

If Lois Brown were Conservative leader?

Climate Change, the fate of missing and murdered indigenous women and the Syrian Refugee crisis were the three social issues that Lois Brown surprisingly chose to address at the recent All Candidates meeting at Trinity Church in Newmarket.

I want to applaud Lois for choosing these issues that are obviously important to her personally, but have failed to have been addressed in any meaningful way by her leader or by his Conservative government.

If a party were serious about climate change, they would not slash funding for scientific research. They would strive to move away from fossil fuel dependency, support alternative energy development and not invest so much in the success of the Tar Sands.

Lois herself has a passionate interest in First Nations, but her leader has resolutely refused to launch a national inquiry into violence against First Nations women despite the pleas of provincial premiers, the First Nations community and even Amnesty International. Harper started out promisingly in 2008 by offering an apology to First Nations but, since then, has ignored issues like the disproportionate number of First Nation children in child care custody and their over representation in our prisons.

The relationship between this government and First Nations has grown increasingly adversarial during Harper's time in office and seen the rise of the Idle No More movement and, most recently, the powerful voice of the first Indigenous Mrs. Universe, Ashley Callingbull Burnham, calling for all indigenous Canadians to vote Harper out of office.

If Lois Brown were the leader of the Conservatives maybe we would see the red tape removed blocking the actual settlement of Syrian refugees in Canada and we might see an end to the current Conservative policy, called 'cruel and unusual' by our own Supreme Court, that denies health care to many refugees.

If Lois were leader, perhaps the Conservatives would not consider bombing to get at the root of the problem. After all it was the US bombing of Iraq that Harper supported in opposition that created the chaos that gave birth to ISIS.

With a different leader perhaps Canada would once again contribute skillful negotiation and diplomacy to work toward the solution of this awful problem.

Any citizen truly concerned about these three crucial social issues needs to look somewhere else than the Conservatives to place their vote.

Unfortunately, Stephen Harper is still their leader and we know his record.

Time for a change.

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