



Rock The Vote!

Special Election Issue



VOTE FOR WHO?



Special points of interest:

- Vote for Who?
- Women and the Electoral Process
- Politics 101
- Leading ladies
- Run for our Rights!
- Issues of Concern to Northerners
- Femme Fatal
- Telling my story, knowing my rights : Julia's story
- Ask your Leaders
- The Harsh Facts of Life



Why vote? If you want to change the world or make a difference in other peoples lives one of the easiest ways is to vote. By voting you are helping elect the next leader of your government, and in turn by choosing a leader you are able to criticize that leader when they do something unjust or against a cause that you are fighting for.

If you still believe that one vote doesn't make a difference then go out and find people who support your view and vote together. You never vote alone and with each supporting vote your cause is increased. It only takes one passionate voice to change a group of people's mind. If you have children that cannot vote then be their voice. If you know people who are jaded because the world never changes then enlighten them on people that are running. Sometimes the lesser of two evils is better than the apathy of a country.

Voting is as simple as: making sure you are on the voting list, walking into a polling station, and placing an "X" in the box for the leader you wish to run your government. Now to make things a little bit more complex, there are different ways of voting. One is very much like the previously explained process. Another, is called voting by proxy where you either vote via mail or you arrange through the elections office to vote wherever you may be at the time. Please call the elections office for more information at:

(867) 920-6999 or 1-800-661-0796 or email electionsnwt@gov.nt.ca.

There are many ways to become more informed about who to vote for or why voting for one person is better for you then another. It is a great way to support your community if you vote for a candidate that wants to change it into something better. Keep in mind that elections are not a question of who is the better person and if someone votes for another candidate this does not mean they are voting against you. Everyone has different priorities and no one person can fix everything. Choose the issues that are most important to you and vote for the person who will positively change those issues the most.

Ways to become more involved and informed are by asking questions, keeping updated on current events, phoning other organizations such as: The Status of Women or Alternatives North, looking at the candidate's websites/pamphlets, or participating in forums. You can find out about these through your local paper or radio stations in your community.

If enough people in your community believe the same issues are important and they all vote, you concerns will be voiced in government. If enough people in the North believe in the same issues then they will be addressed in government and change the territory into a healthier place for us all. It all starts with one ideal, one voice, one vote. Change what you see and vote for a better North. **ROCK THE VOTE!**



Rock the Vote!



LEADING CHANGE

"When people ask me why I am running as a woman, I always answer, "What choice do I have?"
-Pat Schroeder

Women and the Electoral Process

Women make up 52% of the population but we still are not equally represented in government at the municipal, territorial or federal level. At the Federal level women elected to the House of Commons from the 4 major political parties are:

Liberal Party: Female, 26%; Male 74% NDP: Female 35%; Male 65% Conservative Party of Canada: Female, 12%; Male 88% Bloc Quebecois: Female 29%; Male 71%

(Globe and Mail Jan.5, 2006)

With numbers like that how do you encourage women to get involved. Well there are a number of resources available to help you get started such as: 1) Government of Canada Parliamentary website: www.parl.gc.ca 2) Elections Canada Website: www.elections.ca

Also here are some suggestions on how to get involved from Canada's Equal Voice

(an organization devoted to women's participation in politics and government):

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1) Become politically active | 4) Volunteer |
| 2) Learn about our Political system | 5) Vote |
| | 6) Nominate a woman |

Did you know?
Currently we have two Women MLA's
Sandy Lee and Jane Groenewegen

Do you know who to call about running for office?
A. Elections Canada, Band Council, Alternatives North

Here are a few other places to look if you are not sure what political party best fits your views:

- The Liberal Party of Canada: www.liberal.ca The New Democratic Party of Canada: www.ndp.ca
 The Conservative Party of Canada: www.conservative.ca Bloc Québécois: www.blocquebecois.org
 Green Party of Canada: www.greenparty.ca

On the websites you can read up on party platforms that best suit you! Or Create your own!

Politics 101... A Guide to Consensus Government

The NWT runs under a consensus style of government, Nunavut is the only other government in Canada that runs under the same system. A consensus government runs very differently than a party system. In a party system candidates run under a certain platform, spectrum or ideal and a larger group of candidates run together (i.e. conservative, liberal, green party). In consensus government each candidate runs as an independent, meaning they are not attached to a platform or a specific ideal and run a campaign based on their own values. The reason the NWT adopted this style is because it reflects traditional ways aboriginal peoples governed themselves.

