

January 2010

OSSTF/FEESO Status of Women Committee Update

1. Campaign to stop Bill C-391

On November 4, 2009, C-391 passed second reading in the House of Commons. Sponsored by a Conservative backbencher, this private member's bill was supported by all Conservative MPs, as well as 8 Liberals and 12 NDPers. If it passes third reading, the requirement that owners must register their rifles and shotguns (long guns) will be eliminated.

Current gun control requirements were established with the passage of the Firearms Act in 1995. Pressure for this legislation grew out of a campaign following the Montreal Massacre. After this tragedy, many were shocked to find there was little regulatory control over gun ownership and licensing in Canada.

The families of victims in the Montreal Massacre have joined many others in opposing Bill C-391. This includes women's groups, police chiefs and police associations, and emergency medical and public health authorities. The evidence is clear that gun registration works to curb firearm deaths and helps to protect the vulnerable. This includes women, children, and police officers – the most frequent targets of long gun attacks - as well as those at risk of committing suicide using a firearm, especially in the north and rural areas. Information on who owns a gun certainly helps in investigations following violence, but just as importantly, it is of enormous assistance in violence prevention. Police estimate they consult the gun registry over 10,000 times daily.

Although Parliament has been prorogued until March 2010 and government legislation must be reintroduced, the passage of a private member's bill is not affected. Bill C-391 will proceed through the legislative process and come to the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security when the House of Commons resumes. Once it finishes in Committee hearings, it will return for third and final reading.

The next few months are critical for reaching your MP. Send a note of support to those who opposed the Bill. If your MP is among those who voted for the Bill and in favour of ending the gun registry, arrange a meeting, send a personal letter, or make a phone call to make him or her aware of your objections. Contact information is available at www.parl.gc.ca.

OSSTF/FEESO supports the campaign in opposition to Bill C-391 and has applied to make a presentation to the House of Commons Committee. More information on the history of gun control legislation in Canada and the campaign on Bill C-391 can be found in both English and French on the Coalition for Gun Control website at www.guncontrol.ca/

The Canadian Labour Congress is also leading a campaign called *Keep our Communities Safe/ Protégez la sécurité de nos communautés*. The website links in English and French are shown in the box on the right.

Did you know?

The law gives a birth mother the right to be accommodated for medical conditions or disability during pregnancy. The employer cannot require her to take sick leave or start pregnancy-parental leave early as an alternative to providing reasonable accommodation that would make it possible for her to remain at work.



www.canadianlabour.ca/action-center/keep-our-communities-safe



www.congresdutravail.ca/centre-daction/protégez-la-securite-de-nos-communautes

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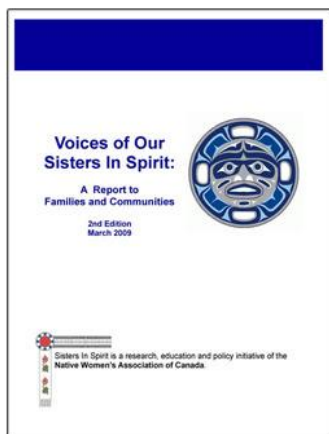
2. OSSTF/FEESO Status of Women Award

This is a reminder that the nomination deadline for the OSSTF/FEESO Status of Women Award is January 31, 2010. The award is presented annually at AMPA.

Nomination information and forms are available on our provincial website as follows:

- English (www.osstf.on.ca/Default.aspx?DN=348d2039-a5bc-4748-946b-4759efdbfd17)
- French (www.osstf.on.ca/Default.aspx?DN=348d2039-a5bc-4748-946b-4759efdbfd17&l=French)

3. Sisters in Spirit Initiative



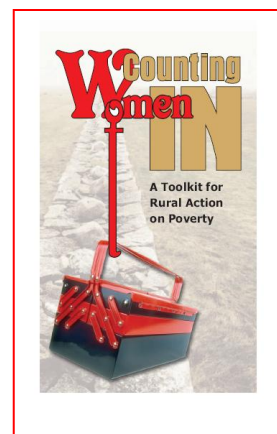
Voices of Our Sisters in Spirit 2nd Edition, October 2009 is now posted on the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) website. It can be downloaded by visiting www.nwac-hq.org/en/sisresearch.html. Other resources and research initiatives are also available.

Amnesty International (AI) in Canada continues its advocacy on the issue of missing and murdered aboriginal women as well. In October 2009, it published *No More Stolen Sisters: The Need for a Comprehensive Response to Discrimination and Violence Against Indigenous Women in Canada*. This shorter document follows the original comprehensive AI report from 2004. Both reports, along with other materials, are posted on the AI website at www.amnesty.ca/campaigns/sisters_overview.php

The National Film Board has also made the film *Finding Dawn* available through its website. To view this film, go to http://www.nfb.ca/film/finding_dawn/. The film was one of those included in the OSSTF/FEESO booklet *Violence Against Indigenous Women*. The annotated bibliography of resources was published in 2007 and is available in print as well as on the OSSTF/FEESO website.

4. Resources for Rural Women

Women in rural areas often find it more difficult to access resources and services than their urban sisters. In part this is the result of smaller numbers as well as geographic distances, but it can also reflect local government and agency resources/outlook and service priorities. This is why *Counting Women In and How We Count: Tools for Action on Rural Poverty* is an interesting "find". The materials published in June 2009 not only offer information on accessing services and resources in the Grey Bruce area, they also provide insights and strategies on reaching out and drawing together women living in rural communities. To download materials go to www.endabusenow.ca/node/149



5. AND Looking Ahead... International Women's Day 2010

Next March 8th marks the 100th anniversary of International Women's Day. An article in the February issue of *Update* will highlight this landmark event and encourage members to participate and organize local events. The Provincial Executive has also approved that a memo be sent out to local bargaining unit presidents. However, you will find some material attached to this email about IWD, women's history and women's/gender studies that we hope you will also find helpful as background. The next email update will include more resources/website links.