



Federal Election 2004

HOW THE LIBERALS HAVE HURT WOMEN

Paul Martin's privatization agenda has eliminated many well-paying jobs held by women. Many of these jobs have been turned into temporary, poverty wage and non-union positions. Women now work more but earn less so that private corporations can make money off of essential public services.

Paul Martin's privatization agenda has made life more dangerous for women. Low-income women and their children are more vulnerable to domestic violence because they can't make ends meet on their own.

Paul Martin's privatization agenda is forcing increasing numbers of older women into poverty. Privatized jobs mean an end to public sector pension coverage. Already more than half of senior unattached women live in poverty.

The wage gap between men and women was entrenched under Liberal rule. The 2004 federal Pay Equity Task Force found that women with the same qualifications and professional experience are still paid less than their male counterparts. The Task Force concludes that human rights legislation needs to tackle this problem head on. We've known that for years but the Liberal government has done nothing.

Paul Martin's cuts to public services have made women's quality of life worse. Women have to juggle several jobs to make ends meet while putting in more hours looking after family members, including children and elderly parents.

Studies show that women are stretched to the breaking point. This is particularly true for immigrant women. More than 90 per cent of immigrant women within the Somali, Ghanaian and Ethiopian communities in Toronto are facing poverty.

As finance minister, Paul Martin had many opportunities to deal with the difficult situation facing women and their families but he did nothing. Canada's piecemeal child care system falls far short of our needs. Licensed, regulated child care is threatened by funding cuts.



Privatized, two-tier medicine will have devastating consequences for women because women rely most on public health care delivery and public health insurance. The Liberal government allowed privatized health care to expand. As finance minister, Paul Martin made dramatic cuts to public health care funding. And he will not guarantee an end to for-profit medicine.

Why the Conservatives are no better

.....

The Conservatives under Stephen Harper promise to cut social programs even more severely than the Liberals have. Their demand for lower corporate tax rates than the US has already been delivered by Paul Martin, but they want even more cuts. Harper's policies will make inequalities between women and men even worse. He says he is a "social conservative". That means he refuses to recognize the needs of women and equality-seeking groups. He also opposes equal rights to marriage.

When Harper left the Reform party and became president of the National Citizens' Coalition he said it was because the NCC "criticizes, attacks and gives alternatives to such things as official multiculturalism, enforced national bilingualism, a pro-criminal justice system, anti-family social policies, open door immigration...".

What the New Democrats say

.....

The NDP has policies that support the rights of women and other equality-seeking groups. The New Democrats believe women need jobs that provide decent pay and benefits, job security, flexibility and access to training. The New Democrats say women deserve opportunities for advancement, predictable working hours, employment equity and pay equity. NDP MPs continue to fight for a new unemployment insurance system that would meet the needs of women, many of whom are part-time workers. The NDP has consistently pushed for a voluntary, accessible, affordable and quality child care program.



What we want

.....

We want to live in communities where women enjoy a better quality of life and have equal access to employment; where they have decent jobs with fair wages – full-time jobs with reliable pensions and access to Unemployment Insurance benefits, including parental benefits. We want women and their families to have access to affordable quality child care, universal health care and public recreation programs. We want a federal government that will help women balance work and family; that will support public transit; and ensure that women have access to training and advancement in the workforce.

We want a federal government that supports the expansion of public services because they are critical to ending women and family poverty. We want a federal government that will use all its legal and financial authority to stop the privatization of public services.

