

**Submission to
The Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Status of Women**

**Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women
Newfoundland and Labrador
November 24, 2006**

Issues: Changes to the Women's Program Terms and Conditions and the Funding Reduction to Status of Women Canada

1. New rules prohibit all domestic advocacy activities:

Organizations such as Status of Women Councils that do pro-active work to raise awareness, recommend solutions, and advocate on issues such as poverty, unemployment, homelessness and women's access to justice no longer qualify, even if previous phases of the project have received funding under the former terms. This silences the voice of women, and further marginalizes the most disadvantaged groups in our society.

2. Expanded eligibility rules increase competition:

Rather than following the recommendation of the Standing Committee's Third Report to increase Women's Program funding by 25%, Government has capped the amount available and is opening it up to business. Organizations that exist to make profit should not be competing with not-for-profit, poorly funded women's organizations who work to advance equality rights which are enshrined in the Charter but not yet substantively in practice. A sexual assault centre should not have to compete with a business to access Status of Women Canada funds.

3. Prohibition of general research moves women's equality backwards:

General research is no longer eligible for funding under the new guidelines. Women's groups will no longer have the funds to conduct research and gather evidence and data around women's equality issues. This makes little sense in an age where transparency, accountability and evidence-based decision-making are required by Governments at all levels. This decision is anything but democratic and denies citizens access to legitimate knowledge and information.

4. Administration funding cut will weaken policies and programs:

A 43% administrative cut will reduce the ability of Status of Women Canada to advocate for sound public policies and programs to advance women's equality. It will also remove any impetus for federal departments to use gender inclusive analysis in their decision-making processes.

5. Potential closure of regional offices:

Social development work is critical to advancing women's equality. The potential closure of the Newfoundland and Labrador regional office means women will no longer have access to a Status of Women Canada Program Officer for collaboration and assistance in examining the issues, developing proposals, and implementing projects. This decision will destroy a vital federal link and role in advancing the status of women in our province and country.

6. Rolling back women's rights:

Women in Newfoundland and Labrador view the cuts and changes to Status of Women Canada as a means to promote an anti-feminist agenda and diminish our hard-won equality rights. This Government is erroneously promoting the concept that Canadian women have achieved equality. In fact, unless checked immediately, this Government will undoubtedly roll back women's rights.

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