



ONTARIO EQUAL PAY COALITION

CLOSE THE GENDER PAY GAP

8 March 2017

Premier Kathleen O. Wynne, MPP (Don Valley West)
and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs
Room 281, Main Legislative Building, Queen's Park
Toronto, Ontario M7A 1A1

Dear Honorable Premier:

International Women's Day It's Time to Get Serious About Closing the Gender Pay Gap

The Equal Pay Coalition is an organization that unites more than 39 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. As we celebrate International Women's Day **we call on you to commit to take active steps now to close the gender pay gap.**

Six Ministers in the Ontario Cabinet have an explicit mandate to develop a Gender Wage Gap Strategy that will end gender wage discrimination and ensure economic empowerment for women at all economic levels.

And yet the gender pay gap remains a human rights crisis of staggering proportions:

- Indigenous women face a gender pay gap of **57%**.
- Women with disabilities face a gender pay gap of **46%**
- Immigrant women face a gender pay gap of **39%**
- Racialized women face a gender pay gap of **32%**
- On average women in Ontario face a gender pay gap of **30%**.

Ontario's Gender Wage Gap Steering Committee released its report and recommendations for action in August 2016. The Minister of Labour announced the appointment of a Working Group to address implementation of that report in November 2016 but the Working Group will not convene its first meeting until April 2017. To date, the Working Group's mandate and terms of reference have still not been confirmed.

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The gender pay gap impoverishes women every day. The gender pay gap is a human rights crisis which must be addressed immediately.

There is no more time for delay. The time to act is now.

Our International Women's Day gift basket helps you measure the gender pay gap and makes sure that Closing the Gender Pay Gap stays on your "to do" list. Our enclosed report, *Securing Human Rights Justice for Women's Work*, provides detailed analysis and a concrete action plan of 12 Steps to Close the Gender Pay Gap by 2025.

While there is a lot of work to be done, there are a number of actions that you can take immediately to make a start on closing the gender pay gap, such as:

- Increase funding to the Pay Equity Commission to enable robust proactive enforcement of pay equity obligations. 2017 marks the 30th anniversary of the enactment of the *Pay Equity Act* but we know that employer non-compliance is widespread. Pay equity is the law 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*.
- Increase funding for proactive employment standards enforcement to end wage theft that impoverishes women.
- Raise the minimum wage to \$15 per hour.
- Ensure that broader public sector employers are funded appropriately to meet their pay equity obligations and demand accountability to demonstrate that payments are being made to workers.
- Implement a gender and equity lens in the current provincial budget process and in Cabinet and Ministry decision-making.

Equal Pay Day in Ontario will be recognized on Tuesday 11 April 2017.

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.

What are you doing to close the gender pay gap?

We call on you to stand in the Legislature on 11 April 2017 and recognize Equal Pay Day by making a public statement

- * identifying the concrete actions that you and your Ministry are taking to close the gender pay gap; and
- * identifying what resources you and your Ministry are committing to ensure that this happens.

We look forward to your active commitment to eliminating discrimination and to ensuring that Ontario woman enjoy their human rights to equal economic security.

Sincerely,



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Equal Pay Coalition Co-Chairs



Jan Borowy