

IMPACT OF PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT CUTS ON WOMEN...SHAME

ELIMINATION OF WOMEN RIGHTS = VIOLENCE ON WOMEN AND CHILDREN

- Eliminated the Ministry of Women's Equality
- Elimination of funding to women's centres end of March 2004
- Eliminated Employment Equity
- Pay Equity under review
- Universal Childcare cancelled – scrapped \$15.6 million
- Before and after school care programs eliminated
- Funding for early childhood development and special needs children and youth limited – restricted eligibility criteria and imposing new rate structure

CUTS TO INCOME = INCREASED POVERTY

- 0.5% increase in sales tax
- Reduced training wage to \$6.00 per hour
- Cuts to Income Assistance for ages 50-64
- BC Seniors Supplement to be phased out (approximately \$49 per month).
- Cut welfare rates for single mothers by 18%
- Reduction in government's contribution to the BC Family Bonus
- Women whose youngest child has turned three must find paid work
- Eliminated the Family Maintenance exemption, which allows those receiving child support payments to keep \$100 per month
- Eliminated the Earnings exemption, which allowed single welfare recipients to keep earned income of \$100 or those with a child or partner \$200 per month
- Welfare "recipients aged 60-64 will be required to seek work or participate in employment programs"
- Over 83% of health care jobs lost were women's and 1/3 of all jobs lost were by immigrant people or people of colour
- Ripping up of contracts freely negotiated by nearly 160,000 workers in BC which claws back employment security provisions, eliminates or reduces severance, ends successorship, eliminates wage parity, attacks health benefits which enables the government to give the work to low-wage, non-union contractors

CUTS TO HEALTH = INCREASED RISKS

- Health Care spending frozen – government won't cover increased health care costs due to inflation, population growth, escalating drug costs, and obligations under collective agreements. This creates a huge funding crisis for Medicare, resulting in massive cuts in services to patients, ward closures, and facility shutdowns
- Medical deductible going up, more medications delisted
- MSP Premiums increased 50% as of April 1/02 and may go up another 60%
- Increase of \$10 or \$25 per prescription depending on income – everyone will pay more for their drug, but seniors will be hurt the most.
- Diabetics charged approximately \$1.00 per strip (most use 2 to 4 per day)
- Home support/care for the frail elderly and disabled facing a 30% cut in 2002 - proposal that all funding eliminated in next three years.
- Delisted MSP services: eye examinations, podiatry, massage, physiotherapy, chiropractic therapy – with these cuts, British Columbians earning less than \$60,000 per year have already lost what they gained through tax cuts.
- Proposal to privatize ambulances and emergency rooms in hospitals, and close hospitals while privatizing others – privatization means worse service and less care.
- Approximately 20,000 unionized women health care workers may lose jobs or have incomes reduced 30% through privatization
- Talking Books and Hearing Aid Programs cancelled
- \$360 million cut over three years to funding to Ministry of Children and Families which has meant child care subsidies have been cut, social workers cut etc.

*Cuts were compiled by BC Coalition of Women's Centres (bcwomen@telus.net) other social justice groups in BC.
Designed by Benita Bunjun (admin@vsw.ca).*

CUTS TO HOUSING = HOMELESSNESS

- Landlord and Tenant Offices in Vancouver and Nanaimo – closed
- Residential Tenancy Act is under review and proposed changes may eliminate Rent Review and require one month's rent as a damage deposit
- Only those disabled people receiving "continuous" assistance will be eligible to apply for seniors housing through BC Housing
- Social housing projects frozen
- 5,000 new Long Term Care beds are needed now and some Residential Care facilities will be closed in the future

ELIMINATION OF JUSTICE = VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

- No legal representative (unless you pay for it) for a complainant at a hearing under the BC Human Rights code because of cuts to Legal Aid and the Human Rights Commission.
- Legal Aid funding gutted – a reduction of 40% over three years will specifically reduce access to justice for the poorest members of society, and immigrants and refugees, while the gutting of funding to family law will hit single mothers especially hard.
- Elimination of Crown Victim Witness Services Program – despite the Liberals' election commitments to improve the justice system for victims of crime.
- Cuts to the Violence in Relationship Program
- Ombudsman's Office cut by 35%
- Poverty law budget slashed – the Campbell government is virtually eliminating the funding for the area of law that helps BC's poorest citizens resolve landlord tenant disputes, disputes with BC Benefits, the WCB, and Employment Insurance.

- Closure of Court Houses throughout the province – courthouses in 24 communities have been closed, reducing BC's access to justice
- Closure of all 60 Legal Aid Offices in BC means no more poverty law services and legal aid for family law or only when there is violence involved
- Elimination of Crown-based Victim Services – despite the Liberals' election commitments to improve the justice system for victims of crime.
- Elimination of public legal education grants to community groups
- Holding a referendum on Aboriginal Treaty Rights
- Debtors' Assistance Program eliminated – this program helped 70,000 BC families deal with debt problems each year.
- Rape Crisis counselors cut – auxiliary victim services workers who help rape and domestic violence victims have been laid off.
- Family Advocates eliminated – the Campbell government has cut those who protect the interests of children in custody cases
- Assumption that women's unpaid work will pick up the cuts in services

ELIMINATION OF RIGHT TO EDUCATION & TRAINING

- Tuition deregulation – ended the tuition freeze and increased tuition by 35% to 300%
- Training programs and welfare-to-work initiatives eliminated – includes: Summer Works, Skills for Employment, Job Start.
- Employment Service Centres CLOSED – office closures in Abbotsford, Maple Ridge, New Westminister & Surrey

Useful websites about the CUTS on British Columbians:

BC Coalition of Women's Centres: www.bcwomen.cjb.net

Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives: www.policyalternatives.ca

PovNet: www.povnet.org

West Coast LEAF (Legal Education and Action Fund): www.westcoastleaf.org

Women for Women Needing Welfare in BC: www.wwwinbc.ca

Other websites include: www.firstcallbc.org; www.campaignbc.ca

BC Coalition of Women's Centres strongly urges you to speak out against these cuts. What can you do?

- ❖ Get informed about the cuts by visiting social justice organizations, websites and other alternative media sources
- ❖ Work with other social service and justice agencies in your area to create a collective voice opposing all cuts to social services... Organize meetings and kitchen table discussions in your community.
- ❖ Support your local women's centre, and other feminist and social justice organizations. Become a volunteer, member and donor of these organizations.
- ❖ Join the MAKING JAM CAMPAIGN and oppose the heartless cuts by the Government of British Columbia... JAM the phone and fax lines! JAM up the E-mail inbox!
 - Call, mail, fax, email the Ministers who are making decisions that impact women's lives. Demand to know the details of the current and intended cuts. Ask questions.
 - Mail, call, fax, email your MLA, Gordon Campbell, George Abbott, and Lynn Stephens. Let them know how important programs and services are in your area. Tell them how these cuts are directly affecting women and families in BC.

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