

# Ottawa's nod to women's equality short on details, says YWCA Canada <sup>[1]</sup>

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**Source:** YWCA Canada

**Format:** Press release

**Publication Date:** 8 Oct 2004

## AVAILABILITY

See text of press release below.

Text of the press release:

Canada's largest women's multi-service organization joined others in voicing cautious optimism for the nod to important social policy in this week's Throne Speech and Prime Minister's response. YWCA Canada is however reserving its endorsement until further details are released.

The government receives marks for its pledge to strengthen laws on pornography and female trafficking, and the renewed vow to "work toward gender equality" is noted, says Elaine Teofilovici, Chief Executive Officer of YWCA Canada. "Missing are the goals, implementation plans and funding commitments to back up the promises."

Other references indicate Martin's government is ready to modernize its family policies by valuing the roles women play as primary care givers in families. A national system of early learning and child care, and support for family members tending the elderly and the disabled will affect millions of Canadians.

The key word is 'system', says Teofilovici. "Layering new funding on top of the dysfunctional service patchworks that now exists will not deliver the benefits these programs promise."

New money for child care indicated in the Throne Speech makes this the third federal transfer to the provinces for early childhood initiatives in five years. However, the reluctance of the federal government to impose conditions on its funding has resulted in an alphabet soup of disconnected programs that have only made the terrain more confusing and less reliable for families. The Auditor General, herself, has expressed concerns about Ottawa's inability to account for its funding.

Teofilovici is pleased that the government remains committed to the principles the Prime Minister announced on the campaign trail, promising quality, universal, affordable, developmental early learning and care. "Missing is the mechanism to ensure the principles are adhered to," says Teofilovici. "Reporting to Canadians is not a sufficient accountability tool."

The YWCA also applauds the federal government for its focus on affordable housing but expresses disappointment that they have ignored the overarching issue of poverty in our communities. Let's not forget that 40% of single women under the age of 65 and 56% of lone parent families headed by women live under the poverty line.

While this was the first time a Throne Speech has hailed the unique strength that the not-for-profit sector contributes to the health of communities, it again came up short on a real commitment of resources.

**BLURB:** Canada's largest women's multi-service organization joined others in voicing cautious optimism for the nod to important social policy in this week's Throne Speech and Prime Minister's response.

**Region:** Canada <sup>[2]</sup>

**Tags:** quality <sup>[3]</sup>

child development <sup>[4]</sup>

accessibility <sup>[5]</sup>

federal programs <sup>[6]</sup>

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