

The ZeroNow Campaign's Leaders Survey on Gender-Based Harm (2021 Federal Election)

Why This is Important

During nationally broadcast debates in the last federal election, the terms “sexual harassment,” “sexual misconduct” and “sexual violence,” or anything related to those subjects, were neither raised nor commented on by any party leader. There was almost zero discussion of these issues on the campaign trail. That must never happen again.

Women across Canada tell us that gender-based harm and sexual harassment in the workplace remain inadequately addressed at the top, leaving too many at risk every day. Over the past several months, toxic workplace conduct has seen a governor general resign in disgrace, a former chief of Canada's defense staff charged with obstruction of justice in connection with sexual harassment accusations, the removal from command or criminal charging of other general officers, and legal settlements in the military and RCMP amounting to hundreds of millions of dollars. Shocking as these events are, they are but telling milestones of the continuing failure of the system to protect women from gender-based abuse and harm in the workplace and from reprisals when they come forward.

As a nationally recognized voice in combating gender-based violence, [The ZeroNow Campaign](#) is determined to ensure the subject of sexual violence and sexual harassment in the workplace is given the

attention it deserves by party leaders during this election.

We are asking leaders for their positions on this important subject, as well as on several proposals that promise to be systemic game-changers in combating gender-based harm. We will share their responses with Canadians prior to the election on September 20th.

* 1. **Has your party published, as part of its election platform, a comprehensive plan to address and combat gender-based abuse in the workplace?**

☐ Yes

☐ No

* 2. [Fear of not being believed](#) is one of the top reasons why most victims don't report workplace abuse. **As a matter of policy, should women be believed when they come forward with a specific allegation of abuse, harm or sexual harassment in the workplace?**

☐ Yes

☐ No

* 3. Many victims say fear of reprisal, and the absence of confidence in the independence of investigations, are also major impediments to coming forward. To ensure both the fact and appearance of independence, and to demonstrate the importance of the issue, **do you support, and**

will you work to enact, the creation of a [new Commissioner, reporting to parliament](#), to investigate complaints arising from sexual harassment, bullying and other forms of sexualized workplace abuse in the federal public service, the RCMP, and the Canadian military?

☐ Yes

☐ No

* 4. Non-disclosure agreements (NDAs) are seen by victims and experts alike as a [legal artifice that protects bad actors](#) and prevents victims from speaking out about their experiences. Several U.S. states have barred their use at the government level.

Do you support, and will you work to enact, the prohibition of NDAs - beginning in the federal public service, RCMP and military - except in cases where victims request them?

☐ Yes

☐ No

* 5. For too many women, the cost of reporting sexualized wrongdoing in the workplace is paid with their jobs, chosen careers and financial well-being.

Will you work to designate the federal government as a model employer for [hiring back](#) victims whose careers have been injured in previous employment relationships as a result of coming forward?

☐ Yes

☐ No

* 6. Getting confidential help on a timely basis can make all the difference to victims seeking safety. Where to get that information presents many obstacles. **Do you support, and will you work to enact, the creation of an easy to remember, three-digit telephone hotline, similar to the proposed 9-8-8 system for suicide prevention, that would provide information and counseling for victims of workplace violence and harassment?**

☐ Yes

☐ No

* 7. What happens when allegations come to light is [seen by many as a determining factor in how seriously sexual misconduct, sexual violence and gender-based abuse in the workplace are taken.](#) **If a senior official in the federal public service, the military, RCMP or a member of the House of Commons or Senate is confronted with allegations of sexual misconduct, should that person be required to step aside from their duties pending the outcome of an investigation?**

☐ Yes

☐ No

* 8. Trauma-informed training is viewed as key to developing gender sensitivity and mitigating harms related to sexual misconduct. **Do you support mandatory trauma-informed training for all MPs and senators at the beginning of each new term of parliament?**

☐ Yes

☐ No

* 9. What leaders do and say is an indicator of how important sexual misconduct in the workplace is viewed. **As leader of your party, in the next parliament will you appoint to the senior ranks of your staff a person experienced in trauma-informed practices to advise you on policy and other matters related to combating gender-based harm in the workplace?**

☐ Yes☐ No

10. High-profile resignations like former New York governor Mario Cuomo's are rare outcomes in sexual violence and harassment cases. The fact is most victims never find justice. **What can you say in a few words to give Canadian women confidence that under your leadership they can look forward to a safer and more just workplace?** (Please feel free to send longer comments in a separate email if you wish.)

Survey completed.

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