

Submission to

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE DOUGLAS FORD

Premier of Ontario

By



**THE BUSINESS & PROFESSIONAL
WOMEN OF ONTARIO**

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bpwontario.com

**Working towards improving economic, political, social,
and employment conditions for women in Ontario**

“Celebrating our past...Embracing our future!”

Member of:

The Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women (BPW Canada)

The International Federation of Business and Professional Women (BPW International)

January 2021



INTRODUCTION

The Business and Professional Women of Ontario (BPW Ontario) is a non-partisan and non-sectarian organization which represents dedicated working women in clubs across Ontario. Our members represent a diverse group of women working in public and private sector, industry, and the professions and who hold positions such as entrepreneurs, Chief Executive Officers, managers, and employees across all occupational sectors.

Our members meet monthly at their local club to discuss issues relevant to women. Being part of BPW Ontario means each member also enjoys the privilege of membership in the Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women (BPW Canada) and the International Federation of Business and Professional Women (IFBPW) which were both founded in 1930. The International Federation of Business and Professional Women has members in over 100 countries around the world and maintains Consultative Status in the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

Since 1910, BPW Ontario promotes the interests of working women by making submissions to government regarding issues such as closing the gender wage gap, employment equity, childcare, health issues, and other areas of concern to women. BPW Ontario promotes equality as a basic human right. Through the realization of their full potential Ontario's working women will continue to drive the business and economic recovery needed for Ontario to recover from the Covid-19 pandemic. This pandemic also brought many of the challenges working women face to the forefront. We look forward to the opportunity to meet and discuss the resolutions contained in this document with you and your government.

Since 2016, BPW Ontario continues to use the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals to empower women. We continue to work in collaboration with BPW International, BPW Canada, and the United Nations and other likeminded organizations across the province seeking gender equality. In 2019, BPW Ontario played a key role in the successful awareness campaign regarding the human sex trafficking of minor aged victims in Ontario. Your government has demonstrated support to resolve this issue with your Anti-Human Trafficking Strategy and providing financial support to stakeholders working with our minor-aged youth. BPW Ontario now supports the #ProjectMapleLeaf national campaign which has been adopted by BPW Canada.

BPW Ontario looks forward to the opportunity to discuss the resolutions in this brief and ways we can work collaboratively to positively impact the lives of women in Ontario.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Heather Ellis". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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Business and Professional Women of Ontario

Resolutions - Table of Contents

Resolutions presented by Business & Professional Women Ontario Conference/Annual General Meeting, September 2020

Resolution 2020 - 01: In Support of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.....	6
Rationale	6
References	7
Resolution 2020 - 02: Closing the Gender Wage Gap for Ontario Midwives	8
Rationale	8
References	9
Resolution 2020 - 03: Expansion of Funding to Increase Options for Women who are Victims of Violence to Live Safely in Their Community.....	10
Rationale	10
References	11
Resolution 2020-04: Promoting Education on Heart Disease in Women	12
Rationale	12
References	13
Resolution 2020-05: Support for Progressive Labour Law.....	14
Rationale	15
References	16
Resolution 2020-06: Support for Living Income Program as Part of an Ontario Poverty Reduction Strategy	17
Rationale	17
References	18
Resolution 2020 - 07: Violence and Harassment Against Female Politicians	19
Rationale	19
References	20
Resolution 2020 - 08: Women in Politics.....	21
Rationale	21
References	22
Resolution 2020 - 09: External Agency for Sexual Harassment Investigations in Policing	23
Rationale	24
References	25

Resolution 2020 - 01: In Support of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that BPW Ontario strongly urges the Government of Ontario, specifically the Minister of Indigenous Affairs, the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services, and the Associate Minister of Children and Women's Issues to accept the findings of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls;

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that BPW Ontario strongly urges the Government of Ontario, specifically the Minister of Indigenous Affairs, the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services, the Associate Minister of Children and Women's Issues, the Attorney General, and the Minister of Health to implement the 231 calls for justice cited within the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Final Report where they are applicable on a provincial level especially those calls related to items under provincial jurisdiction including child welfare, health, mental health, culture, and criminal victimization;

AND FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that BPW Ontario strongly urges the Government of Ontario to contribute data to a national annual plan collecting data on victimization and prepare a provincial report annually on the government's actions taken to implement these calls to action.

Rationale

In June 2019, the Government of Canada's Commissioners released their final report on the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, which reveals that persistent and deliberate human and Indigenous rights violations and abuses are the root cause behind Canada's staggering rates of violence against Indigenous women, girls, and two-spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex and asexual (2SLGBTQQIA) people. The Business and Professional Women of Ontario are aware of the injustices against Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA in Canada and support the truths within the report and the 231 individual calls for justice directed at governments, institutions, social service providers, industries, and all Canadians (Government of Canada, 2019, 2019a).

