

**Submission to**

**THE RIGHT HONOURABLE DOUGLAS FORD**

**Premier of Ontario**

**By**



**THE BUSINESS & PROFESSIONAL  
WOMEN OF ONTARIO**

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**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)

September 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).

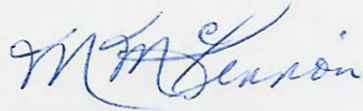
Since 2016, BPW Ontario continues to use the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals to empower women. We continue to work in collaboration with BPW International, BPW Canada, and the United Nations' and other likeminded organizations across the province seeking gender equality. In 2020 and 2021, BPW Ontario continued to play a role in the successful #ProjectMapleLeaf awareness campaign regarding the human sex trafficking of minor aged victims.

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.

To bring some of these challenges forward BPW Ontario's this year discussed Safe Long-Term Care in Ontario urging the need for setting standards, protocols, and training for both staff and administration from COVID 19 lessons learned and study recommendations. Then discussed the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples urging the provincial adoption into law the recommendations within the declaration. BPW Ontario finally discussed the provincial childcare and the proposed participation in the federal childcare proposal urging the partnership with the proposed federal program, expanded provincial subsidy program and capacity building for training, infrastructure, and standards.

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 blue ink, appearing to read "Marlene McKinnon". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Marlene" being more prominent than the last name "McKinnon".

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**Business and Professional Women of Ontario**

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*Resolutions presented by Business & Professional Women Ontario Conference/Annual General Meeting, June 2021*

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## **RESOLUTION 2021-01 - Safe Long-Term Care in Ontario**

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Business and Professional Women of Ontario urges the Government of Ontario, specifically the Minister of Long-Term Care, Minister of Health, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, and the Minister of Labour Trade and Skills Development, to implement and sustain long-term solutions for taking care of its elderly and preparing for a future pandemic based on lessons being learned during the current COVID-19 pandemic by implementation of infection control practices and leadership as recommended in Ontario's Long-Term Care COVID-19 Commission: Final Report;

**FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Business and Professional Women of Ontario urges the Government of Ontario, specifically the Minister of Long-Term Care, the Minister of Health, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, and the Minister of Labour Training and Skills Development, to implement recommendations on the infection control practices, working conditions, staffing, expertise and leadership from the Ontario Long-Term Care Staffing Study.

**AND FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Business and Professional Women of Ontario urges the Government of Ontario to support Bill 13, An Act to amend the Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007, which seeks to ensure that a long-term care home will have to provide its residents with at least four hours a day of nursing and personal support services, averaged across the residents.

### **Rationale**

The high proportion of COVID-19 deaths among elderly individuals living in Long-Term Care (LTC) homes has exposed long-standing challenges in the delivery of long-term care in Ontario. Ninety percent of workers in LTC homes are women, making the outbreak of COVID-19 in LTC homes a gender crisis (Estabrooks and Keefe, 2019). As of January 11, 2021, there were a total of 2,952 lives lost in LTC homes since the start of the pandemic (Government of Ontario, 2021). Ten (10) staff members in Ontario's LTC homes have died due to the virus. Seventy-three point three (73,3%) percent of residents are women and Ontario reported that 64.5% of COVID-19 cases among LTC residents were women (Norris, 2020). Clearly the measures that have been taken are not adequate. Inadequate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), improper co-horting and infection control practices, lack of accountability by home operators who are not ensuring adequate safety measures, and crisis-level staffing shortages are issues that require urgent action (Ontario Health Coalition, 2021) Lack of leadership and a lack of comprehensive infection control vision for implementation of procedures have made major contributions to the death of the elderly. These issues predate the COVID-19 pandemic, as documented in numerous reports prior to the start of the pandemic, the most recent being the Gillese Report of 2019 (Gillese, 2019)

Ontario's Long-Term Care COVID-19 Commission has made comprehensive recommendations for improving the situation in their first and second interim letters and the final report (Marrocco 2020; Marrocco, 2021; Marrocco 2021). Non-compliance with standards of infection control have been particularly egregious, despite guidance available from Health Canada and Ontario experts. In July 2020, the latest report of many on the subject, the Ministry of Long-Term Care published recommendations on appropriate levels of staffing in LTC homes, to address one of the root causes of this crisis in LTC homes (Government of Ontario, 2020). The Armed Forces Report recommended various immediate operational measures that should be undertaken immediately.

