



*e-newsletter of*

CITIZENS for PUBLIC JUSTICE

*Ola!*

Special Election Ola! – Week One



Welcome to this special election edition of Ola! While Ola! is usually sent out once per month, during this election campaign, we at CPJ will be sending out weekly editions. These special Ola!s will go in-depth on pressing election topics, giving you comprehensive background information, provoking questions to ask your candidates, and much more.

Be sure to visit our website [www.cpj.ca](http://www.cpj.ca) for updates on other public justice issues throughout the campaign!

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## **Election 2008: Through a public justice lens**

Just hours after the election was called, roadside campaign signs began to appear. Phone campaigns were immediately launched, and politicians began raising their key themes. It was overwhelming right from the start – already, we have so many compelling issues competing for our attention.

Is there a way to find clarity amidst the partisan rhetoric and contentious debates?

CPJ believes that a public justice lens provides us with a helpful vision to guide our way through these complicated and competing issues. A public justice lens challenges us, as Canadians and people of faith, to express love for our neighbour and to seek the common good. Public justice puts the values of justice, compassion and care for creation at the centre of political debates.

Join us throughout the election as we examine key issues through this public justice lens. Leadership, poverty, taxes, the environment, newcomers – we'll be looking at these issues in-depth as candidates tour their ridings, explaining their ideas for a better Canada. Question your candidates – make sure they know they'll be held accountable if they get elected.

### **The issues**

This election, we've started out by highlighting five issues that CPJ believes should be at the centre of the election campaign—read more about these issues below. But these are not the only important and

relevant election issues – Aboriginal concerns, international aid, the Safe Third Country agreement – we'll be exploring these issues and more as the campaign continues. Keep visiting our website [www.cpj.ca](http://www.cpj.ca) for updates and read these election OIa!s for CPJ's thoughts on the campaign.

### Poverty reduction

Right now, 1 in 10 Canadians are living in poverty. Poverty undermines the dignity of people, which is their right as human beings, created in God's image. It also hinders them from fully participating in and contributing to society.

It's time for a federal poverty reduction strategy. Such a strategy would allow us to get at the root causes of poverty, making a lasting difference in the lives of the 10.5% of Canadians who struggle daily.

Read more -

[http://cpj.ca/otherwork/Canadian\\_Elections/index.html?ap=1&x=121388](http://cpj.ca/otherwork/Canadian_Elections/index.html?ap=1&x=121388) and ask your candidate about their vision for a Canada without poverty.

### The environment



If the environment could rate Canada's record, we'd get a failing grade. Our dismal environmental performance is evident in the withdrawal from the Kyoto Accord and the reticence to sign a new international agreement.

A public justice lens reveals that as human beings, we need to recognize our place within creation, and that we have no right to destroy what is meant to exist for all, and for all generations. It can be hard to see where and when real environmental policy change will occur. But we need to hold our candidates accountable and call them to a future that includes active care for creation. Read more...

[http://cpj.ca/otherwork/Canadian\\_Elections/index.html?ap=1&x=121391](http://cpj.ca/otherwork/Canadian_Elections/index.html?ap=1&x=121391)

## Taxes

Taxation has loomed large in discussions about the future of Canada's economy. But so much of the debate is centred on numbers and how much money Canadians pay – forgetting that taxes are equally about government programs and services, poverty and inequality.

Taxes are an important tool, helping the government to carry out its public justice tasks. Taxes are a major contribution to the common good, an investment in our shared future. We need to go beyond looking at taxes as an isolated set of numbers to recognize the contribution that these revenues make to our entire society. Ask your candidate about what kind of Canada they want to live in, and how collective programs and services can contribute to that. Read more... [http://cpj.ca/otherwork/Canadian\\_Elections/index.html?ap=1&x=121384](http://cpj.ca/otherwork/Canadian_Elections/index.html?ap=1&x=121384)

## New neighbours

Newcomers face increasing challenges when they arrive in Canada. Persons who have been trafficked to Canada from overseas find it difficult to get the protection and help they need. Churches and citizen groups sponsoring refugees face seemingly never-ending backlogs. Refugees who feel their case was not adequately heard by the Immigration and Refugee Board have no place to turn to appeal the decision.

We all need to be better neighbours and welcome newcomers. But we need to encourage politicians to adopt policies that do not penalize newcomers. We must raise our voices for and with marginalized newcomers – our neighbours. Read more... [http://cpj.ca/otherwork/Canadian\\_Elections/index.html?ap=1&x=121386](http://cpj.ca/otherwork/Canadian_Elections/index.html?ap=1&x=121386)

**For all at CPJ, Karen Diepeveen. Look out for our election bulletin – it will be arriving in your mailbox soon! Be sure to visit our website [www.cpj.ca](http://www.cpj.ca) for updates as this campaign soldiers on. And send us your thoughts on these and other issues by emailing us at [cpj@cpj.ca](mailto:cpj@cpj.ca).**

Please forward this email to any and all who may be interested.