

**SUBMISSION for 2016**

**Presented to**

**THE RIGHT HONOURABLE KATHLEEN WYNNE**

**Premier of Ontario**

By



**THE BUSINESS & PROFESSIONAL  
WOMEN'S CLUBS OF ONTARIO**

Member of the Canadian and International Federations of

Business and Professional Women

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The Business and Professional Women's Clubs of Ontario (BPW Ontario) is the coordinating organization for the active membership of dedicated working women in clubs across the province.

BPW Ontario membership represents a diverse group of women, in both the public and private sectors of business, industry, and the professions. Our members hold positions as business entrepreneurs, CEO's, managers, and employees across a full range of occupational sectors.

Individual clubs within the provincial organization are members of the Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women (BPW Canada) founded in 1930, and the International Federation of Business and Professional Women (IFBPW) which has members in over 100 countries around the world and maintains Consultative Status in the United Nations Economic and Social Council.

Since 1910 BPW Ontario has worked to promote the interests of working women. We have made submissions to government, addressing issues of equal pay and benefits, employment opportunities, employment equity, part time work, child care, maternity leave, pension reform, health issues, and other areas of concern to women. BPW Ontario promotes equality as a basic human right, ensuring the full participation of women who comprise 52% of the population. It is believed that through the realization of their full potential, Ontario working women will continue to drive the thriving business and economic climate of today and ensure prosperity for the generations to come.

For continued improvement in the status of women and betterment of the economic, political, employment, and social aspects of daily living, BPW Clubs from across the province meet annually to discuss and approve resolutions submitted by individual clubs. The resolutions included in this brief were approved by our membership at the 70th Annual Conference held in Mississauga, Ontario, May 27 – 29, 2016.

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## Business and Professional Women's Clubs of Ontario

### Index-2016 Resolutions

	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Page</u>
1.	<b>Closing the Gender Wage Gap for Ontario Midwives</b>	4
2.	<b>Accessibility to Transportation</b>	5
3.	<b>Caregiver Benefit</b>	6
4.	<b>Recognizing in Public Policy the Issues of Older Women Facing Sexual Violence and Harassment</b>	7
	<b>Reference:/SOURCE OF DATA</b>	8



## **Closing the Gender Wage Gap for Ontario Midwives**

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**WHEREAS** closing the Gender Wage Gap has been made a priority by the Premier of Ontario, in mandating the Minister of Labour with the support of the Minister Responsible for Women's Issues to develop a Gender Wage Gap Strategy that will assess ways in which government, business, labour, other organizations and individual leaders can work together to address the conditions and the systemic barriers that contribute to the wage gap;

**AND WHEREAS** the Gender Wage Gap for women in Ontario increased over the previous year by 2% to 31.5% and that the Durber Report (2013) estimates the wage gap for Ontario Midwives to be closer to 38%;

**AND WHEREAS** the Ontario Government implemented in 1994 the recommendations presented by Robert Morton who was contracted by the Ministry of Health and Long-term Care to conduct a pay equity-informed analysis to determine the rate of pay for the newly regulated health profession of Midwives to bridge the gender wage gap;

**AND WHEREAS** wages were frozen from 1994 to 2005, again from 2011 to 2013 and a continuous increase in the Midwife's scope of practice in procedures and responsibilities has created a greater wage gap for Midwives today than when first regulated;

**AND WHEREAS** the Ministry of Health and Long-term Care (MOHLTC) Results Based Plan Briefing Books 2013-14 and 2014-2015 speak to the value associated with Midwives work as a safe cost effective alternative to hospital deliveries: "Midwifery care results in fewer medical and surgical interventions, which benefits mothers and babies and provides better value to the health care system.", as does the fact that two new Midwife-Led Birth Centres to provide pregnant women more choice in where to give birth were opened in 2014;

**AND WHEREAS** bridging the gender wage gap for Midwives will help to attract and retain Midwives to the profession and begin to breakdown the systemic cultural barriers that limits access to this service and will contribute to the MOHLTC's Health System Funding Reform and assist in better meeting the high demand for midwifery services in Ontario.

