
Policy Matters: Helen Kennedy

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 [is asking non-profit leaders](#) what public policy issues are top of mind for them.

Name and organization: Helen Kennedy, Egale Canada

What current election issues might impact your work?

With any election there is always going to be changes. In the past we have seen funding cut, re-allocated or just non-existent, we have seen discrimination increase or decrease based on a party's values. We have been on an upwards trajectory in recent years when it comes to LGBTQI2S rights in Canada with several laws passed, the apology, and more. We need to keep that momentum going. There is so much more that needs to be done to advance LGBTQI2S rights in Canada and beyond and we have seen with our counterparts in the US just how easy it can be to slide backwards.

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

In addition to issues of mental health and homelessness and housing for LGBTQI2S youth and seniors, and ongoing concerns related to the blood ban, intersex rights (the 'I' in LGBTQI2S) continue to be a pressing issue in Canada. Despite ongoing advocacy, intersex people in Canada continue to face horrifying human rights violations. Surgeries on intersex children have been condemned by the United Nations, yet continue to take place across the country. Canada has been urged to adhere to the UN Convention Against Torture by prohibiting non-consensual medically unnecessary surgeries on intersex children. It is our goal at Egale to create more awareness about the struggles faced by the intersex community in Canada and to continue to strive for policies and legislation that protect LGBTQI2S people through research, education, and community engagement.

Where can we learn more about these issues?

[Egale Canada](#) website: egale.ca