current job training and re-training programs are not adequate and need to be better funded. What will you do to create more adequate and accessible programs especially for visible minority and immigrant women?

- . Are you willing to ensure adequate language training and access to the training for immigrant women, including those who are not government sponsored?
- . Will you support elimination of systemic discrimination against women in the immigration and refugee policies?
- . Bill C55 and C84 have been denounced by many organizations and individuals. Will you support amendments to make the refugee determination legislation more humane and in accord with the international conventions to which Canada is a signatory?
- . Will you work towards the establishment of a better, more accessible and fairer hearing and appeal procedure for refugees?
- . Will you support a broader definition of "family" to allow all immediate family members who are left in economically depressed areas and politically oppressive countries to be sponsored by their families?
- . Will you work towards the elimination of the fee imposed on domestic workers with temporary work permits, when they apply for landed immigrant status?
- . Are you aware of and concerned about the negative impact of the Free Trade Agreement on the lives of visible minority and immigrant women, on their economic status, and on family reunification?

- Visible Minority and Immigrant Women's Committee
National Action Committee on the Status of Women

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