



October 2010



Inside this issue:

Durham Election 2010: Making the Environmental Choice	Pg 2
StandUp against poverty: Whitby Heritage Day	Pg 2
Green Team at Durham AIDS Walk 2010	Pg 3
Looking for Passionate Volunteers	Pg 3
Senate's Poverty Report Ignored	Pg 4
Government Response Void of Substance	Pg 4
Spotlight: In From The Margins	Pg 5
Event Calendar	Pg 6
18th Annual Take Back the Night in Oshawa	Pg 6

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whitby-oshawa greens

october newsletter

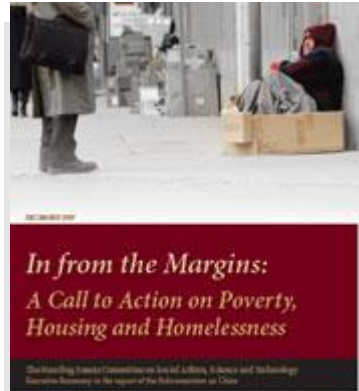
Harper Government's Response to Senate Poverty Report Disappointing

October 8, 2010

The Green Party of Canada strongly denounces the decision by the Conservative Government to reject the Senate's poverty report, which was unanimously approved by the Senate on April 29, 2010. The report, entitled *In from the Margins: A Call to Action on Poverty, Housing and Homelessness* provided seventy-four specific recommendations on how to reduce poverty in Canada.

The recommendations included many initiatives that are already part of the Green Party's policy platform, such as increasing the Guaranteed Income Supplement for seniors, increasing funding for the National Affordable Housing program, and making the Disability Tax Credit refundable.

"While this move was not a surprise given the Government's track record on poverty reduction issues, I am still disappointed," said



Green Party Poverty Elimination Critic Rebecca Harrison. "This report was non-partisan and drew reference from think tanks, NGOs, as well as direct testimony from Canadians living in poverty, many of whom were homeless."

Rebecca Harrison is an advocate for a Guaranteed Livable Income policy for Canada, a policy that Committee Deputy Chair Senator Hugh Segal also advocates for. "We did not expect the Harper Government to implement all 74 recommendations," said Harrison, "but to reject them all was definitely a setback, and a sad day for

Canada."

The report states boldly, "We believe that eradicating poverty and homelessness is not only the humane and decent priority of a civilized democracy, but absolutely essential to a productive and expanding economy benefiting from the strengths and abilities of all its people." Of great concern to the committee is the observation that many Government income programs sustain people in poverty, rather than lifting them out of poverty.

"This is a huge setback for poverty elimination in Canada," said Green Party Leader Elizabeth May. "Thankfully provinces like Newfoundland are forging ahead with their plans to help eliminate poverty within their borders. However, we still need action at the federal level to help lift the countless number of Canadians living below the poverty line from coast to coast."

Durham Election 2010: Making the Environmental Choice

Web site features environmentally focused responses by candidates.

The web site is a project of *DurhamCLEAR*, a new permanent umbrella organization which has been formed to advocate, inform and educate on all environmental issues across Durham Region as and when they arise.

Politics is a balancing act between the public who think that politicians should make commitments and then follow them through to the letter and the politicians who, by nature, prefer to keep their options open.

- Energy Conservation
- General Approach
- Governance

CANDIDATE RESPONSES

The questionnaire was originally sent to existing mayors and councillors in June 2009. All those who have not completed the questionnaire have received reminders every month or so.

CANDIDATE RATINGS

Candidates are rated 5-star for excellent, 4-star for good and 3-star for acceptable. "Anything below that is unrated and should be interpreted as 'unacceptable'," said Doug Anderson, president of DurhamCLEAR.

Out of close to 200 candidates in the Oct 25 election, 122 completed the questionnaire, and their answers are all posted for the public to see on DurhamElection2010.ca along with addi-

stituents after they are elected.

In August and early September, local committees were formed in Ajax, Whitby, Oshawa and Clarington to develop ratings of the candidates' overall suitability. The questionnaire answers were only part of the evaluation. As Anderson put it, "In this day and age, any candidate can figure out the answers that an environmental organization would like to hear, so the committees had to figure out which candidates were sincere and which were blowing smoke."



This questionnaire is intended to pin them down, at least to the point of expressing their preferences.

TOPICS

- Health and the Environment
- Planning and Development
- Transportation
- Waste Management

The vast majority of candidates have completed the survey, however there are still a few who did not bother to complete it. For example, in Whitby, neither Pat Perkins nor Marcel Brunelle have completed the survey.