As documented in the Final Report, testimony from thousands of survivors of violence and family members of victims and survivors demonstrated the surrounding context of multigenerational and intergenerational trauma as well as marginalization in the form of poverty, insecure housing or homelessness, and barriers to education, employment, healthcare and cultural support. Experts and Knowledge Keepers referenced specific colonial and patriarchal policies that displaced women from their traditional roles in communities and governance and diminished their status in society, leaving them vulnerable to violence (Government of Canada, 2019, 2019a).

BPW Ontario policies are in alignment with the Commission's recommendations addressing the systemic causes of all forms of violence against indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA. BPW Ontario has discussed these issues at many national meetings and made four resolutions that recognized the issues:

- 2010 – Reaffirmation of the Resolution on Funding for Sisters in Spirit Initiative of the Native Women's Association of Canada; and resources (police personnel and funds) to find the missing and murdered women in Canada, and in particular the Aboriginal women as identified by the Sisters in Spirit in their research.

Resolution 2020 - 01: In Support of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

Rationale, cont'd

- 2014 – Resolution on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women: To adopt and implement the recommendations as outlined in the Amnesty International 2004 report: Stolen Sisters: Discrimination and Violence against Indigenous Women in Canada: A Summary of Amnesty International's Concerns, and to engage the expertise of Native leaders and Native women's organizations in order to establish effective mechanisms to combat violence against aboriginal women.
- 2015 – Resolution on Adoption of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People: Adopt and implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of the Indigenous Peoples so that it can start integrating the rights of indigenous peoples into its agendas, policies, and programs at all levels.
- 2017 – Resolution on Violence Against Women: Violence Against Indigenous Women: to support and give Royal Assent to Bill S-215, and to prepare a study for public release on the effects of Bill S-215 and whether there is a decrease in violent crimes against Aboriginal women (BPW Canada Database, n.d.).

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Resolution 2020 - 02: Closing the Gender Wage Gap for Ontario Midwives

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT BPW Ontario reaffirms the BPW Ontario 2016 – 01 Resolution: Closing the Gender Wage Gap for Ontario Midwives which states 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 (now Minister of Labour, Training and Skill Development), Minister of Health and Long-term Care (now Minister of Health) and the Minister Responsible for Women’s Issues (now Associate Minister of Children and Women’s Issues);

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT BPW Ontario strongly urges the Government of Ontario to commit the Minister of Health to maintain a regimen of compensation review for Ontario Midwives consistent with the physicians and nurses to prevent a gender wage gap from widening again.

Rationale

The purpose of this resolution is to re-affirm the 2016 resolution and close the gender wage gap being experienced by the Ontario midwives and to make recommendations to close that gap. On November 27, 2013, the Association of Ontario Midwives (AOM) on behalf of Ontario midwives filed an application with the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario (HRTO) to address the gender wage gap (Association of Ontario Midwives [AOM], 2020).

The Pay Equity Commission of Ontario is mandated to identify, and correct gender discrimination based on paid wages, ensure employers know their obligations, and provides resources. The new Pay Equity Commission of Ontario states the purpose of the Pay Equity Act is to redress systemic gender discrimination in the compensation of employees in female job classes and provides for employers, which includes classified government agencies, and provides the resources to achieve pay equity. However, one of the main reasons for the midwives’ wage gap is the provincial government classifies midwives as independent contract status which excludes midwives from the Pay Equity Act (Government of Ontario, 2018). Pelletier, Patterson, and Moyser (2019) found, “... that women in Canada have surpassed men in educational attainment...higher-status occupations (Moyser, 2019), the persistence of gender-based wage inequality warrants continued attention (p. 4).”

On September 24, 2018, Adjudicator Reaume outlined her interim decision regarding the wage dispute between the Association of Ontario Midwives and the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MHLTC) as follows: “From 2005 to 2013 there is sufficient evidence to support a finding of discrimination as a result of the Ministry of Health not remaining in alignment with the 1993 principles and methodology (Reaume, 2018).”

Following the HRTO Decision, the Ontario Government requested a judicial review of the HRTO interim decision that took place in the Ontario Divisional Court on April 8, 9, and 17, 2020 (AOM, 2020a). “July 8, 2019 in St Jacobs, ON – Today, Minister of Health Christine Elliott announced that the Ontario government will invest in improving access to midwifery care. The announcement includes additional funding to invest in the growth of midwifery. Additionally, the Ministry is committed to expanding the scope of practice for midwifery, making it easier for people in Ontario to access the health care they need (AOM, 2020, para 1).”

Resolution 2020 - 02: Closing the Gender Wage Gap for Ontario Midwives

Rationale, cont'd

On February 19, 2020 the HRTO released 2020 HRTO 165 Decision on Remedy of the AOM v. the Ministry of the Attorney General as represented by the Ministry of Health (MOH) citing specific and concrete remedies the Ministry of Health must take to address lost wages owed to Ontario midwives, and correct the systemic discrimination to comply with the Human Rights Code (AOM, 2020).

