

# ENDING VIOLENCE

Association of BC

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## BC Budget Fails to Provide Adequate Measures to Protect Women and Children

Victoria — Despite a series of reports conducted in the wake of sexual and domestic violence murders of women and children in our province, the BC Provincial budget released today provides little protection for women and children. Our Government's, well meaning statements of concern need to be backed up by funds to support victims and front line services dealing with the aftermath of these horrific crimes. While the budget includes an additional \$5 million to address problem gambling and an additional \$52 million for increased RCMP costs including costs associated with gang activity, there are no increases to ensure victims of domestic and sexual violence have access to life saving support services. Numerous Coroner's Inquests and Death Review Panels have identified that access to such services is critical to help ensure victims do not fall through the cracks.

Since 2002 BC has fallen behind in providing services for women victims of violence.

While awareness and service delivery pressures have increased exponentially, funding for all of BC's sexual assault/woman assault centres and women's centres were cut in 2002.

All funding for training for the remaining victim assistance programs was cut in 2008.

There are just 62 community based victim services in BC. These are the programs mandated to identify risk, create safety plans and provide a plethora of other supports to keep women and kids safe.

While the BC Government has spent significant resources on Commissions of Inquiry and Justice Reform initiatives, there is no evidence, i.e., funds in the budget, that any steps are being taken to pro-actively implement these and other report recommendations. (*Forsaken: The Report of the Missing Women Commission of Inquiry; BC's Domestic Violence Death Review Panel Report; Honoring Christian Lee; Kaitlyn, Max and Corydon; BC Policing and Community Safety Plan; Family Law Reforms; White Papers on Justice Reforms;*) No increases have been made to the number of community victim services or the level of funding these programs receive for the last ten years. At the same time, we have 2000 more police than we had ten years ago, an increase of over \$450 million!

"Concrete action is needed to prevent this senseless violence. The time for general statements of support and further study has passed." says EVA BC Executive Director Tracy Porteous, "We need action and programs, not merely more committees, more reports, more plans and more summits".

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