EVENTS

The web site has an up-to-date listing of municipal debates for each municipal area.

tional biographical information as provided by the candidate. In the case of incumbents, the page also contains vote results from the last election and the contributions they received.

Those candidates who did not complete the questionnaire were deemed unacceptable on the grounds that if a candidate will not answer questions while running for office, they are unlikely to be responsive to their con-

DEBATE VIDEOS

DurhamElection2010.ca in cooperation with Garth Riley Media has invited all candidates across the Region to participate in online discussions on issues. Please check the web site to check out the ones that have been posted so far.

www.durhamelection2010.ca

StandUp against poverty: Whitby Heritage Day 2010

This year's International StandUp campaign took Whitby by storm. Over 40 people participated, many of them youth, and stood up to eliminate poverty across the world. This year's focus was on the Millennium Development Goals.



Green Team at Durham AIDS Walk 2010

The Whitby-Oshawa Green Party participated in the walk in Oshawa on Sept. 25, along with the Durham Greens & the Pickering-Scarborough East Greens. Team Green managed to raise over \$600 for this worthy cause.

Canada's most important HIV/AIDS fundraising and awareness event is the annual Scotiabank AIDS Walk for Life. During the national event, cities and communities from across the country will host Walks to raise funds for local services and programming and to increase awareness about HIV/AIDS. To date, more than half a million Canadians have participated in the Scotiabank AIDS Walk for Life from coast to coast to coast. Together, these Canadians have raised close to \$28 million to support programs and services for people living with and affected by HIV/AIDS in their communities.



Team Green:
This year's Green Team raised over \$500 for AIDS/HIV support in our community!

About the Aids Committee of Durham Region

The AIDS Committee of Durham Region is a community-based, non-profit, charitable organization. We work in partnership with many individuals and organizations that support, in principal or in practice, our mission and goals.

Contact:

22 King Street West, Suite 202
Oshawa, ON L1H 1A3

Tel: 905-576-1445

Fax: 905-576-4610

<http://www.aidsdurham.com>

Annual General Meeting

October 26th, 2010

7:00 PM

[Click here for more info](#)

[Call for Nominations](#)



Looking for Passionate Volunteers for Rebecca's Campaign

Do you believe change is possible in Whitby-Oshawa?

Do you believe that people are catching on to the Green message, and want to help us take the campaign to the next level?

Do you believe our nominated candidate Rebecca Harrison has what it takes to make

a difference?

Rebecca has made the commitment to represent the Green values in Whitby-Oshawa in the next federal election. Now we need to stand behind her and give her a chance to show the voters that she is the best choice.

We need passionate people who are willing

to contribute some time, effort, and creativity.

If you are willing to lend your specific skills, even for a small amount of time, it would greatly help Rebecca's campaign.

We are looking for people to help:

- Write press releases

- Set up public appearances
- Organize events
- Phone potential voters
- Canvass with Rebecca

Contact Rebecca now to volunteer. Call 905-999-5479 or send her an [email](#).

Not even a crumb from Harper; Senate's Poverty Report ignored

They braced for a disappointment, but the brush-off was more callous than they anticipated.

This week, the government delivered its response to the Senate's 2009 report, *In From the Margins: A Call to Action on Poverty, Housing and Homelessness*.

It rejected every one of the report's 74 recommendations. It ignored the senators' evidence that Ottawa is spending \$150 billion a year on social programs that merely perpetuate poverty. It concluded with these all-too-familiar words: "The best long-term strategy to fight poverty is the sustained employment of Canadians."

The glimmer of hope that anti-poverty activists, people with disabilities and overburdened charities had nursed since last December when the Senate's social affairs committee released its comprehensive plan to eradicate poverty, went out.

"The government has turned its back on low-income people in Canada," said [Campaign 2000](#), a national coalition of children's advocates that has been working for 19 years to keep Parliament's resolution to end child poverty by the year 2000 on the national

agenda.

"The government seems unwilling to make any commitment to work with the provinces to develop a poverty elimination plan for Canadians," said [Citizens for Public Justice](#), a faith-based network of 1,500 people dedicated to creating a society in which everyone can live in dignity.

"What we got from the government of Canada was: Get a Job," said a bitter Tony Dolan, who chairs the [Council of Canadians with Disabilities](#), many of whose members can't work.

Senator Art Eggleton, author of the 362-page report, was less crushed than his supporters. His expectations had always been low. Although his co-chair, Senator Hugh Segal, had done his best to convince fellow Conservatives to temper their message of austerity with compassion, Eggleton knew Prime Minister Stephen Harper wasn't interested in social issues.