Despite this remedial decision, the provincial government proceeded to request a judicial review of the HRTO decisions which took place on April 8, 9, and 17, 2020 (AOM, n.d.).

On June 26, 2020 the Ontario Supreme Court of Justice Divisional Court dismissed the request for a judicial review concluding the Tribunal's decisions in respect to liability and remedy fall within a range of possible, acceptable outcomes which are defensible in respect of the facts and law and demonstrates the reasoning process is transparent, intelligible, and justified (Backhouse, Pattillo, Lederer, 2020).

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Resolution 2020 - 03: Expansion of Funding to Increase Options for Women who are Victims of Violence to Live Safely in Their Community

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT BPW Ontario strongly urges the Government of Ontario, specifically the Attorney General, the Minister of Children, Community, and Social Services, and the Associate Minister Responsible for Children and Women's Issues to establish core funding to expand to programs similar to Project Guardian, a pilot program in the Region of Peel, across the province to improve women's safety and reduce the impact of gender-based violence.

Rationale

In Ontario, 23,305 cases of police-reported incidents of domestic violence against women were reported in 2018, representing an increased rate of 8% between 2017 and 2018 (Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics). Women who experience domestic violence are frequently referred to a violence against women shelter. Of those who seek emergency shelter, 60% are women. Of those women, 40% attend shelters with their children. In Ontario, 42% of shelters were at capacity, and shelter being at capacity was the reason women were turned away in 82% of situations (Moreau, 2019). According to a 2017/2018 Statistics Canada report, on a snapshot day, more than 3, 500 women sought shelter; of those who cited abuse as their reason for seeking shelter, 80% reported their alleged abuser as an intimate partner (current or former) (Sinha, 2013).

Emergency response systems have existed in some communities for those at high risk of violence for many years. In 2016, a collaborative effort between Victim Services Peel and Peel Regional Police, changed their system from a home alarm system to a mobile GPS tracking device. This new system, 'Project Guardian', is being piloted in Peel Region. Variations of this project exist in many regions in Ontario. Project Guardian functions to improve the safety of those at risk of violence from assaults, human trafficking, hate crimes, and domestic violence. The project consists of extensive safety planning, maintaining contact with Victim Services Coordinator, and supports individuals living in Brampton or Mississauga who have reported violence or threat of violence to the police, do not reside with the accused, and seek out and utilize other safety measures (e.g. peace bonds, restraining orders, or no contact orders). At the time of this resolution, nine (9) GPS trackers exist for Brampton/Mississauga, a population of over one million people; all of which are have been allocated to individuals and a waitlist exists. The GPS trackers allow individual victims of violence who wish to remain living safely in their own residence, after the perpetrator has left or been removed. The GPS tracker has an emergency call feature linking all details of the individual's case directly to the police and once pressed, allows for an immediate response by police, should the perpetrator violate the court order (Peel Police Services Board, 2018; Victim Services of Peel, 2020).

The Minister for Women and Gender Equality stated the COVID-19 pandemic is empowering domestic violence abusers with some regions showing a 20% to 30% increase in violence rates since the virus started spreading. The Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses (OAITH), which represents over 70 shelters across Ontario, states that 20 percent of their organizations have experienced an increase in calls (Amin, 2020). Rates of gender-based violence were high in Canada even before the pandemic: on average, every six days, a woman is killed by her intimate partner.

Thousands of women, girls, and trans and non-binary people now face a heightened risk of violence at home with COVID-19 isolation measures. One in 10 women is very or extremely concerned about the possibility of violence in their home according to a Statistics Canada survey on COVID-19. Those living with abusers face new obstacles to escape violence and get help. Due to shelter overcrowding, women and children often have to go to shelters outside of their region resulting in job loss due to transportation issues and their children either do not get to school or end up switching schools, adding to their current trauma. The use of the GPS tracker alleviates the need for reliance on shelters and provides some sense of normalcy as victims can safely stay in their homes, maintain their jobs, and remain in their home schools.

Resolution 2020-03: Expansion of Funding to Increase Options for Women who are Victims of Violence to Live Safely in Their Community

Rationale, cont'd

Despite women utilizing all current available safety resources (e.g., restraining order, custody order, police), leaving an abusive relationship remains the most dangerous time is pending or actual separation was present in 67% of homicides investigated by the Domestic Violence Death Review Committee between 2003-2018 (Office of the Chief Coroner, 2019). This report also identified additional high risks such as a current or past history of domestic violence by the perpetrator (71%), victims having an intuitive sense of fear (43%), prior threats to kill the victim (36%) and the perpetrator having failed to comply with authority (28%). 'Project Guardian' provides individuals safety through immediate, informed intervention to reduce risk of violence, including homicide, and helps to increase autonomy, independence, and stability (Peel Police Services Board, 2018).

