

# Harper targeted in Parliament Hill protest

## Women's groups decry program funding cuts

By **KENNETH JACKSON**  
Metro Ottawa

Hundreds of boisterous women upset with Prime Minister Stephen Harper's recent cuts to funding for women's programs protested in Ottawa yesterday.

Protesters were especially opposed to removing the promotion of women's equality from the mandate of Status of Women Canada.

Protesters shouted "Harper Must Go!" as a long trail of people marched from the Supreme Court of Canada to

Parliament Hill.

"We are here today to deliver a direct message to Harper and that message is we won't shut up," said Paulette Senior, executive director of YWCA. "So today, even though we are wearing aprons, we will not go back to the kitchen. In fact, there may be no dinner tonight."

Senior said the cuts cost the YWCA \$200,000 of annual funding for their study of women using shelters.

"We were using it to research the experience of women who use our shelters right across the country. They were telling us we were saving their lives," said Senior. "Now the program has been cancelled.

We have not come this far to have our rights taken away from us."

The cancellation of provincial and federal child care agreements, the refusal to adopt a pay equity law and changes, cuts and closures to Status of Women Canada were all hot topics yesterday, along with cancellation of the Court Challenges Program.

"We're being told 'be nice, go home, shut up' and we are saying, no we won't do it. Let's fight for women ... We can reverse it," said Shelagh Day, a Vancouver-based human rights consultant.

The gathering marked the 25th anniversary of Inter-

in attendance

Officials from Amnesty International, the Canadian Labour Congress and Quebec's Federation des femmes du Quebec were some of the groups represented at the rally.

national Human Rights Day, but many said they feel nothing has changed for women.

"We are outraged. Women are being treated so badly. All of the cuts that have been made ... is a slap in the face of all women," said Monica Lysack of Ottawa, who was joined at the rally by her 14-year-old daughter.

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