Ottawa's display of indifference came at a disheartening time for the 3.4 million Canadians living in poverty.

- The Ontario government, which pledged to lift 25 per cent of low-income residents out of poverty by 2014, has all but abandoned its poverty reduction strategy. Since raising the Ontario Child Benefit in the spring of 2009, the province has done nothing substantive.

- The municipal outlook is bleak, especially in Toronto, which is usually a social policy leader. Voters are in a surly mood. The mayoral contenders in this month's election are vying to outdo one another, promising to slash costs and impose harsh fiscal discipline on city hall. Poverty has barely been mentioned in the 10-month campaign.

- Charities, faced with rising demand for services and shrinking support from the government and private donors, are watching their workers burn out and their volunteers give up.

Eggleton, Toronto's longest-serving mayor before entering federal politics, insists the battle isn't over.

"I'm going to continue my efforts," he said, as he headed off to Yellowknife to meet civil society groups and government officials.

He still believes there is a case to be made to business that Canada can't afford to relegate aboriginal people, new immigrants, single parents, older workers and high-school drop-outs to the sidelines as its workforce shrinks.

He also thinks he can convince taxpayers it makes no sense to pour billions of public dollars into a social welfare system that doesn't improve lives or strengthen the economy.

Asked why his own party has said so little about this issue, Eggleton hedged, then said he and a few Liberal colleagues — Ken Dryden, Anita Neville, Mike Savage, Carolyn Bennett, Maria Minna — are drafting an anti-poverty plank for party leader Michael Ignatieff's election platform. "It's a work in progress."

That is faint solace to Canadians who can't pay their rent, can't afford healthy food and can't fill their prescriptions. They need tangible help. They need unambiguous champions. They need a path to a better future.

Source: www.thestar.com

Government Response Void of Substance

It was with great anticipation and cautious hopefulness that we awaited the Government of Canada response to [In from the Margins: A Call to Action on Poverty, Housing and Homelessness](#). This comprehensive report by the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science

and Technology, Subcommittee on Cities was released in December 2009 and was passed unanimously by the Senate in April. Action on the 74 recommendations it contains could have had a profound impact on the lives of Canadians living in poverty.

The response that was delivered to the Senate Monday evening was, in a word: disappointing. Our frustration, however, certainly cannot compare with the profound distress faced by those who work every day to break free from poverty — for themselves, their parents, and their children — and are

faced by a system seemingly determined to see them fail.

The Margins report called for a fundamental shift in our government's approach to poverty. The first recommendation of the report

(Continued on page 5)

Spotlight: *‘In From the Margins: A Call to Action on Poverty, Housing and Homelessness’*

~ Summary ~

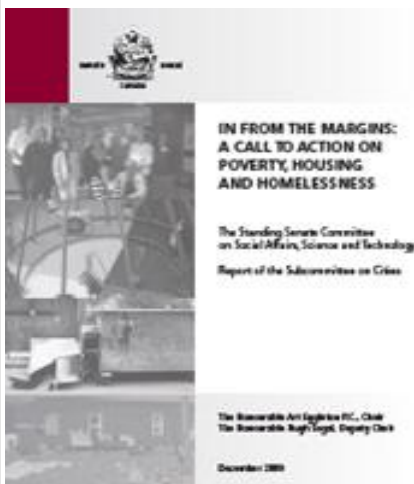
The report's 74 recommendations are the summation of a two-year cross-country study. Committee members heard testimony from more than 170 witnesses, including people living in poverty, several of them homeless, as well as universities, think tanks, provincial and local governments and community organizations.

Based on the findings of this extensive study, the Committee's first and fundamental recommendation is that Canada and all provinces and territories adopt the goal of lifting people out of poverty. Included among the vast range of measures recommended by the Committee to realize this core goal are the coordination of a nationwide federal-provincial initiative on early childhood education; the development of a national housing and homelessness strategy; and the creation of a basic income floor for all Canadians who are severely disabled.

The Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology has a mandate to exam-

ine legislation and matters relating to social affairs, science and technology generally, including: (1) veterans affairs; (2) Indian and Inuit affairs; (3) cultural affairs and the arts; (4) social and labour matters; (5) health and welfare; (6) pensions; (7) housing; (8) fitness and amateur sport; (9) employment and immigration; (10) consumer affairs; and (11) youth affairs .

‘We are saddened to report that far too



many Canadians living in cities live below any measure of the poverty line; that too many people struggle to find and maintain affordable housing; and that an increasing number of Canadians are homeless. And despite the thoughtful efforts and many promising practices of governments', the private sector, and community organizations, that are helping many Canadians, the system that is intended to lift people out of poverty is substantially broken, often entraps people in poverty, and needs an overhaul.

