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Policy Matters: Amira Elghawaby

By Amira Elghawaby

Later this year, Canadians will vote in the 43rd federal election. Many non-profit organizations, networks, and coalitions see elections as a critical opportunity to raise relevant public policy issues. Recently, the rules for charities engaging in public policy have become a prominent source of debate and discussion in government and the sector. As we countdown to the next election, The Philanthropist will be asking non-profit leaders what public policy issues are top of mind for them.

Name and organization: Amira Elghawaby, founding board member of Canadian Anti-Hate Network

What current election issues might impact your work?

We're very concerned about the rise of far-right, white supremacist hate groups in Canada right now. We are worried that the federal election campaign will become divisive around issues of immigration and multiculturalism.

This will ultimately impact minority communities because it is they who often face the backlash whenever debates about belonging, and inclusion occur – as we saw in the federal election in 2015.

We know that online hate can spread quickly and that hate groups are trying to mobilize on various platforms. Foreign interference may also play a role; the CBC has already confirmed that foreign actors have weaponized immigration and pipelines as issues to stoke division in Canada. We hope that the election will not lead to a rise in far-right activity, but it most certainly could.

What issues would you like to bring more attention to in the election?

Indigenous communities have welcomed immigrants to this land for generations. Canada has thrived because of the contributions of people from all around the world. It is of the utmost importance that elected officials, and those vying for public office, be absolutely clear that Canada's diversity must be cherished, nurtured, and protected. Our values of compassion, humanity, acceptance, and embrace are threatened by right-wing populist movements deliberately spreading fear and mistrust of various communities, including of newly-arrived immigrants and refugees. Every party should be clear on how it will combat rising hate and how it will stand up for values that promote social cohesion.

Where can we learn more about these issues?

Learn about the work of the Canadian Anti-Hate Network here: www.antihate.ca

For analysis of a range of related issues, read this collection of commentaries:
<https://www.amiraelghawaby.net/news-1>

The Canadian Human Rights Commission is mandated to promote and uphold human rights across Canada: <https://chrc-ccdp.gc.ca/eng>

Visit the Institute for Canadian Citizenship to read more about supporting newcomers: <https://www.icc-icc.ca/site/>