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Resolution 2020-04: Promoting Education on Heart Disease in Women

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that BPW Ontario strongly urges the Government of Ontario, specifically the Minister of Health, the Minister of Colleges and Universities, the Minister of Education, the Minister of Indigenous Affairs, and the Associate Minister Responsible for Children and Women's Issues, to recommend inclusion of information on heart disease and symptoms of heart attacks in women in curricula for upper grade elementary and secondary schools and post-secondary institutions;

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that BPW Ontario strongly urges the Government of Ontario, specifically the Minister of Health, Minister of Colleges and Universities, Minister of Education, Minister of Indigenous Affairs, and the Associate Minister Responsible for Children and Women's Issues, to provide materials giving information on heart disease and symptoms of heart attacks in women in secondary schools and post-secondary institutions, either as additions to health courses or as printed materials available in student centres or electronic links available for download by students, parents or other caregivers.

Rationale

Although considered an issue for men, heart disease in women is also an issue every 20 minutes a woman dies from heart disease in Canada, making it the leading cause for premature death in women.

Premature death has been defined as dying before reaching your expected lifespan. This has increased the mortality rate for women, making heart disease 11% higher than for men. In addition, the risk of heart disease is highest in women over the age of 55. Furthermore, symptoms experienced by women are much different than those experienced by men and are often not recognized. Due to this, women have historically waited longer before seeking treatment, as their symptoms do not align with the known symptoms of heart disease (Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada [HSF], 2018).

Heart attack symptoms in men and women differ greatly, and physiological differences are part of the reason. Lack of sufficient knowledge of these differences has led to early signs of impending heart attacks being missed in 78% of women (HSF, 2018). This results in gaps in our understanding of heart disease in women, leading to misdiagnosis from doctors and lack of awareness in the public.

Since symptoms are different for women, there should be more education provided to women so that they can be aware of and respond to these symptoms. Studies have shown that although women of all ages are concerned about heart disease, many women, and especially younger women are unaware of how the symptoms of heart disease and heart attacks present. In a survey conducted in 2017 by the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada of 2,000 women from across Canada aged 19 - 29, only 37% believe heart disease can be different for women than men (compared to 67% of women age 50-69), 40% eat unhealthy foods 5 or more times per week (compared to 28% of women age 50-69), and 58% report stress most or every day (compared to 35% of women age 50-69) (HSF, 2018).

Resolution 2020-04: Promoting Education on Heart Disease in Women

Rationale, cont'd

Government agencies should take more responsibility in spreading awareness, making it a requirement for other health agencies to spread awareness about heart disease in women. In addition, educational materials regarding heart disease in women should be made available in upper grade elementary, secondary and post-secondary institutions, either as additions to health courses or as printed materials available in student centres or electronic links available for download by students, parents or other caregivers. Although the risk of heart disease is highest in women over the age of 55, raising awareness and educating women from a young age about the risks of heart disease and the symptoms of heart attacks will decrease the rate of mortality of women (HSF, 2018).

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Resolution 2020-05: Support for Progressive Labour Law

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that BPW Ontario strongly urges the Government of Ontario, specifically the Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development, to amend the Employment Standards Act 2000 (ESA) and implement:

- an increase to the minimum wage to be in 50-60% of the median hourly wage as measured by the Ontario Ministry of Labour for full time workers or minimum \$15.00 as of January 2021, subject to annual adjustment of every year starting in 2021; and
- annual increases in accordance with an economic indicator formula allowing minimum wage levels to increase based on relative Consumer Price Index (CPI) and average Ontario workers weekly earnings or other applicable measure, applied with a minimum notice period;

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that BPW Ontario strongly urges the Government of Ontario, specifically the Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development to amend the Employment Standards Act to require equal pay for equal work on the basis of number of hours worked including for part-time, fixed-term, temporary, casual and seasonal employees doing substantially the same work as full-time employees; provide the right for employees regardless of their classification, to request review to comply with this requirement;

AND FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that BPW Ontario strongly urges the Government of Ontario, specifically the Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development to amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000 to all employees including part-time, fixed-term, temporary, casual and seasonal employees, who do NOT have an employment contract and provide the right for employees regardless of their classification to:

- include at least two (2) paid days per year accrued at an equitable formula or minimum 1 hour per 30 hours worked, and
- ensure paid leave following one week of employment according to the formula;

AND FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that BPW Ontario strongly urges the Government of Ontario, specifically the Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development to amend the Employment Standards Act's current Public Holiday Pay Formula which is based on the precarious worker's four weeks of work preceding a public holiday to reflect the 2015 Ontario Human Rights Commission's Report's recommendation 122 to be more equitable such that it reflects the actual number of hours worked in the 2 week pay period immediately preceding the public holiday by precarious workers be used;

AND FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that BPW Ontario strongly urges the Government of Ontario, specifically the Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development to amend the Employment Standards Act to provide:

- the right to request changes to scheduling after an employee has been employed for at least 3 months;
- a minimum 3 hours of pay for being on-call;
- the right to refuse requests to work or be on-call with insufficient notice; and
- 3 hours of pay where a scheduled or on-call shift is canceled within 48 hours before the shift was to begin.

