

One vote: jobs, housing and child care top election issue for settlement worker ^[1]

Author: Pecoskie, Teri

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EXCERPTS

Jane Sumwiza's vote in the provincial election hangs on housing, child care and jobs.

"I have many immigrants that come to me - they talk about child care, they talk about jobs," she said. "I want to see those three things addressed."

Sumwiza, 45, is a settlement counsellor at the Immigrant Women's Centre downtown.

She's a wife, a mother, a grandmother. She's also a former refugee.

Sumwiza's family fled Rwanda for Kenya before resettling in Canada 23 years ago. She said her experiences help her understand the challenges other newcomers are up against.

Immigrants encounter a number of barriers that must be addressed by politicians, she said - "like housing. Housing is crazy."

In particular, she's looking for a candidate who can break down the roadblocks to adequate shelter. The wait lists for affordable housing are long, she said, and rent is just too high.

For many newcomers, inadequate child care is also a problem.

If one of Sumwiza's clients wants to look for work, for instance, "she has nobody to take care of her child."

Then, if she happens to get hired, she's either stuck on a wait list for child care or struggling to find a service she can afford.

"That has to be addressed," said Sumwiza, who has become a Canadian citizen.

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- reprinted from the Hamilton Spectator

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