

# Group wants women's issues on agendas [CA-BC] <sup>[1]</sup>

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## EXCERPTS

A group of Kamloops women calling themselves the 52% Coalition are demanding that issues affecting women be part of the provincial election agenda.

Representing a provincewide initiative, the group held a press conference Tuesday at the Kamloops Women's Resource Centre, which has been operating on a shoestring for the past year after the Liberal government axed funding.

The coalition is holding an all-candidates forum on May 4, 7 p.m., at Desert Gardens, but not all candidates will be attending, they acknowledged.

MLA Kevin Krueger's office has already stated that he will not be there and MLA Claude Richmond does not plan to attend, either.

"I find it very frustrating that some candidates in the Kamloops and North Thompson constituencies refuse to deal with issues that affect women directly," said coalition member Trish Archibald.

"The reality is that women live in families and care about families so these issues are about others and providing for them. That's why, as a coalition, our sole purpose is to get the issues out there."

Government policies over the last four years have cost women economic security and eroded their human rights, the group contends. They criticized the Campbell government for cutting funding for income assistance, legal aid for family law and child care, cuts that have had a disproportionate impact on women.

"This government, no sooner were they elected than what they did was repeal the part of the Human Rights Code that ensures women are paid equally," said Jane Birbeck. "Pay equity legislation is always all about women."

Liberal policies appear to be based on antiquated notions of women as secondary income earners in families, Archibald noted.

"They are not secondary income earners in many families; they are the prime income earners."

Aboriginal women have been particularly hard hit by Liberal policies, Goldney said. Immigrant women have also been made more vulnerable, they said.

"There were whole families living in broken down vehicles this past summer," Birbeck said. "The conditions of poverty because of the reprehensible cuts, I don't think we know the extent of it."

- reprinted from the Kamloops Daily News

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