October 5 2019 CFUW Ontario Council Speaker Series

Our theme of “Women Supporting Women and Forging Forward” continued on Oct. 5. Rather than a keynote speaker, we were introduced to our regional leaders and listened to their expertise on a number of important issues, many related to the upcoming federal election. Both the a.m. and p.m sessions had speakers address these issues. The morning session was interactive with lots of time for q and a’s, and the afternoon workshops, entitled “Talk It Out”, consisted of participants choosing a few topics and rotating between discussion tables . Our three Burlington representatives tried to spread out and attend most of these discussions.

Climate Change presented by Cheryl Ambrose

-Cheryl presented two striking graphs, showing the dramatic increase in human produced Greenhouse gases and Carbon dioxide from human activities

-clear evidence that climate-related risks grow with the magnitude of global warming and associated changes in climate

-it is challenging communicating this information as there is a disconnect between Canadians understanding climate science and their sense of their own climate awareness

-more than half of respondents were climate deniers, believing that climate change can’t be blamed on human activity alone

-all these beliefs are reflected in party platforms

-the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change(IPCC) produces science analyses every 5-7 yrs and is recognized as the gold standard regarding the state of knowledge on climate change, consequence and response options

-the IPCC reported that 2 d C of warming would be catastrophic for ecological systems and human health and force hundreds of millions of people into poverty by 2050

-according to IPCC we have until 2030 (11 years) to hold off the accelerated risks of extreme heat waves, wildfires, flooding, drought, seal level rise and extensive poverty by pursuing a rough but doable pathway to 1.5 C

-Canada is already experiencing average temp increases at twice the global rate and our far north is suffering temperature increases at triple the global rate(decreased ice thickness, melting permafrost, rising sea levels, coastal erosion, altered distribution and migration of wildlife and likely animal diseases spread throughout the north, putting children at increased risk of disease)

-globally women play a central role in food production and provision, family care, fuel and water collection and overall community well-being

-hunger, population migration, labour intensification, wars over access to fertile land or water and the necessity to travel further to collect water or fuel are just a few of the impacts that put women at greater risk of harm as a result of climate change

-Canada is among the top 10 emitters of GHG (China, US, EU, India, Russia , Japan, Brazil, Indonesia and Iran)

-as a signator of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, we pledged to cut our emissions by 30% from 2005 levels by 2030

-by doing above, it was expected to hold increases in global temps to between 1.5-2 dC above pre-industrial levels which would **reduce** but not eliminate the risks and impacts of climate change

-unfortunately Canada, along with other developed nation, is on track to exceed 2 dC of warming by as early as 2040 (predicted 5.1 dC by 2100)

-this is why Greta told Justin “You’re not doing enough to protect the environment from the threat of runaway climate change”

-mitigating climate change either reduce the sources or enhances the sinks o greenhouse gases (sources release GHGs into atmosphere and sinks remove them)

-natural systems, ecosystems, are unable to adapt to the rapid changes caused by climate change, resulting in species extinction, changes in natural ranges, spread of diseases, etc.

-**Carbon taxes**: meant to change behaviour and can be an effective and important tool in mitigating climate change

-Carbon tax makes polluting environment more expensive and can channel funds into renewable energy sources

-**Fuel Subsidies vs renewable Energy Subsidies**: these send out a bad signal, as more carbon is burned -this effectively pays polluters to pollute and undermines climate action in Canada

-**Climate Action**, according to Naomi Klein must engage the best science, we need to do more, -“we have a lot of pundits who know a lot about politics and very little about climate science…it comes off as very serious because they’re all wearing suits, but it’s really a joke”

-women’s participation in developing a national response has been fairly low

**The real solution to the Climate Crisis**

-we cannot defeat climate change within the framework of a free market economy with market-based half measures like a carbon tax or cap and trade

-needs a sense of mission

-needs legislative and personal solutions to halt a global calamity and it means having an honest conversation about climate change

-we are failing to meet the inadequate targets set under an earlier administration

-we need a new framework, an infrastructure plan that changes base of our carbon-emissions-reliant economy that transforms transportation, how we get energy, and changes how we live

-individuals can’t fix the problem

-political organizing is necessary to achieve massive regulatory and legislative change

-personal changes can’t fix the climate by themselves, but buy less stuff, limit air and sea travel, reduce animal products in your diet

-too many Canadians associate climate action with their electricity prices going up or paying more at the pump…think it’s a loss, but there are real benefits

-good news is that in addition to reducing deaths from air p9ollution and boosting innovation, the net costs of climate action may be reduced to zero or even result in a net economic gain

-health co-benefits of reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions could be worth $100 US per tonne of CO2 in high income countries like Canada

-climate change is a global problem that requires global action, which is why governments around the world, including ours, hve committed to work together to limit global warming

-Climate change is a reality we must confront together

-we urge federal parties to make climate change mitigation and the inclusion of gendered perspectives a priority

-federal and provincial governments must work together to address Canada’s role in climate change

-Climate Change is the indisputable cause of global crises including heatwaves, floods, hurricanes, tornados, wildfires, food insecurity and insect borne diseases