The benefits to having a non-party structure to our government is that candidates can fully represent their unique views on any subject or action presented and this allows them to be a voice for the people and not the party (i.e. not towing a party line). The downside to a consensus government is the inconsistency within candidates as they are representing their values and understanding of the needs in their riding instead of having a set political ideal/agenda.

Our government is made up of 19 Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs). Within these members there are a speaker, Premier, and six other members can hold portfolios.



There are portfolios for each Minister. Some portfolios are Health, Education, or Aboriginal Affairs. The Premier can hold portfolios (and does) however, the Speaker cannot.

The Speaker holds the highest position of power in the Legislative Assembly and performs the duties of mediator and spokesperson for the Legislature to all organizations outside of it. The Speaker is an authority figure who enforces all the rules of the Assembly and remains impartial: meaning she/he does not participate in votes or debates with the exception of presenting the Assembly's budget or to break a tie.

The Premier is the head of government (the head honcho, so to speak) she/he is responsible for handing out Minister's portfolios. The Premier also acts as a

spokesperson for any actions that fall outside of particular individual portfolios.

Though typically consensus means everyone agrees on an issue in government that is not entirely the case.

Decisions do not require all MLAs to agree for action to be taken. Majority rule, meaning that 11 people of the 19 MLAs need to agree to move a motion forward. This makes the other MLAs that do not hold a portfolio very important in decision making as there are only 7 members with portfolios and 11 members that can vote (the speaker cannot). Once a decision is passed all members must fully support the decision, even if they opposed it originally.

Through consensus government the NWT is able to hear the voices of its people instead of a party, work closer in the ways of aboriginal peoples, and run a government for people and not just ideas.

DO YOU KNOW WHAT GENDER PARITY IS?

Gender parity is a term that means having equal number of men and women MLAs in the Legislative Assembly.

Each electoral district (constituency) would be represented by one male and one female MLA. Men and women are each half of the population. A Legislative Assembly with gender parity would have the same balance of men and women as the general population.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Men and women would run as candidates for election the same way they do now. However on voting day the male candidates' names would appear on one ballot and the female candidates' names would appear on another ballot.

Each voter would cast two votes in the election. People would still be voting for the candidate they think will do the best job, but instead of voting for just one person they would vote for two people - the best man and the best woman to represent their constituency.



"If you think you are too small to be effective you have never been in bed with a mosquito"

- Author Unknown

WHAT IS GENDER BASED ANALYSIS ANYWAY?

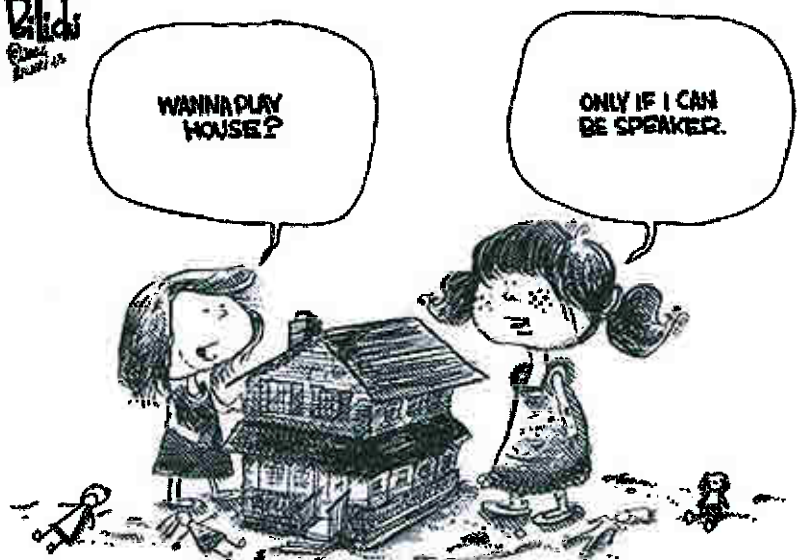
According to Health Canada's Gender Based Analysis Policy, to understand Gender Based Analysis one must first have an understanding of Gender Equality. Gender Equality is where both men and women have the same status in society. It ensures that women and men have equal conditions for realizing their human rights and ability to contribute to national, political, economic, social and cultural development. In turn, this grants the ability to benefit from the results.

