

Alanna Koch

Poverty, Violence and Homelessness

Q. What concrete steps will you take to reduce the rate of intimate partner violence in Saskatchewan?

A. With Saskatchewan having the highest rate of intimate partner violence in the country, and the second-highest rate of reported sexual assaults in Canada, it is clear that as a government we need to do more to offer improved protections and supports to women who are fleeing domestic violence. Critical to this will be working collaboratively with community agencies and advocacy groups, such as the YWCA, to ensure that this issue is being properly addressed and augmenting policy, where necessary.

Q. The Saskatchewan Poverty Reduction Strategy states that in the short-term, the Government of Saskatchewan will “work with community agencies to expand opportunities for housing for those deemed hard-to-house.” What steps will you take to provide safe, appropriate, supportive housing options for women who are deemed hard to house?

A. I support the recommendations outlined in the Saskatchewan Poverty Reduction Strategy and would continue to work towards achieving its stated goals and objectives. Where expanding housing for women who are deemed hard-to-house is concerned, a collaborative approach that involves both community agencies and government is necessary to ensure that we are taking positive steps on this issue.

In my policy platform, *A Vision for 2030*, I outline guidelines to growing Saskatchewan, which includes caring for those that most need it. I want a strong economy because that ensures we can dedicate appropriate resources to looking after our most vulnerable. My government will focus on prevention instead of intervention, and I believe adequate housing is important.

If you'd like to see more about my platform, please visit alannaforleader.ca.

Q. Will you commit to applying a gender-based analysis of provincial assistance programs, and any future redesign of such programs, to ensure women and families receiving assistance are able to adequately cover the cost of living?

A. Significant changes to any provincial assistance program would require feedback from all relevant stakeholders. I would be supportive of raising any issue that an organization deems as lacking or missing with our provincial assistance programs as part of a larger discussion, if a future redesign of such programs were to occur.

Q. What will you do to support the inquiry into missing and murdered Indigenous women and to respond to the disproportionate victimization of Aboriginal women and girls?

A. The federal government has undertaken a valuable and substantial journey in addressing the issue of missing and murdered Indigenous women in Canada.

While the inquiry remains in its early stages, it would be prudent for the government to take its cues on how to best respond and support victimized Indigenous women and girls from the outcomes of that inquiry.

Women and Employment

Q. What measures will you implement to improve the economic status of women in Saskatchewan?

A. Saskatchewan's labour market is robust and at no other time in the past have women been more engaged in our provincial economy. In fact, over 60 per cent of women in Saskatchewan are gainfully employed, compared to 1976 where fewer than 45 per cent of women were active participants in the labour market. We have certainly come a long way. But more could, or should, be done. Our success hinges on both the public and private sector's commitment to address the under-representation of women in managerial and non-traditional roles, that equal employment opportunities continue to drive our hiring practices, and that cultural and gender diversity is entrenched in our hiring practices and policies.

Q. Do you have plans to develop work-based training programs that increase opportunities for women to participate in the workforce?

A. The provincial government currently offers a number of different programs to help individuals obtain skills training as an avenue to participate in our economy. Outside of these skills training programs, development of any work-based training or mentorship programs that specifically increase opportunities for women to participate in the workforce should ultimately be led by business with the support of government, if required.

Q. How do you plan on recognizing and giving economic value to the unpaid work of women?

A. It goes without saying that every hour of unpaid work that women contribute to our society is significant, and that all work experiences – either paid or unpaid – should hold weight when applying for employment opportunities.

Education – Early Years

Q. How do you plan to fix the child care subsidies to ensure that all families have access to high-quality early years programming for their children?

A. Child care subsidies in Saskatchewan are provided to families who are considered low income earners in order to help cover the costs associated with licensed child care. I would ask my ministers to work with stakeholders on what, if any, changes are required to the existing subsidy program.

Truth and Reconciliation

Q. According to Statistics Canada, 85% of children in care in Saskatchewan are First Nations and Metis. How do you plan to reduce the number of First Nations and Metis children in care?

A. Reducing the number of First Nations and Metis children in care comes down to working collaboratively with our First Nations and Metis communities to pinpoint ways to improve outcomes. For government to dictate goals and outcomes on an issue that requires both cultural and economic considerations would be unfair to decision makers in those First Nations and Metis communities. A united approach is necessary, or any plan put forth by government would fail.

If I am fortunate enough to be elected as leader, I would expect my ministers to get out from behind their desks and talk to people. Government needs to do a better job of asking what citizens want and working with our stakeholders to find solutions.

Q. In 2015, a legislative review was completed titled Child Welfare Legislative Proposals. What is your response to these proposals and how do you intend to move these recommendations forward?

A. These proposals are comprehensive and, I believe, have put the government on the right path in terms of where we need to take our child welfare legislation in this province. One of the highlights of this legislative review included repealing the Persons of Sufficient Interest legislation to build a new framework that would strike a balance of responsibility among extended family members and the government, and would change the requirements of government involvement so to ensure that the welfare of children is not at risk. As it stands with the current PSI legislation, this is a concern.

I would certainly take the outcomes of this review to my cabinet ministers and ask them to consult with their stakeholders, including the Children's Advocate, so appropriate considerations can be made on how to improve the laws that affect the most vulnerable in our society.