It starts with leadership. There needs to be a clear lead for the quality of care amongst the leadership team, which needs to be comprised of a dedicated Executive Director, Director of Nursing and Personal Care and Medical Director in each LTC home. The Director of Nursing and Personal Care must be on-site each day in a full-time position and be held accountable for resident quality of care. The Government of Ontario needs to provide the financial resources necessary to effectively support designated leads in the areas of infection control, quality of care, operations and care, and medicine in carrying out their roles and responsibilities.

Specific standards for infection control and management have also been recommended to be implemented to continue to ensure ongoing safety of residents (Marrocco, 2021). In the area of premises management, such as ventilation, attention to maintenance, limits to room occupancy and sharing of sanitary facilities, training to adhere to sanitary measures, and effective zones for staff movement to limit contagion are effective measures that need to be met (Marrocco, 2021).

Staffing should be the key focus of improvement to address recruitment, retention, and compensation as per the July 2020 report from the Ministry of Long-Term Care (Government of Ontario, 2020). A key standard, not currently met, is at least four (4) hours of care per resident per day. Other recommendations for improvement include dealing with the building and design of nursing homes, ensuring residents have access to a variety of healthcare professionals, adequate data collection, and penalties for homes that fail to provide proper care.

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## **RESOLUTION 2021-02 – An Intersectional Gendered Lens to Implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples**

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Business and Professional Women of Ontario urge the Government of Ontario, specifically the Attorney General, and the Minister of Indigenous Affairs, to pass the Bill 76 Act and/or an Act with the contents of this Act, to adopt the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) to have force of law in Ontario and to adopt the recommendations therein;

**FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Business and Professional Women of Ontario urge the Government of Ontario use an intersectional **gendered analysis** to implement the recommendations of United Nations Declaration on the Rights of indigenous Peoples and in accordance with UNDRIP Article 22(2) including the rights of indigenous women.

### **Rationale**

Given Canada's foundation in colonization and the manner in which this intersected with gender, as demonstrated by the various provisions in the *Indian Act* that removed power and representation from Indigenous women (e.g., the prohibition against of women voting and running in band council elections, and the provisions that caused many women and their descendants to lose status, an intersectional gendered analysis is necessary to ensure that implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) addresses the harms of colonization and the specific ways in which it has impacted Indigenous women.

In November 2019, a private member's Bill 76, was introduced in the Ontario Legislature to implement UNDRIP (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 2021). Bill 76 calls for laws in Ontario to be in line with UNDRIP. Bill 76, if passed, would provide an important mechanism for Ontario to uphold its international human rights obligations and signal a meaningful commitment to reconciliation (Mandhane, 2019). The Bill proposes that:

- A. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples have force of law in Ontario;
- B. The Government of Ontario shall, in consultation and cooperation with indigenous peoples in Ontario, take all measures necessary to ensure that the laws of Ontario are consistent with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples;
- C. The Government of Ontario shall, in consultation and cooperation with indigenous peoples in Ontario, develop and implement a provincial plan to achieve the objectives of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

The Declaration is a key building block in fully recognizing, respecting, protecting, and fulfilling the rights of Indigenous peoples. Further, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission called on the Provincial Government to adopt and implement UNDRIP (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015).

Given that Canada's colonial project engaged in gendered attacks, including the various provisions in the *Indian Act* that removed power and representation from Indigenous women (for example, the prohibition against voting and running in band council elections and the provisions that caused many women and their descendants to lose status), a **gendered analysis** is necessary to ensure that implementation of the UN Declaration addresses these harms of colonization as well.

Taking a gendered approach is particularly important to reveal the structures of power that "create hierarchical and differential access to resources, representation, political influence, and to being 'heard' in indigenous societies." (Kuokkanen, 2012)

Although women's rights are formally codified as human rights under the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) (United Nations, 1979) and Indigenous peoples' human rights are codified and recognized in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) (United Nations, 2007). Indigenous women's rights are often neglected at both the international and local level (Animbiigoo Zaagi igan Anishinaabek, 2021; Gunn, 2018; Parisi, 2007).