So what is Gender Based Analysis (GBA)? It is a tool used to assess the different impacts of policies, programs, and legislation on men and women (not just women). The main reason we need GBA is because men and women have different realities and experiences that are caused and affected by historical oppression, physical health, physiological and anatomical differences and family commitments.

According to Status of Women Canada, GBA recognizes that equal opportunity does not necessarily mean equal results or one general solution for both sexes. Through creating new and revising old legislation, programs, and policies we can create an equal environment for both Genders.

Justin Bilicki

Bilicki
Justin Bilicki



Rock the Vote!

Leading Ladies

What does it take to be a leader? Women are under-represented in management level roles, in boardrooms and in government. What does it take to be a woman in a leadership role?

Well, women from communities believe that these are the strong leadership qualities they came up with:

- * Be a good Listener
- * Be honest
- * Be prepared
- * Have integrity
- * Admit when they are wrong
- * Be aware of what they know and what they don't know
- * Include all members
- * Understand Dene or community rules/laws
- * Be committed
- * Be a role model
- * Have confidence
- * Be sober
- * Be strong-willed
- * Have knowledge of languages and cultures
- * Be open-minded
- * Be strong in body and mind
- * Have self discipline
- * Be well organized
- * Have education/life experience
- * Be a team player
- * Voice their opinion
- * Speak well
- * Be someone young people look up to
- * Be knowledgeable



SO, WHAT DOES A LEADER LOOK LIKE ?

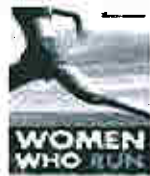
WOMAN * YOUNG/OLD * FRIENDLY * APPROACHABLE * CONFIDENT * HEALTHY * A MOTHER * A SISTER

YOU... THEY CAN LOOK LIKE ANYONE!

There is no such thing as being non-political. Just by making a decision to stay out of politics you are making the decision to allow others to shape politics and exert power over you. And if you are alienated from the current political system then just by staying out of it you do nothing to change it. You simply entrench it.

Jan Kimer at Women into Power Conference, Adelaide October 2011

Run for our rights! - Women in Politics



You may be asking yourself "Why should I run for office?" "What benefit is it to me to run in an election?" "Why on earth would I ever want to be a politician?"

There are a million and one reasons to run as a woman for electoral office. In this position you can bring the power of the people back to the people. You can tell the government what they really want. If you voice the issues that are closest to you and to your co-workers you are making a huge step towards change and together you will be the decision-makers of your territory.

Aside from the salary and benefits package that politicians get, you also get to travel. You will be able to see the territory in all its glory and many other parts of Canada. You would also be invited to important events that you may not normally be aware of.

As well as providing much needed input to issues that affect your community the most as a politician you also get first hand knowledge of what is coming down the road (to predict your community's future so to speak). We need you to run so that there are more women in office; this is a fact! With more female politicians our voice can be heard and issues that uniquely affect women can be properly addressed (i.e. healthcare, childcare, education, equal pay).

Break down the old boys club and make a change. If you step up to the plate more women might have the courage to speak out and your running for office might inspire them to run themselves. This is particularly important for Aboriginal Women who may hold places of respect in the communities but are strangely absent from high ranking seats in government and city councils. We need your voices now more than ever.

The election process can actually be fun too. You get to make slogans, develop a platform, and speak to real people that experience the same issues that you are fighting for. You will talk passionately to others and hear what they have to say about their community, your community. Through this experience you get to make friends, know your neighbors, and better understand your community.

Make our voices equal, and open the territories eyes to a new wave of government!

Family Violence

Summary of Shelter Use Stats for the NWT 2005-2006

Based on Reporting of 4 out of 5 shelters in the NWT

Total Number of women admitted to the shelters: **231**

Total number of children admitted to the shelters: **185**

Total Bednights: **6766**

Total number of repeat women: **135**

Abused by:

- Husband/Live-in Partner: 136
- EX-Husband/EX-Live in Partner: 17
- Sibling: 4
- Parent: 3
- Boyfriend: 13
- Ex-Boyfriend: 8
- In-laws: 7
- Others: 20

Ages of women:

- 15-19: 6
- 20-29: 98
- 30-39: 75
- 40-49: 40
- 50-64: 11
- 65 and over: 7

Ethnicity:

