

Some women giving premier a fit [CA-NF] ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

When Premier Danny Williams checks his e-mail on the eighth day of each month, he's greeted by dozens of messages from women across the province.

These women are having a fit. A Feminism Fit.

Determined to have an impact on the political process and make their voices heard, women are writing the premier, and Human Resources Minister Joan Burke -- who's also the minister responsible for the Status of Woman -- to raise issues of concern.

This unique form of political protest is a project of the St. John's Status of Women's Council, in partnership with other community and women's groups in the province.

The first "fit" was held April 8, with some 65 e-mails sent to the premier and Burke, asking that annual funding to the women's centre be doubled.

The campaign resulted in a small funding increase, but nowhere near what is needed, said council co-ordinator Lisa Zigler.

The second fit, held May 8, took government to task for cuts announced in its March 30 provincial budget, including the elimination of 4,000 public-sector jobs over four years and restructuring in education and health care. Zigler didn't know exactly how many messages were sent.

How does Feminism Fits work?

Each month, women are asked to suggest an issue affecting their lives or the lives of women they know. A Feminism Fits committee decides which of those issues will be the focus of the month.

A short background paper and sample letter is then prepared and sent to women on a growing e-mail list. They are encouraged to use the information to e-mail the government on the eighth of each month.

Since International Women's Day is March 8, members of the committee thought it was fitting that they take action on the eighth day of every month.

The goal is to have hundreds of women across the province write to the premier on the same day.

Feminism Fits was the brainchild of Nancy Riche, a well-known labour activist from St. John's. Riche was installed as an Officer of the Order of Canada in Ottawa Friday.

She came up with the idea during International Women's Day events in St. John's this year. She's received calls from women's groups from as far away at Scotland and Australia who want to start a similar initiative.

She also hopes to enlist elected members of the Liberal and New Democratic parties to raise issues highlighted in each Feminism Fit in the House of Assembly.

Some of the issues being considered for the June 8 Feminism Fit include the need to increase the minimum wage, violence against women, funding for women's shelters and affordable child care.

"Unfortunately, the list is endless," Zigler said.

- reprinted from the Telegram

Region: Newfoundland ^[2]

Tags: gender ^[3]

Links

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/04/05/some-women-giving-premier-fit-ca-nf> [2]
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