



Abortion Rights
Coalition of Canada

Coalition pour le droit à
l'avortement au Canada

Your Voice for Choice

Canada's only national political pro-choice advocacy group

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**Anti-choice MP Rachael Harder “Unqualified and Unfit”
to be Chair of Status of Women Committee**

NATIONAL – Conservative MP Rachael Harder (Lethbridge) has been nominated as Chair of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women (FEWO) despite the fact that she is strongly anti-abortion.

“Being anti-choice should be an automatic disqualification for the position of Chair on the Status of Women Committee,” said Joyce Arthur, Executive Director of the Abortion Rights Coalition of Canada (ARCC). “Harder’s outspoken stance against reproductive rights is incompatible with Status of Women Canada’s key mandate to promote equality for women and their full participation in society. Reproductive rights are fundamental to women’s equality because most women cannot participate fully in public life unless they can control their fertility.”

Harder is “unqualified and unfit” for the position of FEWO Chair, said Kathy Dawson, an Alberta spokesperson for ARCC. “Harder tried to hide behind the Conservative policy to not ‘re-open the abortion debate’, but she herself co-sponsored a private member’s bill last year that would have given rights to fetuses, and in 2014, she promised a national anti-choice group that she would try to introduce and pass anti-choice laws and policies to protect the ‘unborn’. She also provides Canada Summer Jobs grants to anti-choice groups in her riding – over \$17,000 since 2015.”

“Harder’s strong and passionate anti-choice views could affect her priorities and decisions at the FEWO committee and when reporting in Parliament on the Committee’s work,” said Arthur. “We fear that her presence as Chair could create a serious chill effect on any Status of Women work or funding that relates to sexual and reproductive rights and health for women and transgender people.” Arthur suggested that since the Conservative Party has the right to nominate the FEWO Chair, perhaps they should appoint pro-choice MPs to the Committee instead, like Lisa Raitt or Michelle Rempel.

“We ask the Liberal members of the FEWO Committee to oppose Harder’s nomination,” said Dawson. “Further, if she is appointed Chair, we ask all FEWO members to monitor her performance and object to any attempts to impose her conservative and anti-choice views on the committee’s work, or the work of Status of Women Canada.”

Please see ARCC’s research paper: **“Rachael Harder’s Public Position on Abortion”**:
<http://www.arcc-cdac.ca/action/Rachael-Harder-position-abortion.pdf>

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