- Dene/Cree: 76
- Métis: 15
- Inuvialuit: 89
- Euro-Canadian: 13
- Other: 1

Childcare. For the 2006-2007 fiscal year the number of government licensed childcare spaces in the NWT was 1703 spaces in 109, licensed programs. Communities without government licensed childcare programs in operation are Nahanni Butte, Jean Marie River, Colville Lake and Trout Lake. —GNWT Dept. of Education, Culture and Employment

In 2007, it may surprise you to know that women make approximately 0.71 cents for every dollar a man earns. Higher Education does not seem to help matters much either, the average Female University Graduate earns even less, on average approximately 68.9% even for work of equal value or the same position as their male-counterparts. Racialized, Aboriginal women earn significantly less than that, their average household income being approximately \$16,621 and \$13,300 respectively. Although Canadian Mothers make up 70% of Canada's workforce there still is not a National Child Care Program. The Toronto Community Foundation says that over 10,000 children are on a waiting list for subsidized childcare alone and that is just within Toronto. A pretty sad situation for Canadian mothers and children (facts taken from the Statement for the December 10th Campaign for Women's Equality and Human Rights, presented to Prime Minister Stephen Harper and " That was then...this is now Part I, " Janice Kennedy: The Ottawa Citizen (January 28th 2007).

Equal Pay for Work of Equal Value

"I myself have never been able to find out precisely what a feminist is, I only know that people call me a feminist whenever I express sentiments that differentiate me from a doormat"
-Rebecca West (1913)

FEMME FATAL

What exactly is Feminism in the North and how exactly do Northern women who identify as feminists describe themselves? Well, according to the dictionary definition Feminism is:

- The doctrine advocating social, political, and all other rights of women equal to those of men.
- (Sometimes initial capital letter) an organized movement for the attainment of such rights for women.

In an effort to be all inclusive, feminism as a movement is acknowledging that there are more than just two categories in which the movement for equality is divided into and that there are many forms of inequality between even different groups of women based on age, disability, economic status, religion and race (not simply power and balance between women and men). Feminism (in its broadest definition) seeks to create a united front in which the rights of all people are recognized and respected.

In the North, women, trying to align themselves with a notion about feminism that may reflect very southern values can be baffled as to what exactly

that word means. The word Feminism is not used in conversation frequently among Northern women, particularly aboriginal women. Feminism is often seen as a dirty word and associated with hatred towards men.

But upon closer examination, many Northern women, both aboriginal and non-aboriginal, whole-heartedly support many values that define the movement as a whole.

The basic definition describes advocacy for equal rights for women and men as a holistic political movement.

Such issues as job training for women, childcare, adequate housing, education and equal pay for work of equal value are issues of concern to Northern Women.

In the North training for women in the areas of mining, oil and gas is extremely important as it allows women to join the ranks of their male counterparts in this booming industry. Also, changes that allow women to be hired to sit in high level management positions or represented in boardrooms and government offices seem to be on the minds of Northern

women.

So, why is it that we refuse to call our movement feminism? Are we afraid that in an effort to attain equality that the word 'Feminism' will undermine our efforts or that we will be viewed as Women attempting to overthrow their male counterparts? Are we afraid that the very mention of that word will hamper our efforts to create change?

This narrow view on the subject doesn't quite seem to accurately reflect the movement as a whole. Sure, there will always be radicals and there will always be those for whom resistance and aggression are their primary method for fostering change. But, on the whole feminism seeks to create spaces for women in community agencies, in elected seats in Government, in the boardrooms of our nation to make our voices heard and to allow us to be catalysts for change.

Telling my story, knowing my rights! -Julia's story

This is the story of one woman's need to fully understand the issues in a residential school negotiation. These are her words as she describes her fight for recognition and justice:

The Indian residential school settlement

Jose A. Usugak's wish in 2002 was "that our Canadian Government behaves fairly and responsibly and genuinely recognizes Inuit as a unique aboriginal people of Canada, and acknowledge that their "one-size-fits-all" approach to solving aboriginal issues does not work. Kusugak missed the opportunity to realize his dream to have Inuit recognized by standing silently as Phil Fontaine made the deal for the First Nation's People.

The chance to make an informed choice about the settlement, I feel was taken away from me and that my human rights have been violated. To remain silent would be to dishonor my ancestor's memory.

