



Federal Budget 2007 and Women

This budget does very little to promote women's equality or to tackle those issues that are important to women.

While the federal budget contains many tax changes and some new program funding it is primarily directed at high income earners. This is significant since the average earnings of women working full time for a full year is \$36,500. That is only 71% of what men earn based on the same hours (2003). Indeed many budget initiatives are non-refundable tax credits. This means those who do not pay taxes receive no benefit. This includes the child tax credit. Women make up a disproportionate share of low income earners. In 2003 the poverty rate was 49% for single parent mothers compared to 20% for lone parent fathers.

Income splitting (for tax purposes only) for pensioners, doesn't ensure that senior/retired women receive an income in their own right. Indeed the tax change does nothing for Canada's poorest seniors – widows.

Much of the budget initiatives are transfers to other levels of government. This money comes without federal standards to ensure that all Canadians have equal access to high level, essential social programs and public services. The federal Tory government's ideological approach to less government is not the approach women want. Women and children are the largest users of much of Canada's social programs and we need assurances that the delivery of these services will meet common standards. We also need assurances

that money given with one hand will not be clawed back with the other.

Tax cuts, of which there are many in this budget, mean a loss of revenue for government to expand and enhance social programs and public services that women use and need.

The new money for Status of Women Canada (SWC) is not going toward operational spending – the funding taken away last year. Rather it is directed at program and partnership funding but without amending the terms and conditions for receiving funding from SWC. This means that private companies could get funding from SWC but many not-for-profit organizations will not. For example, some shelters for women and children, where CUPE members work could lose funding, but Honda Canada could get funding for a training program directed at women. This means that organizations receiving funding cannot lobby or advocate on behalf of the women they serve. Being on the front line they are among the best to do this. The federal Tory government continues to stifle opposition to its stance on equality and human rights.

The gender lens is missing from this federal budget. While the word women is mentioned several times in the budget document, the impact of the budget on women is harsh. Women's equality has not been advanced. The needs of women, including pay equity, employment equity, and affordable, universal, licensed child-care program are ignored.