

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Local Candidates' Forum on Women's Issues Organized by Alliance of Women's Groups**

*Durham, Ontario, Thursday September 3, 2015* – With the commencement of the Federal Election Campaign, three major women's advocacy groups have joined together to organize a forum for local political candidates to address women's issues. It will be held at the Abilities Center (55 Gordon St, Whitby) on September 24th at 7:00 pm. This evening will be moderated by Pamela Cross, feminist lawyer and women's advocate (see background). It will help Durham residents understand what local candidates have to say about issues affecting women such as violence, leadership, education, employment, the pay gap and sexual harassment.

The upcoming Federal election has provoked an unprecedented and powerful alliance of women's groups collectively known as Up For Debate Durham (link) Locally, more than 30 business and social service agencies in Durham Region, are represented in partnership including: **Violence Prevention Coordinating Council of Durham** ([www.vpccdurham.org](http://www.vpccdurham.org)) – a Ministry of Community and Social Services funded network of 30 organizations working collaboratively to eliminate violence and abuse against women, children and the elderly; the Durham Chapter of **Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women** ([www.bpwdurham.com/wordpress/about-us/](http://www.bpwdurham.com/wordpress/about-us/)) -- a non-sectarian, non-profit, and non-partisan organization focused on improving the economic, political, social and employment conditions of working women in Canada; and The **Canadian Federation of University Women** ([www.cfuwoshawaanddistrict.com/index.html](http://www.cfuwoshawaanddistrict.com/index.html)), which advocates for issues that focus on women's rights, equal opportunity for leadership, employment, income, education, careers, and the ability to maximize potential.

Up for Debate Durham supports The Alliance for Women's Rights national campaign and stands united with over 150 women's organizations across Canada in raising awareness about the issues affecting women's quality of life. Up for Debate Durham is calling on all political parties to make meaningful commitments to change women's lives for the better, at home and abroad, by ending violence against women, ending women's economic inequality, and supporting women's leadership and organizations.

The women of Durham Region have organized this public conversation between candidates so that we can hear where they stand on these important issues. Women in this Region are leaders and change-makers. We expect to be taken seriously during the next federal election and Up for Debate Durham wants to know how our local political candidates will tackle the issues that are important to us and our families before it comes time to elect our next federal government.

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