Resolution 2020-05: Support for Progressive Labour Law

Rationale

On October 23, 2018, the Ontario Government's Bill 47, *Making Ontario Open for Business Act* replaced the majority of Bill 148, *Fair Workplaces, Better Jobs Act* (Government of Ontario, 2018). The Ontario Human Rights Commission submission to Ministry of Labour Changing Workplace Review (2015) notes that nearly 70% of part-time, contract, temporary and temporary help agency workers in 2013 were women, a proportion that has not changed significantly over the past three decades (Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2015). Women comprise a disproportionately larger portion of precarious professionals (60%) than men (40%) (Hennessy and Tranjan, 2018).

Not every worker fits neatly into the category of employee or independent contractor, where some are more likely in a traditional employment relationship rather than that of an independent contractor, which deprives these workers of the protections of the *Employment Standards Act* (ESA) (2000) including employment insurance (EI), severance and other benefits, unless employer is prohibited from misclassification (Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2015). Most Ontario's 534,000 minimum wage workers are women in marginalized groups and are more likely to work for minimum wage. The Ontario Equal Pay Coalition recommends the minimum wage should be \$15 per hour, effective immediately and new wage must keep up with inflation and continue to increase until it is at the level of a living wage (Government of Ontario, 2017; Law Commission of Ontario, 2012). The wage-setting process should include moving from arbitrary set figures using to include implementation of annual increases based on an economic indicator formula based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) and average weekly earnings (Dickens, 2015; Gunderson, 2007; Gunderson, 2005), which will provided a measurable formula consistent with economic conditions for minimum wage workers where 60% may be women (Green, 2015).

The ESA provides the minimum standards for working in the province of Ontario, setting out the rights and responsibilities of employees and employers in Ontario workplaces and regulating employment in the province of Ontario, including wages, maximum work hours, overtime, vacation, and leaves of absence for all workers including precarious workers where women are in the majority, with less job security, few if any benefits and minimal control over working conditions. From 2012 to 2017 studies were prepared for reforms (Government of Ontario, 2014; Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2015), resulting in revisions to the law in 2017 and some repealed in 2018 (Kirkness and MacMillan, 2018).

Since March 2020 economic impacts of pandemic conditions have exposed the disparate vulnerability of women in such institutions as long term care and others whose reliance on temporary and casual workers who are predominately women, as a means of using exclusions in the employment act to exploit limited legal protections by limiting wages, hours of work, and benefits.

The following repealed measures are recommended revisions to the law to help protect rights of women who are more likely to be 'vulnerable workers' engaged in precarious work. Law Commission of Ontario's Vulnerable Workers and Precarious Work Final Report (2012) key recommendations to improve the flexibility and ability of women to live in economic parity include:

- A. Raise minimum wage and reform the minimum wage setting process
- B. Require equal pay for equal work
- C. Provide two days of paid personal emergency leave for employees employed for at least a week
- D. Reform the Public Holiday pay formula to apply in proportion for short term work
- E. Require employer notice for schedule change to provide short term working women flexibility for family commitments

Resolution 2020-05: Support for Progressive Labour Law

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Resolution 2020-06: Support for Living Income Program as Part of an Ontario Poverty Reduction Strategy

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that BPW Ontario urges the Government of Ontario, specifically the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade, the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services, and the Associate Minister Responsible for Children and Women's Issues to design, budget, fund, and implement a living income program run by a third party independent external agency, based on a saturation site in which the whole eligible low income population is automatically enrolled in gender parity and with a well thought-out protocol for dealing with in-year income variation in order to provide definitive tests of how to run a living income program;

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that BPW Ontario urges the Government of Ontario, specifically the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade, the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services, and the Associate Minister Responsible for Children and Women's Issues to implement a living income program to measure the employment incentive effects of such a program including for gender equity.

Rationale

Recommendations made in the report 'The Cost of Poverty in Ontario' 10 Years later. October 2019 by Lee and Briggs notes that poverty in Ontario has a big price tag. Poverty is estimated to have cost the residents of Ontario \$27.1 billion to \$33 billion in 2019 – the equivalent of 5.5 per cent to 6.6 per cent of provincial GDP. Most of this cost is borne by the 1.9 million households with the lowest incomes. Ontarians who live in poverty all face increased income disparity with the income gap between the poorest 10% and richest 10% of Ontarians growing by 10% between 2000 and 2016. The loss of tax revenue and increased health and justice system expenses reflects the economic cost incurred by poverty. Those experiencing low incomes have even greater difficulties affording their most basic needs each month (Lee and Briggs, 2019).

