

Media Release – For Immediate Release
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Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women, Newfoundland and Labrador

"Advisory Council Gives Provincial Budget a Thumb's Up"

"The Provincial Government gets a big thumbs up for this year's budget", says Leslie MacLeod, President of the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women.

Many of the initiatives included in social spending indicate that government has been listening to the advice of women around the Province. "We were very pleased to see the strong commitment to advancing the status of women in a variety of ways", said Ms. MacLeod.

The Advisory Council was relieved to see a \$25,000 increase in funding to each of the eight Women's Centres around the Province. "Women's Centres are an essential part of our communities. They provide important resources to women and have been doing this on a shoe string budget", said Ms. MacLeod.

The Advisory Council also received a significant budget increase. "We will have an additional staff member and more resources. We will be able to do more to advance the issues that are important to women," said Ms. MacLeod.

Women make up the majority of people who work for minimum wage, and women's groups have been a vocal part of the lobby for \$10 an hour minimum wage. The announcement of an \$8.00 minimum wage by April 2008 shows we're clearly on the way to that target.

The new post-secondary student grant system and reduced interest on student loans, free text books, assistance to people who have high drug costs, improved health care for women, as well as improvements in social housing and justice services are all welcomed by the Advisory Council.

The Advisory Council congratulates the women of Labrador for their success in advocating for increased medical transportation coverage, lower electrical costs, and improvements in education and justice services.

"We are also delighted that a total of \$30 million in tax cuts will directly improve the lives of women and families in the low income bracket," said Ms. MacLeod.

However, the Advisory Council continues to give the federal government a big thumb's down. "If Harper's government hadn't turned its back on women's issues, the Province would have significantly more money for child care and early learning programs", said Ms. MacLeod.

"We would also be well on our way to solving serious problems with the legal aid system if the federal government believed in our right to access the justice system." Unfortunately, thanks to the federal government, access to both child care and legal aid continue to be serious problems for the women in our Province.