



# EQUAL PAY COALITION

## NEWS

### Happy International Women's Day! Take Action to close the gender pay gap.

Make International Women's Day the start of your mobilizing towards Equal Pay Day! The current provincial government has taken many steps that diminish protections against gender pay discrimination.

#### Equal Pay Day is Tuesday April 9, 2019.

Together we can send a strong message that the government must close the gender pay gap. In **3 simple steps**, you can help to build a strong collective voice of women across the province.

#### 1. Respond to the government's Pay Transparency Act consultations.

Last year on IWD, Ontario's Pay Transparency Act was introduced as an important new tool to help enforce existing human rights laws to close the gender pay gap. The Act requires employers with 100+ employees to report the gender pay gaps in their workplaces annually. Women were supposed to have access to pay transparency by January 1, 2019, but the government stalled the Act indefinitely.

The Act's regulations will set out the details of employers' pay transparency reporting obligations and the government is currently consulting on the employers' reporting mechanisms. They are asking business how costly and onerous pay transparency will be. Any government consultations on the gender pay gap must prioritize women, the people most impacted.

Visit our website for more details in the coming week. **Send your comments in support of a strong Pay Transparency Act by April 5, 2019 to the government's regulation registry: [ontariocanada.com/registry/](https://ontariocanada.com/registry/)**

#### 2. Raise awareness around the Gender Pay Gap & Equal Pay Day.

April 9, 2019 equal pay activists across the province will mark Equal Pay Day. Get ready for EPD by building awareness amongst your networks. Share the save the date graphic on Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter. Check out and share some of our recent posts about pay transparency and the government's consultations with business on Facebook and Twitter. Increase your knowledge and raise awareness about the gender pay gap with new fact sheets which will be posted on our website by March 14<sup>th</sup>.

#### 3. Mobilize Equal Pay Day Actions

This EPD the Coalition will call upon Premier Doug Ford and all government MPPs to make public their plans to close the gender pay gap. This year our supporters will be organizing creative and targeted actions - at local MPP offices for example - all over Ontario.

You can make a difference by getting involved. Organize a local event; big or small it all counts. Organize your networks to call their local MPP to discuss their plans to close the gaps. Visit your local MPP.

Get creative! Make sure to alert your local media contacts about your actions.

If you are interested in organizing an event in your area, please email us at **[equalpaycoalition@gmail.com](mailto:equalpaycoalition@gmail.com)**





## Take Action to close the gender pay gap

Watch [equalpaycoalition.org](http://equalpaycoalition.org) and our Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram accounts for articles, shareable graphics, and updates in the weeks and days leading up to this year's Equal Pay Day.

### A12 | TORONTO STAR FRIDAY, MARCH 8, 2019

# TORONTO STAR

ESTABLISHED 1892 — JOSEPH E. ATKINSON, PUBLISHER 1899 - 1948

## > INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY Time to close the wage gap

You'd think a law aimed at eliminating the gender wage gap in Ontario by allowing men and women doing similar work to compare their compensation would be a self-evidently good thing.

And not just for women, who currently earn on average close to a third less than men, but for their families and the economy.

So why then, just in time for International Women's Day, has the Ford government handed women a lump of coal by announcing it is delaying the introduction of the Pay Transparency Act?

The reasons given by Labour Minister Laurie Scott are many. But none of them holds water.

Indeed, it appears more and more that the Progressive Conservatives are delaying women's access to fair wages simply because they're willing to throw women under the bus to curry favour with their friends in business.

First, Scott says the former Liberal government passed the legislation without consultation, so now the PCs must do it.

In fact, the Gender Wage Gap Steering Committee, established by former premier Kathleen Wynne, held year-long consultations on the legislation that included 14 town hall meetings across the province plus "meets" with local businesses, organizations and experts before issuing a detailed report and recommendations.

How Scott could forget that seems strange, considering she was one of the PC representatives on the Standing Committee on Social Policy which, itself, held hearings on the Pay Transparency Act.

Second, a quick glance at the PCs' consultation questions suggests they are designed to elicit what the Ford government wants to hear so it has an excuse to water down the legislation.

After all, the "consultation" is not asking women: "How does earning 30 per cent less than a man impact your ability to pay bills, educate your children, pay for housing and retire?"

Instead it is asking business owners questions such as: "How many hours do you anticipate pay transparency reporting will take in total?"

(Not many, as it turns out. This is basic payroll information that every employer has at their fingertips, Pay Paraday of the Equal Pay Coalition points out.)

Instead of implementing a law that could cut the gender wage gap by half in Ontario, the Ford government is delaying it to cosy up to business

Third, Scott professes concern that the act, as it stands, may be too "onerous" for businesses (as if trying to pay bills while earning 30 per cent less than men isn't onerous for women). After all, she says, the government wants to send a message "that Ontario is open for business."

In fact, the reporting requirements for Ontario businesses — which, even as it stands, won't fully kick in until 2021 — are far from onerous compared to those in some other countries.

For example, in Iceland, a country where the pay gap is a mere 5.7 per cent, legislation actually puts the onus on employers to prove they are paying men and women equally. If they aren't, the government will shame them.

Further, businesses in other countries that have already adopted pay transparency laws, such as Australia, Germany, Denmark, Belgium and the United Kingdom, have managed to adapt. Is the Ford government suggesting Ontario businesses aren't as nimble as their counterparts in those countries?

Fourth, if Scott is truly concerned about the effect the Pay Transparency Act will have on business, as she says, she need only take the time to review studies that suggest closing the pay gap would actually boost the economy. This is far from a new thought: a 14-year-old report from the Royal Bank, for example, found closing the gap would generate \$168 billion (some \$213 billion today) in new economic activity every year in Canada.

The reality is the Pay Transparency Act would boost the economy, not "burden" businesses, while simply giving women a tool to enforce their right to equal pay for the same work.

It would do so by requiring employers to disclose salary ranges in job postings and track wages by gender and diversity. Most importantly, employers would have to post annual reports of the tracking results online, where employees could find them, and submit them to the ministry which would also make them publicly available.

In other words, employers paying men more than women for the same work would be outed.

That simple move is expected to rapidly cut the wage gap by half, based on experience elsewhere in the world.

That's not too shabby, considering the gap has been stubbornly stuck at around 30 per cent for the past 30 years.

The gap hasn't budged even as women achieve higher levels of education and increase their numbers in formerly male-dominated job categories. In fact, even in career fields dominated by women, such as nursing, men still make more.

What is patently clear — apparently to everyone outside of the Ford government — is that nothing short of full transparency will close the gap.

In 2019 it's time to give the go-ahead to the Pay Transparency Act and prove Ontario is open for business, but not for discrimination.



If Ontario Labour Minister Laurie Scott is truly concerned about the effect the Pay Transparency Act will have on business, she need only review studies that suggest closing the pay gap would actually boost the economy.

Use the hashtags #EqualPayDay #CloseTheGap and #PayTransparency in your social media.

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