Economies can only grow themselves by investing in poverty reduction to allow for maximum participation by the population, including those living in poverty. Case studies in Canada (BC. Poverty Reduction, Manitoba Mincome, Ontario Basic Income Pilot Project), the US and UK show that for each of health, justice and opportunity costs of poverty, there may be economic benefits associated with poverty reduction such as savings in health, crime and opportunity costs that may pay for themselves, as well as improved quality of life (Mendelsohn, 2019).

The Vulnerable and Precarious Workers Report by the Law Commission of Ontario notes that women are more likely to be in part-time work (i.e., less than 30 hours per week) and casual work (i.e., hours that vary from one week to the next) (Law Commission Of Ontario, 2012). The Ontario Human Rights Commission submission to the Ministry Of Labour Changing Workplace Review September 18, 2015 notes that nearly 70% of part-time workers in 2013 were women, a proportion that has not changed significantly over the past three decades (Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2015).

Mendelsohn (2019) reports adults in poverty who have no children and are not in the disability stream face especially inadequate levels of social assistance.

Disproportionate challenges are faced by women in the continuing evolution and fundamental changes to the workplace and the labour market given the rise in precarious employment, self-employment, and increases in the gig economy.

Resolution 2020-06: Support for Living Income Program as Part of an Ontario Poverty Reduction Strategy

Rationale cont'd

The case to combat increasing disparity is to give working women the tools to raise themselves out of poverty. A proposed Living Wage policy may build on the success of minimum wage policies by providing more consistent and predictable support in the context of today's dynamic labour market.

The report, 'Lessons from Ontario's Basic Income Pilot' by Mendelson (2019) suggests a Basic Income project must be designed to be periodic, paid monthly; payment such that those who receive it may decide what they spend it on; paid to individuals in lieu of households; be universal and unconditional; with enrollment of a random sample of households, eligibility criteria should include low income.

A new program, Living Wage, is recommended to include a minimum basic income guarantee based on eligibility, an income test which accounts for income fluctuation, a reduction rate, and monitoring and measurement of reduction rate over a period of time.

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Resolution 2020 - 07: Violence and Harassment Against Female Politicians

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that BPW Ontario strongly urges the Government of Ontario, specifically the Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development, the Attorney General, and the Associate Minister Responsible for Children and Women's Issues to use the *2019 Elect Her. A Roadmap Improving the Representation of Women in Canadian Politics Report of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women* and the 2019 *Inter-Parliamentary Union's Guidelines for the Elimination of Sexism, Harassment and Violence Against Women in Parliament*, to create policies to ensure a gender sensitive and safe workplace;

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that BPW Ontario strongly urges the Government of Ontario specifically the Minister of Labour, Trainings and Skills Development, the Attorney General, and the Associate Minister Responsible for Children and Women's Issues to develop an annual reporting system to ensure compliance with these policies that have been created.

Rationale

On September 9, 2019, the news reported the then Minister of Children, Community and Social Services' constituency office received over 100 deeply personal, vulgar, and vicious emails, phone calls, and voicemails between February 8, 2019 and March 1, 2019 (Helmer, 2019). This was not an isolated incident of sexism and abuse directed towards female politicians at various levels of government (Connolly, 2019). This violence is the result of deep-rooted prejudice and structural inequality. Blatant manifestation of this includes unconscious bias, symbolic oppression, routine sexism, discrimination, harassment, and violence, which leads women's subordinate position in society (Nandhego, Danusa, Al-Rasheed, Abdel Hay, Abellan, Mena, et al, 2019).

Women who are political leaders challenge traditional and stereotypical female characteristics, which results in incivility to enforce gender roles. Women in high-ranking positions are more likely to be targets of incivility than women in lower ranking positions. Politicians with higher visibility were more likely to be targeted (Rheault, Rayment, and Musulan, 2019). Violence against female politicians is gendered-based and can be physical, sexual, or psychological such as sexist remarks, sexual harassment, rape, and possibly murder. This is a form of human rights violations (UN Women 2018).

The 2016 and 2018 Inter-Parliamentary Union studies determined that sexism, harassment, and violence towards female politicians is widespread throughout the world. Of the female politicians who participated in the studies, 82 per cent "had experienced psychological violence (sexual and sexist remarks, intimidation and threats, pictures published with humiliating or sexual connotations, etc.)...25 per cent had suffered physical violence, 20 per cent had been sexually harassed...42 per cent of those in the global study had been the target of online sexist attacks on social networks (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.). (InterParliamentary Union [IPU], 2019, p 12, 13)." This sexism and gender-based violence may impact women's desire to enter politics. It does undermine female politicians' dignity and fundamental rights in a place where gender equality and inclusion should be present and working (IPU, 2019).

