

URGENT CALL TO ACTION

Date: 10/10/2006

From: Women's Groups

To: Concerned Citizens

Subject: This Thanksgiving, take just 25 minutes to thank the government on behalf of Canadian women.

Response Required: Immediately; see below.

Page: I of 2

INTRODUCTION

Members of Parliament are home for Thanksgiving this week. Let's have women welcome them.

The federal department, Status of Women Canada, is in great jeopardy after announcements of recent cuts and changes to its mandate. Act now to ensure that SWC and the women's organizations it supports can continue to advocate and lobby on behalf of women. Without them, the future for women's equality rights in Canada is at risk.

25 Years after Canada ratified the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), Canada can and must do much better than this.

For more information on CEDAW visit <http://www.fafia-afai.org>

For more information on the cuts and changes visit <http://www.statusreport.ca>

WHAT CAN YOU DO: THE 25-MINUTE ACTION

Step 1. Contact Your MP (10 min. max.)

Members of Parliament are home for the holidays during the week of October 9th.

Tell your MP you are not feeling particularly THANKFUL about Minister Beverley Oda's recent decisions and actions. Between Tuesday, October 10th and Sunday, October 15th, phone, email, visit, or deliver a Thanksgiving card to your MP to say:

- you are deeply disturbed by federal cuts of approximately 40% to the department and the undemocratic measures undertaken by Minister Oda (Status of Women Minister) to try and silence women's groups by drastically altering the rules of the Women's Program, the funding body at Status of Women Canada
- the Minister's decisions and actions are INCONSISTENT with her job to advance and promote women's equality
- you want an immediate reversal to this decision
- you request your MP take action with your message upon returning to Ottawa

To find out how to contact your MP, use the postal code search feature on this web page:

<http://www.parl.gc.ca/common/index.asp?Language=E>.

Step 2. Thanks a lot, Minister Oda (10 min. max.)

Send a special thank-you to Minister Beverley Oda for wanting to "make change in the real lives of Canadian women" (which is clearly different for the Minister than supporting women's groups that work with women to advocate for systemic change at all levels of government). Take this opportunity to tell her exactly what she can do directly and immediately to make your life better.

The Honourable Beverley Oda can be reached at: Beverley_Oda@pch.gc.ca. Toll free telephone number: 1-866-811-0055

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Page: 2 of 2

Here are some ideas:

- Minister Oda, please send me thirty cents for every dollar I earn to make up for the wage gap which was documented by Statistics Canada in 2006 (OR, instead, your government could instead adopt new federal pay equity legislation so that you stand a better chance of receiving equal pay for work of equal value - though you said recently, Minister, you would not do this);
- Minister Oda, please send me a lawyer as I require it for family law matters (OR, instead, you could provide federal monies for legal aid to provinces and territories to improve women's access to legal advice in the event of divorce and difficulties with child custody and access);
- Minister Oda, come to my house to provide some childcare because the new child care bonus does not come close to paying for safe, quality child care (OR, instead, you could invest in high quality, regulated childcare spaces and improve the maternity leave program by NOT linking it to the Employment Insurance Program for which only 33% of working women qualify);
- Minister Oda, help me raise thousands of dollars so that I can hire a lawyer who can help me fight a discriminatory law or policy in Canada (OR, instead, you could reverse your government's decision to eliminate the Court Challenges Program which allowed individuals to get financial support when fighting discriminatory laws and policies)
- Minister Oda, give me a crash course on my rights under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the UN Conventions (OR, instead, you can lift the ban on advocacy and lobbying so that financial support for women's groups across this country allows them to enable women from across the country, and from all walks of life, to participate in the public policy process)

Step 3. Forward this email (5 min. max.)

Spread the word. Forward this "25 Minute Action" to at least 5 people. Your networks of friends and allies are vast. In every riding, we want elected representatives to know how thankful we are that this federal government has chosen to abandon it's commitment to women's equality.

Finally, thank YOU for helping to keep Prime Minister Harper accountable for his equality commitments to women in Canada (too bad we had to ask!).