

BPW CANADA

BOOK OF RESOLUTIONS

**APPROVED AT THE 2020 CONVENTION
OCTOBER 17 & 18, 2020**



The Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women

**La Federation Canadienne des Femmes de Carrières
Commerciales et Professionnelles**

Member of the International Federation of Business and Professional Women

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**Working towards improving economic, political, social, and
employment conditions for women in Canada
“Women Working for Working Women”**

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BPW CANADA RESOLUTION 2020-01: BPW Barrie Call to Action on the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

Background

In June 2019, the Government of Canada's National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls released their final report, 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 (2SLGBTQQIA) people. The two-volume report based on the testimony of more than 2,380 survivors of violence, family members of victims and survivors, and experts calls for transformative legal and social changes to resolve the crisis that has devastated Indigenous communities across the country. The Business and Professional Women of Canada 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. In 2019 the Business and Professional Women of Canada passed a resolution declaring its support of the findings and recommendations of the Final Report. 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.

The federal government failed to honor their commitment to produce a National Action Plan to address the 231 Calls to Justice of the National Inquiry by June 2020 and furthermore, will not commit to a revised date for a National Action Plan. On June 3, 2020, the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) issued a failing grade to the federal government due to its "lack of action plan".

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women (BPW Canada) urges the Government of Canada, specifically the Minister for Women and Gender Equality; the Minister of Families, Children, and Social Development; the Minister of Indigenous Services; and the Minister of Crown – Indigenous Relations, to implement the 231 calls for justice cited within the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Final Report;

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that BPW Canada urges the Government of Canada, specifically the Minister for Women and Gender Equality; the Minister of Families, Children, and Social Development; the Minister of Indigenous Services; and the Minister of Crown – Indigenous Relations, to adopt the eight action steps outlined by the Native Women's Association of Canada to kickstart a Action Plan immediately.

Implementation:

- 1) Review Calls for Justice for All Canadians on page 33 of the Calls for Justice Report https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Calls_for_Justice.pdf
- 2) Set aside space in all levels of BPW programming for yearly Indigenous speakers and content.
- 3) Create or strengthen community partnerships with Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC), Native Friendship Centers, local Bands, and/or Indigenous Studies Departments at local Universities/Colleges.

BPW CANADA RESOLUTION 2020-03: BPW Canada Online Ending Coerced and Forced Sterilization of Indigenous Women

Background

With the release of the reports of the *Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples*, the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission* and the recent Inquiry into *Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls*, Canadians are becoming more aware and starting to acknowledge our long history of colonial oppression. Recently, another travesty has become public—that of coerced and forced sterilization of Indigenous women.

The Saskatoon Health Region was instrumental in shining light on coerced and forced sterilization of Indigenous women by commissioning Dr. Yvonne Boyer and Dr. Judith Bartlett to study the issue which resulted in a ground-breaking 2017 report. Reports in media from individual indigenous women indicate that the practice of forced sterilization has been undertaken as recently as 2018.

Senator Yvonne Boyer continues to advocate to the Senate Standing Committee of Human Rights for a more thorough investigation to better understand the issue of coerced and forced sterilization of Indigenous women in Canada; to bring awareness of the issue to the public, health professionals and Indigenous women and to work towards stopping its practice.

Coerced and forced sterilization of Indigenous Women has not been addressed in Canadian public policy although the practice is clearly unlawful under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women (BPW Canada) urges the Government of Canada, specifically Health Canada, Minister of Indigenous Services Canada, Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs and Minister of Women and Gender Equality to provide funding for a comprehensive study to determine the scope of coerced and forced sterilization of Indigenous women in Canada;

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that BPW Canada urges the Government of Canada, specifically Health Canada; Minister of Indigenous Services Canada, Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs and Minister of Women and Gender Equality to provide awareness of coerced and forced sterilization of Indigenous women to health care workers, Indigenous women and the general public;

AND FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that BPW Canada urges the Government of Canada, specifically the Minister of Justice to immediately enact legislation to abolish the practice of coerced and forced sterilization of Indigenous women and to work with provincial and territorial ministries of Health and regulated health professional bodies to enforce compliance.

Implementation:

To work together to end this heinous act, BPW Canada and individual BPW Clubs can raise awareness of coerced and forced sterilization of Indigenous women by educating their members with speakers on this topic; writing letters to their respective health regions; making presentations to various government officials; attracting public discussion through local media, and engaging with the Native Women's Association of Canada.

BPW CANADA RESOLUTION 2020-04: North Toronto BPW Support for Judicial Accountability through Sexual Assault Law Training

Background

On February 07 2020, the Government of Canada introduced Bill C-5, to amend the Judges Act and the Criminal Code to require judges in Canada to undergo training about sexual assault law and social context, keeping a promise to revive a private members' bill that would have legislated such actions but failed to pass in the Senate last June.