Canada's Labour Code, DIVISION XV.1 SECTION XV.1 defines sexual harassment and outlines employees' rights and employers' responsibilities (Government of Canada, 2019). The Ontario Ministry of Labour's *Occupational Health and Safety Act* also defines workplace sexual harassment and requires policies to address this harassment (Government of Ontario, 2019).

Resolution 2020 - 07: Violence and Harassment Against Female Politicians

Rationale, cont'd

The Vecchio Report (2019) and the Inter-Parliamentary Union Report (2019) provides data regarding gender-based violence towards female politicians, makes recommendations, and provide strategies to eliminate violence towards female politicians. Committees addressing gender equality and women's issues should be tasked to use these and other relevant documents to reduce gender-based violence against female politicians. This includes creating effective mechanisms to report these incidents to ensure no additional harm is directed at the accuser. The staff, assistants, and public servants working at Queens Park or within any provincial ministry or department should also be involved in this process is important. Likewise, all political parties need to ensure they have policies to protect all members and staff from gender-based violence and harassment. Consulting with experts (e.g. occupational physicians, experts in cyber violence, or workplace psychological and sexual harassment) may be required (IPU, 2019). These policies should be posted on government and party websites to ensure and promote transparency.

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Resolution 2020 - 08: Women in Politics

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that BPW Ontario strongly urges the Premier of the Government of Ontario to create a nonpartisan committee of high level politicians from all parties to review the *2019 Elect Her: A Roadmap Improving the Representation of Women in Canadian Politics Report of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women* to create a strategic plan that addresses the report's recommendations and observations to promote more female representation in the Ontario Legislative Assembly;

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that BPW Ontario strongly urges the Premier of the Government of Ontario to update this strategic plan annually and make the updated plan available to the public.

Rationale

Women represent 50% of the population. Women have different perspectives, insights, political preferences, and priorities than men. In 1921 Canada elected the first female Member of Parliament (MP), Agnes McPhail (Vecchio, 2019). In 2019, Canada elected 98 female MPs while historic, only represents 29% of elected seats (Government of Canada, 2019). This continued underrepresentation results in decision and policy making not representing all groups' perspectives and insights. By nominating few women and electing even fewer, the diversity of women's views cannot be accurately represented (Thomas, Bodet, 2013).

To achieve better economic, social, and political outcomes requires us to understand gender equality exists in Canadian politics. Vecchio (2019) and the Standing Committee on the Status of Women identified seven barriers to increase women representation in government: gender stereotypes and discrimination, women lacking confidence in their abilities, lack of political parties actively recruiting women candidates, lack of financial support for campaigns, lack of family-friendly and gender sensitive workplaces, gender-based harassment and violence, and gender-biased media treatment.

The Standing Committee on the Status of Women stated implementation of their 14 recommendations would increase and retain female politicians. Their recommendations include:

- publicly available data collection of various politically active women's groups including community and political parties as well as barriers faced by minority women and women in electoral politics,
- developing a public education campaign whereby all federal, provincial, and territories incorporate gender stereotypes and female political participation in their educational curricula,
- ensuring gender-based analysis plus (GBA+) is applied to all provincial departments and associated programs, initiatives, and strategies,
- increasing funding to organizations which promote political engagement and empowerment of women including training,
- encouraging job shadowing of politicians at all levels of government,
- develop a strategy to encourage women with diverse and/or Indigenous backgrounds to participate in electoral politics,
- ensuring and report on transparency in the nomination process,
- promoting goal setting and public reporting of registered parties and registered electoral district associations to nominate, achieve gender parity on their boards, and
- encouraging all jurisdictions throughout Canada to make more gender diverse legislatures, and fund awareness campaigns and training programs regarding traditional and social media's gender bias and harassment of female politicians (Vecchio, 2019).

Resolution 2020 - 08: Women in Politics

Rationale, cont'd

The Standing Committee on the Status of Women's observations included asking the:

- House of Commons Standing Committee on Procedures and House Affairs (PROC) to study initiatives to eliminate potential gender bias linked to the design of voting ballots, encourage voluntary quotas by registered political parties and publicly report how they meet these quotas,
- Speaker to study initiatives to prevent and discourage gender-based heckling and look at services and initiatives which promote an inclusive, family-friendly political workplaces which are also gender sensitive (Vecchio, 2019).

Vecchio (2019) stated, "The Committee believes that the implementation of its recommendations by the Government of Canada and the consideration of its observations will help improve women's representation, retention and experiences in electoral politics in Canada. (pg. 3)". These recommendations and observations can be applied to all levels of government in Canada.

