

Hon. Doug Ford, MPP Etobicoke North, Premier of Ontario  
Premier's Office  
Room 281, Legislative Building, Queen's Park  
Toronto, ON M7A 1A1

March 27, 2019

Dear Premier,

The **Ontario Council of the Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW Ontario Council)** is an organization with 50 clubs throughout the province from Windsor to Thunder Bay to Ottawa to Welland.

CFUW started here in Toronto as an organization to support and encourage young women to get a post-secondary education. With that now being quite successful, our advocacy action has turned to helping women use that education.

Any advocacy done by CFUW and its clubs is based on policy derived from our annual grassroots resolution process, with those resolutions voted on and adopted at the Annual General Meetings. We have been advocating on equal pay since 1922!

Work is a fundamental part of a woman's life. It supports her and her family. Equal Pay Coalition, of which we are members, noted in their April 2017 comments on Equal Pay Day that due to the gender wage gap, men could retire at 65, but a woman could not until she was 79. Due to the lack of equal pay, women arrive at retirement with fewer savings and less resources than men.

At the latest 2019 United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director of UN Women said during a session that the gender pay gap is "the biggest blatant robbery that no one is saying anything about. ... Women need assets to look after themselves later in life. "

As an organization of 4500 women across Ontario, we support the concerns of the Equal Pay Coalition, and while we understand that the need to keep and develop jobs here in Ontario, please assist women in getting what they should rightly have – equal pay for the work that they are doing.

Yours truly



Sandra Thomson  
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attachment: Equal Pay Coalition



**ONTARIO**  
**EQUAL PAY COALITION**  
**CLOSE THE GENDER PAY GAP**

March 22, 2019

Hon. Premier Doug Ford  
Room 281, Legislative Building, Queen's Park  
Toronto, ON M7A 1A1

Dear Mr. Premier:

**EQUAL PAY DAY – TUESDAY APRIL 9, 2019**  
**Now is the time for action to close the gender pay gap.**

The Equal Pay Coalition is an organization that unites more than 40 women's groups, trade unions, community groups and business organizations and that has been at the forefront of advocating for women's economic security since 1976.

We write to request a meeting with you together with your Minister of Labour, Laurie Scott and Minister of Women's Issues, Lisa McLeod on **Equal Pay Day – Tuesday April 9, 2019**.

We call on you to commit to take active steps now to close the gender pay gap. We ask you to join us in a discussion about economic inequality and the concrete steps that the Ontario government can take to narrow the gender wage gap in the province. With a clear government commitment, it is possible to end gender wage discrimination and ensure economic empowerment for women at all economic levels.

The Ontario Government introduced its first Equal Pay Day on April 10, 2014 to join the conversation with many countries globally on how to close the gender pay gap. Equal Pay Day marks how far into the new year the average woman must work to earn what men earned by the end of last year. On each Equal Pay Day since its inception, the Coalition has met with the Premier of the province and/or the two key Ministers with the greatest responsibility to close the gender pay gap. We have not been contacted by you or the responsible Ministers regarding the government's plans for Equal Pay Day.

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The gender pay gap is a human rights crisis of staggering proportions in this province. The 2016 Census data on Ontario women's annual earnings show they face these deficits:

Indigenous women: **43%** gender pay gap  
Racialized women: **38%** gender pay gap  
Immigrant women: **34%** gender pay gap  
On average, Ontario women face a **29.3%** gender pay gap.

Women are paid less than men in almost every occupation tracked by Statistics Canada (in 2016, they were paid less in 469 of 500 occupations). Women face gender pay gaps regardless of their level of education, age or income level. Over a 45-year career, the gender pay gap's effect is as if women have worked for 14 years with no pay at all.

Pay Equity Office's own statistics show that 54% of Ontario employers have gender pay gaps contrary to the *Pay Equity Act* even though pay equity has been the law since 1987.

**The harm to Ontario's economy from the gender pay gap is profound.** The Ontario government's 2016 Gender Wage Gap Steering Committee Final Report cited the Deloitte report that

"a qualified working woman who has [the] same socio-economic and demographic characteristics (e.g., education level, age, marital status), and experience in the workplace (e.g., job status, occupation, and sector) as a man, on average receives **\$7,200 less pay per year**. This amounts to **\$18 billion of foregone income per year** for all working women in Ontario, which translates to about 2.5% of Ontario's Gross Domestic Product. To put this into context, the motor vehicle and parts industries together account for 2.5% of the province's 2015 GDP."

The report concluded that closing the gender wage gap in Ontario would **increase revenues from personal and sales tax by \$2.6 billion** each year and decrease government expenditures on social assistance, tax credits and child benefits by \$103 million each year. Closing the gender pay gap just makes basic economic sense.

The gender pay gap impoverishes women every day. **The time to act is now.** While there is a lot of work to be done, there are **5 basic actions** that you can take immediately to make a significant start to closing the gender pay gap:

1. **Implement the Pay Transparency Act, 2018** and the new supporting regulation no later than May 1, 2019. This will provide employers with a year to organize reports – a reasonable length of time considering that employers already have this basic payroll information at their fingertips. In the United Kingdom, 82% of employers and business organizations agreed that the publication of gender pay information would

encourage employers to close the gender pay gap. They also reported that the cost of compliance with pay transparency was nominal – less than \$1,000.

2. **Keep the \$2 per hour Provincial Wage Enhancement Grant for Registered Early Childhood Educators** and child care workers working in licensed child care. Increase funding for investment in public and not-for profit licensed child care.
3. **Ensure that broader public sector employers are funded appropriately** to meet their pay equity obligations and demand accountability to demonstrate that pay equity payments are being made to workers.
4. **Increase funding to the Pay Equity Commission** to enable robust proactive enforcement of pay equity obligations. The Commission's own studies found that 54% of employers are not compliant with the *Pay Equity Act*. Pay equity is the law. Compliance is mandatory and must be rigorously enforced. As part of the new enforcement regime, the Pay Equity Commission must mount an immediate public campaign to advertise the rights and obligations under the *Pay Equity Act*.
5. **Raise the minimum wage to \$15 per hour immediately** and increase funding for proactive employment standards enforcement to end employment standards violations that impoverish women.

Women's work powers the Ontario economy. Closing the gender pay gap must be one of the key building blocks for forging a fair, productive and sustainable society. It is time to put all Ontario women on target for prosperity rather than poverty.

We look forward to hearing your response at your earliest convenience regarding our request for a meeting on **Equal Pay Day** and your commitment to closing the gender pay gap.

**YOURS TRULY,**



**FAY FARADAY and JAN BOROWY**

**Co-Chairs, Ontario Equal Pay Coalition**

c. Hon. Laurie Scott, Minister of Labour

Hon. Lisa Macleod, Minister Responsible for Women's Issues