The Honorable Rona Ambrose's Bill C-337, which was first introduced in February 2017, would have mandated judges in Canada to undergo training in sexual assault law, as well as education about rape myths and stereotypes about victims and the impact of trauma on memory. *"This bill was always about building more confidence in our courts so more victims of sexual assault come forward. Today 95% of women who are sexually assaulted remain silent"* — *The Honourable Rona Ambrose (@RonaAmbrose) June 20, 2019* ^1. Ambrose had introduced the bill after it came to light that an Alberta judge, Robin Camp, had asked a rape complainant in a 2014 trial why she could not just keep her "knees together." The comments provoked public outrage and calls for judges to be trained in sexual assault law.

UN Handbook for Legislation on Violence Against Women says that, 'It is critical to ensure that those mandated to implement legislation regarding violence against women, including police, prosecutors and judges, have an in-depth understanding of such legislation and are able to implement it in an appropriate and gender-sensitive manner'^2. Provisions in the bill include Continuing education for judges in a revision to the Judges Act, Reasons for decisions in a revision to the Criminal Code.

Continuing education for judges: Clause 1 of Bill C-5 proposes to amend section 3 of the *Judges Act* (1985) to require candidates for appointment to provincial superior courts to agree to participate in continuing education on sexual assault law and social context. Clause 2 would amend section 60 of the *Judges Act* to clarify that the Canadian Judicial Council may establish seminars for the continuing education of judges on sexual assault law and social context. Such seminars must be developed after consultation with persons or groups that the Canadian Judicial Council considers appropriate, such as sexual assault survivors and groups supporting them. The Canadian Judicial Council shall also ensure that such seminars include relevant content. Clause 3 would add a provision after section 62 of the *Judges Act* requiring the Canadian Judicial Council to submit an annual report to the Minister of Justice, for tabling in Parliament, on the details of seminars offered to judges on sexual assault law and the number of judges who attended.^3

Reasons for decision: Clause 4 would amend the *Criminal Code* (1985) by adding a provision after section 278.97 to require judges to provide reasons for decisions in sexual assault proceedings.

The amendments in Bill C-5 are intended to improve public confidence, and the confidence of sexual assault complainants, that courts will decide sexual assault cases in accordance with the law and without reliance on myths and stereotypes about how survivors of sexual violence ought to behave. The government says will strengthen training requirements for judgements and provide insight into the myths and judgement that often surrounds sexual assault.

Training mandated by this bill will help combat such myths and stereotypes about victim's behaviors such as if women consented once, they must have consented always^4, suggesting that victim's testimony is not believed despite the fact that independent international research studies have shown that between 2%-8% of sexual assault complaints to police may be misidentified or determined to be false allegations^5, a systematic lack of belief that may appear at all levels of the criminal prosecution system.

BPW previously issued resolutions addressing this issue:

- 1992-Addressing Gender Bias of Judges in the Federal Judicial System by training in the fields of sexual assault, family abuse and violence against women, and lived experience.
- 1994-Mandatory Gender Sensitivity Training for Judges.

**BPW CANADA RESOLUTION 2020-04: North Toronto BPW
Support for Judicial Accountability through Sexual Assault Law Training**

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women (BPW Canada) urges the Government of Canada to re-introduce the content of the former Bill C-5: An Act to amend the Judges Act and the Criminal Code;

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that BPW Canada urges the Government of Canada, specifically the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Women and Gender Equality to encourage all parties to work together to adopt a bill with the content of the former Bill C-5 and implement it including clauses 1 & 2: continuing education on sexual assault law and social context, clause 3: requirement to submit a report on attendance, and clause 4: requirement for judges to provide reasons for decisions in sexual assault proceedings.

Implementation:

- BPW Clubs of Canada should contact the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Women and Gender Equality to advocate for the resolution.
- BPW Clubs of Canada should contact their Members of Provincial or Territorial legislatures to present and advocate for the resolution
- BPW members should actively communicate with other organizations in their communities to support this act.