The issues I have are many. However, I will address the ones, which make me question the legality of the settlement:

- A) The negotiation process was biased, the government holding all the power and the First Nations People bargaining in fear (fear that elders are dying off) that explains the pittance that Fontaine settled for the First Nations People and the government happily accepted.
- B) As an Inuvialuit, I do not appreciate being thoughtlessly forgotten. This makes me wonder what input Kusugak had for the Inuit. (The Inuit were included after the negotiations were over)
- C) There are conditions placed in the settlement. i.e. money will be held in credit for future mental health services (the government of Canada has a fiduciary obligation for aboriginal health care needs)
- D) According to the emotional support person traveling with Joachin Bonnetrouge. The AFN facilitator most survivors are in denial of their residential school experiences. Under such conditions, should the settlement be legally binding?
- E) The threat of a long, expensive legal battle as the other alternative prevents me from making an informed choice. The choice has already been made for me.

We are not helpless. We are resilient and resourceful and we have many well-informed former students who can negotiate a fair and just settlement for us.

Julia is a second generation product of the residential school system. She has requested that her full name not be published to protect her family from those that do not share her views. Julia would appreciate any feedback you may have on this issue, please send questions, comments or personal stories to:

The Status of Women Council of the NWT

P.O. box 1320

Yellowknife, NT

X1A 2L9

Or e-mail us at council@statusofwomen.nt.ca

"I am also very proud to be a liberal. Why is that so terrible these days? The liberals were liberators—they fought slavery, fought for women to have the right to vote, fought against Hitler, Stalin, fought to end segregation, fought to end apartheid. Liberals put an end to child labor and they gave us the five day work week! What's to be ashamed of?"
—Barbra Streisand

"Does feminist mean large unpleasant person who'll shout at you? or someone who believes women are human beings. To me it's the latter, so I sign up "
—Margaret Atwood

Ask your leaders: Direct your future! (Some suggestions)

1. The Coalition Against Family Violence has been working with the Territorial Government and front-line agencies since 2003 to implement the NWT Action Plan on Family Violence. The actions purposed for the 1st phase of that action plan have been met and now the GNWT has made a commitment to provide funding for phase II. What do you think are needed to meet the current needs of clients dealing with family violence and what would you like to see your MLA do to ensure this is a priority for the next session of the Legislative Assembly?
2. Many communities lack adequate housing for low-income families. The public housing available to such families is sometimes uninhabitable as a result of poor heating, plumbing or electrical services. What steps do you think need to be taken to ensure that adequate housing is made available to those in the lower income bracket?
3. Communities in the NWT continue to face difficult social problems, What do you feel needs to be done

Ask your leaders (Continued)

to strengthen programs that alleviate these problems and where do you feel the government should be focusing their funding?

4. With increased economic development, social problems may get worse. What would you like your MLA to do to respond to issues that may arise due to increased economic wealth and disposable income?
5. Women's equality is still an issue despite many of the gains that women have made over the last 20 years. Women today, on average make 71cents for every dollar a man makes and aboriginal and non-caucasian women make even less, the average yearly income being \$16,621 and \$13,300 respectively (according to an Ottawa Citizen article Jan. 28/07 and Stats Can data). What steps do you feel need to be taken to reduce/eliminate the wage gap between men and women doing work of equal value? How can we promote wage equality in all workplaces in the NWT?
6. Accessing healthcare is vital for all Canadians however, there are difficulties in many Northern communities accessing proper health care. Do you feel that occurs often in the NWT, if so what can be done to make easy access to Health care services a reality in the North?
7. Women are more likely to live below the poverty line than their male counterparts and many children also live in poverty. Do you support efforts to provide social assistance that allows those who depend on those funds to live above poverty-line cut-off levels? Would you be interested in sitting on a taskforce on Women's Poverty Issues in the Territories?
8. What measures are needed to deal with the resulting trauma from such things as drug and alcohol abuse, domestic violence or homeless? What sort of things do you think are needed in the communities to build capacity to deal with these issues at the source and promote overall healing/ healthy communities?
9. Climate Change is on the minds of Northerners who understand that increased greenhouse gas emissions and destruction of green-spaces has devastating effects on our climate and wildlife. What actions would you take to reduce climate change and protect our unique Northern environment?
10. According to the Status of Women Canada An Integrated Approach to Gender-Based Analysis: "Gender-based Analysis is a highly adaptable tool that you can use to work towards positive social and economic change. Every action, policy, program, project and socio-economic trend affects men and women differently." What actions would you take to ensure the implementation of Gender-Based Analysis in new and existing GNWT policies, programs and legislation?



