

Employment

1. In the Canadian labour market, a wide earnings gap exists between racialized and non-racialized workers, even within the immigrant community. Racialized male immigrants make 68.7 cents for every dollar that non-racialized male immigrants make. Racialized women immigrants make 48.7 cents for every dollar that non-racialized male immigrants make. (Source: *Canada's Colour Coded Labour Market*, 2011. Wellesley Institute & Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives).

- ***How will your party address the employment and wage gaps between racialized and non-racialized workers?***

2. Access to good jobs is one of the biggest challenges for immigrants who have lived in Canada for less than ten years, as well for Canadians from a racialized background. Immigrants and racialized workers as well as women are over-represented in part-time, temporary, contract, and casual work, where they do not have stable work hours or stable income. Often this makes it difficult for them to qualify for Employment Insurance (EI) even if they pay into the EI plan. Workers from Ontario are under-represented among those who are able to claim EI benefits.

- ***How will your party ensure that immigrants and Canadians from a racialized background have access to good, stable jobs with adequate pay?***
- ***How will your party ensure that immigrant and racialized Ontario workers can have equitable access to Employment Insurance?***

Services For Immigrants

3. Immigrant settlement services are an important resource that help many immigrants make a strong start in their new life in Canada. Recently, the Government of Canada cut funding to immigrant settlement services in Ontario by almost \$44 million. The government also introduced a new funding model that will result in more cuts in Ontario. On March 2 the Parliament of Canada passed a motion to reverse the cuts. The Federal Budget released on March 22 was silent on the cuts, and they were not reversed as of the date of the election call. The immigration agreement between the federal and provincial governments has lapsed and has not yet been renewed.

- ***What will your party do to ensure Ontario gets adequate funding so that immigrants to this province get the services they need for their effective social, political and economic integration?***

Immigration – Families, Workers, Public Messaging

4. Families are important to all Canadians, regardless of where they were born. And regardless of their background, all Canadians consider parents and grandparents an important part of their family. Just before the election, the Canadian Government proposed to cut by 40% the number of parents and grandparents we are allowed to successfully sponsor (from 16,200 permanent resident visas last year to 11,200 visas in 2011). In 2003, parents and grandparents represented 8.8% of all immigration. In 2010 they represented 5.4% and this will drop even further in 2011.

Historically Canada's immigration laws and policies have not treated all immigrants equally. Examples of unequal immigration policies include the Chinese Head Tax and Exclusion Act which discriminated against immigrants from China, and the Continuous Passage Act of 1908 to deter immigration from India. Differential treatment continues under Canada's immigration law today. Applications from some parts of the world (e.g. Europe) are processed relatively quickly while applicants from countries in Asia, Africa, Middle East, Latin

America and the Caribbean find that it takes many years to reunite with parents and grandparents. In responding to these concerns, the federal government recently said that they will approve a higher quota of applications at some visa posts, but not in others which also have massive delays.

- ***What will your party do to reduce the family reunification delays that disproportionately affect Canadians with a racialized background, and make the process accessible and equitable?***

5. The Canadian Government has said that parents and grandparents can visit their family in Canada while they wait for approval of the sponsorship application. But Canada has a visa restriction in place for many countries and the decision to issue a visitor visa to residents from those countries is often arbitrary. Parents and grandparents from countries such as India, Pakistan, Philippines, China and many others are often refused a visitor's visa.

- ***What will your party do to make the visitor's visa approval process more accessible and equitable for parents and grandparents as well as other family members from countries disproportionately affected because of visa restrictions, to visit family in Canada?***

6. In recent years there has been a dramatic shift from permanent to temporary migration. The number of temporary foreign workers entering Canada between 2006 and 2010 increased by more than 30%, while the number of permanent residents increased by only about 12% in the same period. In 2008 for the first time Canada received more people on temporary work permits than as permanent residents. Canada is using temporary migration to address permanent labour needs. People on temporary permits are vulnerable to abuse and exploitation, and cannot contribute fully to Canadian society.

- ***What will your party do to make permanent and not temporary immigration a priority for Canada, and what will your party do to effectively monitor employers and better protect temporary workers from abuse and exploitation?***

7. In recent months, there has been an increase of negative messages from elected public officials and media about immigrants and refugees, particularly those from racialized communities. It has led to an increase in intolerance and misinformation about these communities. For example, Tamil refugee claimants who arrived in Vancouver last summer were subject to harsh and unfair treatment, and have been repeatedly linked with allegations of criminality, terrorism and human smuggling.

- ***What will your party do to counter racism and xenophobia, including the intolerance directed toward immigrants, refugees and members of racialized communities?***

Childcare

8. The number of women entering Canada's workforce has grown over the last 20 years and includes women born in Canada and immigrant women. At the national level, less than 20% of children under age 6, and less than 19% of children under age 12 have access to a licensed child care space. More than 80% of children have parents who struggle to find childcare within the present inadequate patchwork of licensed and unlicensed services and informal arrangements. Studies have shown that access to early learning and child care services is a key tool in reducing child poverty and its life-diminishing impacts. (Source: *Educated, Employed and Equal - The Economic Prosperity Case for National Child Care*, 2011. YWCA Canada)

- ***What will your party do to ensure that immigrant parents and parents with a racialized background have equitable access to high quality, affordable, licensed childcare and early learning for their children?***