

## Some Suggested Topics from the Speakers' Bureau of LEAF Women's Legal Education Action Fund

### Women's Rights are Human Rights

LEAF has played a key role in winning landmark legal decisions in crucial areas such as violence against women, pay inequity, sexual harassment, unfair pensions and reproductive freedoms. LEAF is the only women's organization in Canada that focuses on court action to address the source of injustice against women as a means to bring about social change.

Since LEAF was founded in 1985, our lawyers (staff and volunteers) have participated in close to 150 cases in the provinces' Appellate Courts and at the Supreme Court of Canada. By intervening in these cases important changes are made step by step allowing the substantive equality of women and girls to be advanced. LEAF uses the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, particularly Section 15 and 28, to ensure that the interpretation of our laws by the courts provide women with the substantive equality benefits the law, by right, should provide.

### Feminization of Poverty: Why Feminism is Relevant

Despite the various initiatives to combat women's inequality, women continue to be more negatively affected than men by poverty rates in Canada. This heightened vulnerability is linked to the disempowerment and oppression of women. Society still perceives women to have less social status. This is especially so for women who are identified by race (notably First Nations women), disability, sexual orientation or low-economic status. Feminization of Poverty helps audiences explore what happens when women face poverty and what can be done to address these forms of oppression faced by different women.

### Sexual Assault: Veils in the Courtroom

Sexual assault continues to be a crime which is committed predominately against women and girls and has been recognized by the Courts as a practice of sexual inequality. Women have suffered a long history of where laws and court judgements have created great difficulties for women who are sexually assaulted. There are many discriminatory stereotypes about complainants (women who go to court) including mythologies about rape. This presentation will also explain LEAF's role in a current case (R v. N.S.). This case attracted media attention when the complainant was served an Order to remove her niqab (a veil) in order to testify in court. As an intervener in the case, LEAF advocated for women's right of access to fair trials.

### The Representation of Women in Popular Culture

The images and narratives of popular culture allow the negative stereotypes of women as subordinate persons to men continue. How do these negative stereotypes about women play out? Through a review of popular culture, this presentation challenges representations of women and girls in various forms of media. By exploring cases like Ewanchuk, Mills and Darrach, your Speaker will show how these representatives play out in Canada's Courts.