

# Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba, Inc.

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## ONE PAGE BRIEF FOR THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

*Outline of the potential impacts of the changes to the terms and conditions of the Women's Program and/or the reduction in the administrative budget of Status of Women Canada (SWC)*

- The Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba, Inc. is an incorporated non profit organization, with a membership of 32 provincial organizations. We are a federate member of the National Council of Women of Canada ([www.ncwc.ca](http://www.ncwc.ca)) and the International Council of Women.
- The reduction in the administrative budget will have a considerable impact. The five million dollars is to be withdrawn from the agency's operational budget of 12.7 million. This represents a cut of approximately 40% of the SWC operating budget. This is a significant reduction and the remaining 7.7 million must cover salaries, including staff (mainly women), rent, supplies, web site, communications, publications etc. We in Manitoba are concerned because we have had an officer located in Winnipeg. At the present time, the position is not filled – and with this announcement is unlikely to be filled. Yet, previous officers were key to coordinating the delivery of the project component of the Women's Program. This can not be done as efficiently or effectively from an office located in Alberta. The Program Officer also played an educational role. For example, training sessions were done on Gender Based Analysis (GBA) – to federal, provincial, and community representatives. By working cooperatively with the community, by managing more effectively the funded SWC projects, and by funding needed research on current issues and concerns of Canadian women, there was actually a significant return on the investment of dollars. We are concerned to see that the decision is in contradiction to the recommendations of the Expert Panel on Gender Accountability which called for stronger federal mechanisms.
- There are very significant changes to the Women's Program's mandate, the objectives, the eligibility criteria and activities no longer funded. Women's equality, social justice, political and legal participation of women are examples of the language which has been totally removed from the T's and C's. The opening of eligibility to for-profit groups will mean increased demand. Activities related to advocacy, lobbying and most research have been excluded. The very few dollars that went to these activities were well spent. The excellent research funded by SWC can be seen by a quick look at the publications listed on the SWC web site – topics such as homelessness, economic gender equality indicators, women and trade etc. In our work at the local and provincial level we depend a great deal on the research funded by SWC. The need to support advocacy work on behalf of women and other vulnerable populations (such as aboriginal peoples, new immigrants, persons with disabilities) is important to recognize. Supporting direct services to women may be useful, but is not enough. To make for lasting change, there needs to be systemic change. Barriers removed not just for one woman, but for all women.
- With these announced changes to the Terms and Conditions and reduced operating funds, Status of Women Canada's role within government has been severely diminished. It will no longer have the resources to inform, with independent policy research, government on policy decisions, nor ensure that GBA is understood and implemented. Although we have not commented on the international obligations under CEDAW, we wonder who and how these will be monitored. Further, SWC has always played a very positive role with respect to the annual meeting of the UN's Commission on the Status of Women.

*Respectfully submitted (November 29<sup>th</sup>, 2006)*

*Mary Scott, President*

Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba, Inc.

Honourary Patroness Her Honour, Ms Lenore Berscheid

In Federation with the National Council of Women of Canada [www.ncwc.ca](http://www.ncwc.ca)