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Resolution 2020 - 09: External Agency for Sexual Harassment Investigations in Policing

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that BPW Ontario strongly urges the Government of Ontario, specifically the Solicitor General and the Minister of Labour, Training and Skill Development, to oversee the enactment of legislation requiring the Ontario Provincial Police to use the recommendations in the Civilian Review and Complaints Commission for the RCMP's Report, specifically Recommendation 2, to create a department located at OPP headquarters to provide centralized monitoring and coordination of the harassment complaint process and to ensure direct reporting to a senior executive outside the divisional chains of command;

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that BPW Ontario strongly urges the Government of Ontario, specifically the Solicitor General and the Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development, to oversee the enactment of legislation requiring the Ontario Provincial Police to use the information found in the Civilian Review and Complaints Commission for the RCMP's Report, specifically Recommendation No. 4, to ensure the creation and implementation of an external mechanism for review of harassment decisions;

AND FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that BPW Ontario strongly urges the Government of Ontario, specifically the Solicitor General, the Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development, the Attorney General, and the Associate Minister Responsible for Children and Women's Issues to oversee the enactment of legislation requiring all municipal police services to use the Civilian Review and Complaints Commission for the RCMP's Report's recommendations, specifically Recommendation 2, to create a department located at the municipal office to provide centralized monitoring and coordination of the harassment complaint process and ensure direct reporting to a senior executive outside the divisional chains of command;

AND FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that BPW Ontario strongly urges the Government of Ontario, specifically the Solicitor General, the Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development, the Attorney General, and the Associate Minister Responsible for Children and Women's Issues to oversee the enactment of legislation requiring all municipal police services to use the Civilian Review and Complaints Commission for the RCMP's Report's recommendations, specifically Recommendation 4, to ensure the creation and implementation of an external mechanism for review of harassment decisions;

AND FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that BPW Ontario strongly urges the Government of Ontario, specifically the Solicitor General, the Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development, the Attorney General, and the Associate Minister Responsible for Children and Women's Issues to oversee the enactment of legislation to ensure an independent external agency is used to objectively perform sexual harassment investigations when a complaint is made by a police officer against another officer.

Resolution 2020 - 09: External Agency for Sexual Harassment Investigations in Policing

Rationale

Trends in political, media, entertainment, and businesses show workplace sexual harassment is an epidemic as of 2018. Organizations are under intense pressure to ensure zero tolerance exists within their policies. A key challenge is the lack of a standard definition of sexual harassment (Human Resources Professional Association [HRPA], 2018). Sexual harassment as defined by the Canada Labour Code states, “sexual harassment means any conduct, comment, gesture, or contact of a sexual nature (a) that is likely to cause offence or humiliation to any employee; or (b) that might, on reasonable grounds, be perceived by that employee as placing a condition of a sexual nature on employment or on any opportunity for training or promotion (Government of Canada, 2019, p 236)”. However, sexual harassment is not a criminal offence in Canada (HRPA, 2018).

The 2012 Canadian Ministry of Status of Women’s Canadian Police Services Gender Audit found that over the past 40 years, only 20% of Canadian police are women and policing conform to hegemonic masculinity (Bikos, 2016). Hegemonic refers to, “the social, cultural, ideological, or economic influence exerted by a dominant group (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, n.d.). Hegemonic masculinity is the practice-of accepting the problem of legitimacy in patriarchy and guaranteeing the dominant position of men and the subordinate position of women. The hyper-masculinized police subculture maintains male dominance and leaves female officers at a disadvantage. These realities have a profound impact on police officers and demonstrates police culture is problematic for gender equality (Bikos, 2016).

While little has changed in police culture in the past 40 years, some improvements including increased promotional activity, decreased harassment, and increased sense of social acceptance has occurred. These changes tend to be incremental and superficial to address human rights legislation and the public. Informal mechanisms continue to maintain the hegemonic masculine culture. These results have also been found in the United States and Europe (Bikos, 2016). Statistics Canada (2014) reported only 17 percent of middle management positions and less than 10 percent in senior management positions are female officers.

Social position such as more education and a better career record is critical to advancement. If a female officer is not liked or speaks out regarding discriminatory practices, she risks her career. Where trust and reputation are key components of policing and a female officer’s reputation can be ruined by rumours (e.g. “sleeping around”), told by both their peers and management, results in male officers reducing competition for advancement by making their female colleagues appear incompetent for promotion. Female officers understand speaking out or reporting sexual harassment effectively ends their career. In order to fit in, many female officers have participated in acts of harassment and discrimination (Bikos, 2016).

The Commission for Public Complaints Against the RCMP identified several recommendations, which can be applied to other police services. Recommendations 2 and 4 provide a framework for addressing sexual harassment in all police services:

- Recommendation No. 2: That the RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police) institute centralized monitoring and coordination of the harassment complaint process, located at RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police) headquarters and reported directly to a senior executive outside the divisional chains of command...
- Recommendation No. 4: That an external mechanism for review of harassment decisions be implemented (Government of Canada, 2019a, pg. 29, 30)

While these recommendations were made for the RCMP, they could be implemented in all police services across Ontario.

Resolution 2020 - 09: External Agency for Sexual Harassment Investigations in Policing

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