What does this mean for the millions of Canadians that live with these daily hardships? It means making tough decisions about putting enough food on the table or paying the rent. It means making the decision to stay in school or to drop out to find a job to help the family. It means that by just struggling to get by, these families can not even dream about getting ahead.

Read the full report:

[In From The Margins](#)

Citizens for Public Justice: response to poverty report

(Continued from page 4)

is "that programmes dealing with poverty and homelessness are designed to lift Canadians out of poverty rather than make living within poverty more manageable..." The Senate has [challenged our government](#) to assume its responsibility to care for its citizens, to respect international human rights commitments, and to invest our collective resources conscientiously.

Sadly, the government's response illustrates a disappointing unwillingness to constructively assume

this responsibility.

Passing references are made to federal-provincial collaboration and respect for human rights. Yet any sincerity in this regard is wholly undermined by the complete absence of any substance in the 20-page document. Though formally termed a "response," this government statement is simply a reiteration of current programs and existing financial commitments that comprise the federal component of Canada's social safety net. This same net is, according to Senators Eggleton and Segal, in desperate need of repair, or better

yet, replacement.

Liberal Senator Art Eggleton, who co-chaired the subcommittee behind the report, also expressed his disappointment. He is reported as having said, "I think we made it quite clear it's not just how much you spend but how efficiently and effectively you spend it. What we really needed was an action plan – an indication that this is a high priority for the government."

Where the Senate report called for a move towards setting welfare rates at least at the after-tax low-income cut-off (LICO), the Gov-

ernment remained silent. Where the Senate recommended significant reforms to Employment Insurance and other income security programs, the Government said nothing. Where the Senate recommended the development of a national housing and homelessness strategy, the Government had no comment. Where the Senate recommended the establishment of a basic income guarantee at or above LICO for people with severe disabilities...

Read more:

[Citizens for Public Justice](#)

October 2010

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12 Debate	13 Drinks	14	15	16 Imagine
17	18 Imagine	19 Imagine	20 Imagine	21 Imagine	22	23
24	25 VOTE	26	27	28 Smart Shift	29	30
31 Halloween						
Monday Oct 25th Municipal Election Please make sure to vote in the municipal election!		Thurs Oct 28th 8:30-3:30pm Smart Shift: Moving Businesses towards a Sustainable Future - Ajax Convention Ctr			Wed. Apr. 14th 6-8pm Durham Green Drinks On The Rocks 227 Brock St. S., Whitby	

**Wed. Oct 13th 6-8pm
Durham Green Drinks**
On The Rocks
227 Brock St. S., Whitby
Do you want to meet a lively group of people interested in environmental issues from academia, business, government & NGOs for good conversation? If so, join us for drinks!

**Wed. Oct 13th 6-8pm
Imagine Film Festival**
Ontario Shores Centre
700 Gordon St., Whitby
This year's Imagine Film Festival kicks off on Saturday, October 16 with a Family Day, art exhibit and film screening. Features a variety of unique films & docs.

**Tues. Oct 12th 6:30pm
All Candidates Debate**
St. Thomas Anglican Church, Brooklin
Hosted by the Brooklin Town Crier newspaper

18th Annual Take Back the Night: A Night of Inspiration



Rebecca Harrison, our Federal candidate for Whitby-Oshawa

This past month I had the distinct honour of speaking to the participants of Oshawa's 18th Annual Take Back the

Night and giving this year's survivor testimony.

Being able to share my story of survival and how I was able to break the cycle of violence was an extremely rewarding experience.

It was very pleasing to see over 100 participants in this year's event many of whom were in their teens. This is was incredibly encouraging to me as I was only in my teens when the violence started.

Today nearly 50% of girls will be sexually harassed or assaulted by the age of 16. This includes sexual comments, unwanted

sexual touching and rape or incest. As social media becomes a seemingly mandatory part of the lives of youth the numbers will continue to increase. The recent tragedy of a minor being gang raped at a party was made worse by the video of the lewd act being posted to Facebook for the world to see.

In terms of domestic violence, Facebook has become another frightening way for an abuser to monitor and control every aspect of the victim's life .

I ask you to keep these points in mind not to denounce the powerful networking tool but to shed

light on the responsibility we all have to build safe supportive communities where victims of all ages can feel safe, because when you cannot feel safe in your own home you need somewhere to turn. Please consider how you can make our community a safer place to live.