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT** BPW Ontario strongly urges the Government of Ontario to demonstrate their commitment to serve as a role model in closing the gender wage gap for Ontario's Midwives as it offers a prime example of meaningful culture change that can be applied through collaboration with the Minister of Labour, Minister of Health and Long-term Care and the Minister Responsible for Women's Issues;

**AND FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT** BPW Ontario strongly urges the Government of Ontario to commit the Minister of Health and Long-term Care to maintain a regiment of ongoing analysis every five years of the compensation for Midwives in Ontario to prevent a gender wage gap from widening again.



**WHEREAS** women still are at great risk of being reliant on social programming, such as Ontario Works and Ontario Disability in the province;

**AND WHEREAS** in December 2004 Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Social Services put forward a report on Employment Assistance Programs: Ontario Works & Ontario Disability Support Program acknowledging the issue of inaccessibility of transportation experienced by recipients of Ontario Works;

**AND WHEREAS** this issue can be a barrier to women seeking and gaining employment opportunities.

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT** BPW Ontario urges the Government of Ontario and the Minister of Community and Social Services develop a policy framework for affordable transportation in partnership with Municipalities to promote socio-economic progress of women receiving social assistance or disability supports. This may include a program that supports public transportation passes for eligible persons to be used in travel to seek and maintain employment;

**AND FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT** BPW Ontario urges the Government of Ontario and Minister of Community and Social Services to include in Ontario Regulation 134/98, the program on affordability of public transportation to support job seeking and maintaining employment by persons on social assistance or disability.



## Caregiver Benefit

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**WHEREAS** working women are more likely to be impacted by care giving required by ill family members and this role contributes greatly to managing illnesses at home rather than in costly institutional settings;

**AND WHEREAS** this caregiver role places a financial burden on working women, risking both short term and long term income security, including risks to income, career development, and pension income;

**AND WHEREAS** informal care giving is not routinely part of assessment of care giving and care receiving needs;

**AND WHEREAS** government policies have yet to consider the specific gender-related challenges in family care giving and to design programs for the family caregivers:

**AND WHEREAS** research in the Province of Nova Scotia shows that caregiver benefits for the last five years at \$400 month payment to have reduced the probability of institutionalization by 56%;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT** BPW Ontario urges the Government of Ontario, specifically the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Labour, the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, and the Minister Responsible for Women's Issues to develop policies and programs to recognize and alleviate the financial burden and to provide social and financial support for family caregivers with a provincially-funded caregiver program;

**AND FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT** BPW Ontario urges the Government of Ontario to integrate family caregivers into health and social program planning and development across the public sector so that these issues continue to be considered and influence policies in the long term;

**AND FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT** BPW Ontario urges the Government of Ontario, specifically the Minister of Health and Long Term Care and the Minister of Community and Social Services that along with the assessment of care receiver needs, an assessment of the caregiver needs should be conducted, and services should be provided to sustain their care efforts and promote their well-being.

## Recognizing in Public Policy Issues of Older Women Facing Sexual Violence and Harassment



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**WHEREAS** risk factors for sexual abuse increase in older women, i.e. age, gender and care dependency are risk factors for abuse in older women;

**AND WHEREAS** because of the differentiation of the risk factors faced by older women compared to younger women, there is a need to address these specific issues in programs preventing and dealing with sexual abuse;

**AND WHEREAS** Elder Abuse Ontario (EAO) is the provincial leader in addressing issues of abuse faced by the older adult, there is an opportunity for BPW Ontario to work with EAO in our advocacy for this issue.

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that BPW Ontario urges the Government of Ontario, specifically the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, the Minister Responsible for Women's Issues, the Minister of Health and Long Term Care, and the Minister Responsible for Seniors Affairs to develop policies and initiatives specific for older women under that banner of their response to sexual violence and harassment faced by the women of Ontario;

**AND FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED** BPW Ontario urges the Government of Ontario, specifically the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, the Minister Responsible for Women's Issues, the Minister of Health and Long Term Care, and the Minister Responsible for Seniors Affairs to ensure that issues facing older women with sexual violence and harassment be part of any public awareness campaigns currently funded.

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