March 7, 2017 |

Statements

BC needs a leader who will make life better for women

The following is a statement from BC Federation of Labour President Irene Lanzinger to mark International Women's Day, March 8:

"As we celebrate International Women's Day for 2017, a provincial election that has profound consequences for women is just around the corner on May 9.

How have women fared under six years of Christy Clark and 16 years of BC Liberal government? How has the pursuit of progress toward equality, equity and opportunity for BC women played out?

Are women better or worse off under Clark and the BC Liberals? Are we moving forward—or backward?

The facts are that inequality and injustice for women touch every aspect of our lives economically, socially, politically.

In BC, women earn 83 cents on the dollar compared to men. That's the second worst gap of gender wage inequality of any province in Canada.

Income disparities in BC are among the most extreme in the country. Some 500,000 workers earn poverty wages in our province, less than $15 per hour. An overwhelming majority—some 300,000

workers—are women.

Women bear the burden of this inequality. In this province, more than 80% of single parents raising children are women.

And if you are the child of a single parent in this province, there's a 50% chance that you will grow up in poverty.

Under Christy Clark and the BC Liberals, welfare rates have been frozen for nine years leaving tens of thousands more women in poverty.

There's been no action on childcare.

There's been no action on a poverty reduction plan.

Other legacies of 16 years of BC Liberal rule have hit women hard. They cut all funding to community-based womens centres. They slashed legal aid funding, including important supports for women needing help with family law issues.

One in three women are sexually assaulted in their lifetime. But under Clark and the Liberals, there's no coordinated approach to sexual assault services for women in BC. And when women who are victims of sexual violence seek support at health care facilities, they will find that only nine hospitals in the province—mostly in urban areas—have coordinated services to help them.

It doesn't have to be this way. We can make a different choice.

We can have leaders who make life better for women, for families, for communities.

We can elect a new government May 9. One that will address fundamental issues of equality, move to erase inequities, and implement policies that will expand women's rights on the job and in the community."