"But the artist persists because he has the will to create, and this is the magic power which can transform and transfigure and transpose and which will ultimately be transmitted to others."

André Malraux

"Remember no one can make you feel inferior without your consent"

-Eleanor Roosevelt

Wife of Former U.S.

President Teddy Roosevelt

It is our sincere hope that we have provided you with a little information to help you sort through the issues required to make informed choices that will positively affect your government. Should you have any questions about this newsletter, or would like more information. Please contact

The Status of Women Council of the NWT

Box 1320, Yellowknife, NT, X1A 2L9

Ph. (867)920-6177 Fax (867) 873-0285

We are currently producing Campaign School Kits for women who wish to run in the 2007 Territorial Election, and have a number of resources that might be of interest to you in our Resource Library and Video Library.

Sincerely,

Samantha Dechief and Andrea Bennington, Editors

The Harsh Facts of Life!

Women in the Political Arena

FACT: According to the United Nations, Canada ranks 30th in the world in terms of the representation of women in Parliament, behind Sweden, Norway, Rwanda, Trinidad and Tobago and many other countries on every continent

(United Nations, The Human Development index, "Going beyond Income Country Fact Sheet: Canada 2006)

FACT: In Canada women make up 50.4% of the population, according to Statistics Canada but only 20.8% of seats in the House of Common. (Parliament of Canada, "Women-Party Standings in the House of Commons: Current List)

FACT: In the NWT, there are currently 7 women sitting on as either chief of a Band Councils or a mayor in 33 different communities. They are:

- * Chief Lucy Jackson, Fort Good Hope
- * Mayor Elizabeth McKay, Fort Resolution,
- * Mayor Rebecca Blake, Fort McPherson,
- * Dene Band Chief Adeline Jonasson, Lutsel'ke.
- * Chief Berna Landry, Fort Providence
- * Mayor Tina Gargan, Fort Providence
- * Chief Keyne Norwegian, Fort Simpson

Equality...are we there yet?



Currently in our Legislative Assembly we have 2 women MLA's, Sandy Lee and Jane Groenewegen

FACT: There are currently 28 men serving as either Band Chiefs or heads of community governments.

-Courtesy of the Department for Municipal and Community Affairs (MACA), Government of the NWT website as of June 2007

Family Violence in the Territories:

FACT: Rates of spousal violence in the Territories are higher than in the provinces, 12% in the Territories compared with 6% in the provinces. Police also consistently record higher rates of violent crimes, including sexual assault and spousal homicide in the Territories compared with the provinces

Victims of Spousal violence in the Territories were report such violence more often than those in the Provinces

Spousal Violence victims in the Territories were less likely than victims in the provinces to use social services. However, per capita rates of shelter usage were highest in the Territories.

FACT: In the period of time from 1975-2004 the spousal homicide rates in the Territories were:

- * Northwest Territories - 22 female, 11 male
- * Nunavut- 4 female, 2 male
- * Yukon- 9 female, 5 male

Out of a total of 2,178 Spousal Homicides across Canada

*Please note that the numbers up until the creation of Nunavut, April 1st 1999 include the territory now known as Nunavut under the NWT Childcare in Canada

FACT: Most Canadians are strongly in favour of significant federal investment in Childcare. -According to 2006 Cross Canada Poll entitled "Canadians' Attitudes Toward National Child Care" by the Environics Research Group,

FACT: "Even before current cuts, an OECD comparison of 14 industrialized countries finds Canada at the very bottom in terms of spending on children aged 0-6 (less than 0.3% of the GDP or Gross Domestic Product), far behind countries like Hungary and the United States" -Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Starting Strong II: Early Childhood Education and Care (Paris: OECD, 2006)

FACT: The European Union suggests that European countries should contribute 1% of their GDP (Gross Domestic Product) on childcare and early childhood learning initiatives. However, under the 2004 Child Care Announcement in Canada, we would only spend \$1 billion per year on Childcare and early childhood education, representing less than 0.1% of our GDP.

Canadians Council on Social Development, "Fast Facts on Childcare in Canada," Perceptions vol. 27 no. 1&2 (2004)

FACT: According to The Canadian Council on Social Development it is estimated that mothers of young children contribute \$53 billion of Canada's GDP, representing 5% of the total GDP, that is taking into account their paid work, not the value of all the unpaid labour as mothers of the next generation of Canadians.

WE ARE ON THE WEB

AT:

WWW.STATUSOEWOMEN.NT.CA