

NEWSFLASH

UP FOR DEBATE 2019

May 29, 2019

Two federal political party leaders are ‘Up for Debate’ on gender rights - what about the rest?

OTTAWA – Today, NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh and Green Party Leader Elizabeth May publicly committed to participating in a federal leaders’ debate on women’s rights and gender equality in the lead-up to the October 2019 federal election.

The leaders announced their commitments at the launch of Up for Debate, a non-partisan campaign calling for women’s rights and gender equality to be front and centre in the federal election campaign.

“We are thrilled that two party leaders have committed to a leaders’ debate,” said Paulette Senior, CEO of the Canadian Women’s Foundation, a member of the Up for Debate coalition. “We welcome the commitment made by the Bloc Québécois today to discussing women’s rights and gender equality during the election campaign. We hope they will strengthen their commitment by agreeing to participate in a leaders’ debate on these issues.”

The Liberal and Conservative parties have not yet committed to participate in the Up for Debate campaign.

“Prime Minister Justin Trudeau committed to participating in a federal leaders’ debate on women’s rights and gender equality in the 2015 election campaign,” said Sandeep Prasad, Executive Director of Action Canada for Sexual Health and Rights. “We hope that the Prime Minister, who self-identifies as a feminist, and Conservative Party of Canada Leader Andrew Scheer, will commit to a federal leaders’ debate on these issues without delay.”

Up for Debate, a non-partisan alliance of prominent national organizations promoting women’s rights and gender equality, urges all federal political party leaders to participate in this national debate, and to adopt strong women’s rights and gender equality policy statements in their party platforms including to:

- Remove barriers to economic equality by funding public services and social programs in Canada that help lift women and gender diverse people out of poverty;
- Create a national action plan to prevent and address all forms of violence against women, girls and gender diverse people, including the extreme levels of violence against Indigenous women, girls and two-spirit people; and
- Increase long-term core funding for women’s rights and equality-seeking organizations as well as to grassroots activist organizations, to enable them to carry

out their vital work, which is proven to have a positive impact on the lives of women and gender diverse people.

You can read more details in the Up for Debate Platform for Action [here](#).

In 2015, the Up for Debate coalition called for a national leaders' debate on women's rights and gender equality. After securing commitments to debate from the leaders of the Liberal Party, the Bloc Québécois, and the Green Party, Up for Debate switched strategies, and invited all party leaders to film one-on-one video interviews with leading feminist journalist, Francine Pelletier. The Conservatives declined to participate, but Up for Debate's interviews with the other four federal party leaders were released nationally. The 2015 federal election produced a strong agenda on women's rights and gender equality. There has been no leaders' debate on women's rights and gender equality since 1984.

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Organizations supporting Up for Debate 2019 include:

Action Canada for Sexual Health and Rights
Amnesty International Canada
Canada Without Poverty
Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives
Canadian Federation of University Women
Canadian Feminist Alliance for International Action
Canadian Labour Congress
Canadian Women's Foundation
Campaign 2000
Child Care Now
DisAbled Women's Association of Canada
Fédération des Femmes du Québec
KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives
National Association of Women and the Law (NAWL)
Oxfam Canada
Women Shelters Canada
YWCA Canada
West Coast Leaf
WomanACT