

Promoting good health is just as important as preventing disease. We will invest in community sports facilities so that Canadians across the country can access quality sports facilities in their communities.

And of course, at a time when environmental risks, including exposure to harmful contaminants, are damaging the health of Canadians and causing deaths, the strong Liberal environmental strategy will help protect Canadians – and especially our children – from the harmful health effects of polluted air and water and toxic substances in our products.

#### 4. Women's Equality

The Liberal Party is committed to building a Canada where true equality exists for all, and where the principles of fairness and justice are embedded in all federal government initiatives. Unfortunately, the policies of the Conservative government of Stephen Harper have been detrimental and damaging to women and threaten the hard-won gains made in past decades.

Liberals believe in a different approach. We will chart a progressive course that is essential not only to the advancement of Canadian women, but to the success of our country. Informed by the tireless work of the National Liberal Women's Caucus and its Pink Book recommendations, a future Liberal government will focus its efforts on advancing the equality and economic status of women, and improving the lives of women and families across the nation.

Elsewhere in our platform, we have laid out plans for an Early Learning and Child Care plan and more flexible parental leave, our 30-50 Plan for fighting poverty, our Affordable Housing Plan and an increase to the Guaranteed Income Supplement by \$600 a year for Canada's lowest-income seniors. These initiatives will dramatically improve the lives of many women and in particular, aboriginal women, immigrants and women of colour.

While the Conservatives claim that law and order is their biggest priority, they have taken no real measures to combat violence against women. A new Liberal government's efforts to fight this problem will begin with an amendment to the Criminal Code to include "gender" in the hate propaganda provisions to help end societal acceptance for those who would incite hatred against women.

*A Liberal government will amend the Criminal Code to include "gender" in the hate propaganda provisions.*

We will also propose amendments to the federal Divorce Act, to include consideration of family violence in determining custody and access.

Since aboriginal women are more than three times as likely to report being victims of domestic violence as non-aboriginal women, we will create a nation-wide Violence Prevention Strategy for Aboriginal Peoples, to ensure a culturally-appropriate, holistic approach to helping the victims, their families and their communities.

*We will create a nation-wide Violence Prevention Strategy for Aboriginal Peoples.*

*A Liberal government will take a number of concrete steps to give voice to women's issues and reverse the cuts made by the Conservatives.*

The Conservative government conducted a systematic, ideologically-driven campaign to dismantle programs that help give voice to women's issues. We will repair this damage and ensure it cannot happen again by:

- re-designating “equality” as the main goal of the Women's Program at Status of Women Canada;
- over-turning changes to the funding rules of the Women's Program, so that groups advocating for women's rights can again apply for resources;
- reopening the Status of Women regional offices on which women rely for assistance and information;
- reinstating and doubling the funding for the Court Challenges Program to help remove the financial barriers that can stop Canadians from exercising their constitutional rights; and
- creating an independent Commissioner for Gender Equality, reporting to Parliament, to ensure that legislation and policies of the Government of Canada are examined with an equality lens.

Our ultimate goal is a better society for women and families – a society based on our Canadian values of justice and equality. And as Stéphane Dion has pledged, we commit to the women of Canada that the Liberal Party of Canada will not reopen the debate on a woman's right to choose.

## **5. Immigration: Welcoming New Canadians**

Immigration will account for 100 percent of Canada's net labour force growth over the next five years. We are in fierce global competition for skilled and talented people. And our immigration system is currently not up to the task.

A successful immigration plan is built on the sound principles of fairness, accountability and opportunity. The immigration measures contained in the Conservatives' budget bill, Bill C-50, which give sweeping discretionary power to the Minister to pick and chose between classes of people, fail that test and a Liberal government will repeal them.

*A Liberal government will invest \$400 million to modernize the immigration system and reduce the backlog.*

To streamline and improve the immigration system and reduce the current backlog, a Liberal government will invest \$400 million over four years to modernize its information, data gathering and processing procedures. A Liberal government will respect Canada's international commitments to refugees while providing a timelier and efficient refugee determination system.

A Liberal government will revamp Canada's immigration points system to give greater weight to skilled trades, to better align our immigration policy to the needs of the labour market. We will create In-Canada Fast Track – a new program to allow temporary workers, international students and live-in caregivers to apply for