The intersectionality of gender and colonization must be considered when implementing UNDRIP.

### **References:**

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United Nations (2007), UNDRIP emphasizes its equal application to both "male and female indigenous individuals." UNDRIP art. 4 also mentions the obligation of both states and indigenous nations "to ensure that indigenous women and children enjoy the full protection and guarantees against all forms of violence and discrimination." In UNDRIP, art. 22(2).

Human Rights Quarterly (2012), In Rauna Kuokkanen, "Self-Determination and Indigenous Women's Rights at the Intersection of International Human Rights", Human

Rights Quarterly 34 (2012): 225–227, 233–234; Laura Parisi and Jeff Cornassel, “In Pursuit of Self-Determination: Indigenous Women’s Challenges to Traditional Diplomatic Spaces”, Canadian Foreign Policy 13 (2007): 81, 87

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## **RESOLUTION 2021-04 - Fully Subsidized Public Childcare**

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Business and Professional Women of Ontario urge the Government of Ontario to engage in full partnership with the Government of Canada, in the implementation of the proposed funding for childcare as set out in the 2021 federal budget now;

**FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Business and Professional Women of Ontario urge the Government of Ontario to commit equal funding with the Government of Canada to ensure that childcare is accessible, affordable and of the highest standard by providing online educational opportunities for early learning childcare with a guarantee of adequate compensation now;

**AND FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Business and Professional Women of Ontario urge the Government of Ontario to commit funds to infrastructure to provide adequate and safe childcare facilities now;

**AND FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Business and Professional Women of Ontario urge the Government of Ontario to build a baseline of common, publicly available data on which to measure progress, report to Ontarians, and continuously improve the system now, as suggested by Child Care Now.

### **Rationale**

Even though Business and Professional Women of Ontario (BPW Ontario) has lobbied the Government of Ontario since the 1980's asking for support in managing childcare, Ontario has one of the least affordable childcare systems among the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries. "The cost of non-parental childcare is high in many OECD countries...costing about half of women's median full-time earnings" (OECD).

Childcare affordability and accessibility are long-term challenges that must be addressed to sustain and increase economic growth in this province.

The Government of Canada has included significant funding in its budget presented on April 19, 2021, to put into action a program that will bring into reality a system that ensures that women are able to go back to work with the comfort of knowing that they can afford good quality childcare (Child Care Now and Childcare Canada).

Quality childcare is essential for parents to be adequately and equally employed as the driving engine for our economic sustainability and growth. "Widespread closure of childcare facilities during the COVID-19 crisis only highlights the importance of access to affordable care" (OECD).

Parents need to have choices for childcare to accommodate more than the 9-5 worker. In addition, they need the assurance that early childhood educators are certified to provide the skills necessary for the care and education of their children. Childcare workers must be adequately paid for the care and attention they provide to our young population.

The Ontario Chamber of Commerce makes recommendations for Childcare as follows:

- a) Prepare for a second wave (of COVID-19),
- b) Improve long-term affordability and accessibility of childcare,
- c) Address the shortage of early childhood educators,
- d) Explore creative solutions ranging from in-program changes to workplace-based childcare.

Currently, childcare providers rely on parental fees for revenue, while the government focuses on the demand-side of support for parents through cash transfers (Ontario Chamber of Commerce).

The Canadian Child Care Federation states: “The federal government has listened to our experts in the early learning and child care sector, understanding that of any policy geared to help families, investments for high-quality child care has the biggest economic payoff for parents, children and the economy. It also has compounding positive effects on women’s employment and economic security.” “This budget funding allocation across Canada will help close the gap on gender equality and directly address the continually escalating cost of child care and early education programs” (Giesbrecht).

Child Care Now states the federal budget plan is a turning point (Child Care Now), and Childcare Canada says the 2021 budget “is a recovery plan for jobs, growth and resilience (Childcare Canada).

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