BPW CANADA RESOLUTION 2020-05: BPW Calgary Improving Access to Justice for Survivors of Sexual Assault

Background:

Sexual assault is a gendered crime with women and girls experiencing most sexual assaults (Department of Justice Canada, 2019). 83% of sexual assaults in Canada are not reported to the police (Prochuk, 2018). Fewer than half of all sexual assault cases that go to trial result in a guilty verdict (Department of Justice Canada, 2019). This type of gender-based violence is greatly influenced by sexism, racism, classism, ableism, homophobia, transphobia, colonialism, and other forms of oppression. It is further exacerbated by social and economic power imbalances, gender inequalities and outdated societal gender roles and norms (Status of Women of Canada [SWC], 2019). Studies of the experiences of female survivors of sexual assault indicate that they experience significant barriers in reporting the crimes committed against them. There is little trust in the criminal justice system (police, victim services providers, judges, crown prosecutors, and others) in the handling of sexual assault (Prochuk, 2018). Women and girls who face systemic and intersectional discrimination also experience additional and harmful barriers to accessing justice (Prochuk, 2018). Gender-based violence online, in families, and within marginalized communities must be better addressed and survivors better supported (SWC, 2019).

There are complex societal factors that shape how criminal justice system actors perceive sexual assault and victims who come forward, which impacts their behaviour – for example stereotypes or misinformation about the prevalence of false reporting (Coordinating Committee of Senior Officials Working Group [CCSOWG] 2018 Access to Justice for Adult Victims of Sexual Assault). In November 2018, the CCSOWG Report made 17 recommendations to improve access to justice for adult sexual assault victims. Outstanding recommendations include changes to the Criminal Code which will protect victims with disabilities and victims whose assaults involve electronic images and media, in addition to encoding victims' rights during testimony and throughout the trial process (CCSOWG, 2018).

Training is a significant factor that appears many times in the report, as it applies to not only the judiciary but many other criminal justice system professionals at all levels of policing, government, and civil society. Ensuring access to justice for survivors requires a holistic approach and coordination between the many entities, including consistent training (CCSOWG, 2018). This conforms with the UN Handbook for Legislation on Violence Against Women (United Nations, 2010), as well as echoing calls to justice regarding policing and criminal justice which have been made by leading domestic civil society groups such as the Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and Egale's National LGBTQI2S Action Plan (2020).

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women (BPW Canada) urges the Government of Canada and the Minister of Justice to adopt the changes, including to the Criminal Code of Canada, detailed in the 2018 Coordinating Committee of Senior Officials Working Group (CCSOWG) report: Reporting, Investigating and Prosecuting Sexual Assaults Committed Against Adults – Challenges and Promising Practices in Enhancing Access to Justice for Victims;

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that BPW Canada urges the Government of Canada and the Department of Justice to require and fund annual sexual assault education training nationwide for criminal justice system professionals including police, crown prosecutors and victim service providers, not to exclude those supporting the indigenous population. Training topics are to include: forms of oppression contributing to gender based violence, the role of power imbalances and outdated gender based roles in sexual assault including intimate partner violence, how discriminatory myths and stereotypes about survivors play into the misapplication of the law, sensitivity training including cultural understanding, the neurobiology of trauma in the context of sexual assault, trauma-informed and intersectional approaches for survivors of sexual violence, and the nature of permissible testimonial aids.

BPW CANADA RESOLUTION 2020-05: BPW Calgary
Improving Access to Justice for Survivors of Sexual Assault

Implementation:

- BPW clubs across Canada should lobby their respective Members of Parliament requesting that barriers to access to justice for sexual assault providers be removed, including submitting new bills to enact changes to the criminal code outlined in the CCSOWG report.
- BPW Clubs should support and combine lobbying efforts with victim services organizations working to improve access to justice for survivors of sexual assault.

BPW CANADA RESOLUTION 2020-06: BPW Calgary Improving Access to the Disability Tax Credit

Background

Women face increased financial burden due to factors such as lone mothers accounting for over 80% of lone-parent families (Stats Canada, 2014), women more likely (54%) to be in unpaid caregiver roles (Canadian Caregiver Coalition, [CCC], 2013), and experiencing gender-wage gap; all which contribute to less earning power. Being female coupled with having a disability further restricts financial security (DAWN, 2019).

- Women with disabilities experience higher rates of unemployment than men, 9.5% compared to 5.6%, (Turcotte, 2014, Burlock, 2017) and are more likely to be refused a job (Burlock, 2017).
- Working age women with disabilities had a median income about 3/4 that of their male counterparts (Morris et al, 2018) with the gap widening to 2/3 for those aged 65 years and over (Burlock, 2017).
- The prevalence of disability is higher in women (24%) than men (20%) (Morris et al, 2018), and more women report severe and very severe disabilities (Dunn & Zwicker, 2018).
- In Canada, between 26% and 33% of those living in poverty are women with disabilities. Poverty increases for women with disabilities if they are racialized, Indigenous and/or lone parents (DisAbled Women's Network of Canada [DAWN], 2019). An intersectional approach is important to understand the lived experience of persons with disabilities and the barriers they face (Buetting, 2018).
- Nearly half of all discrimination complaints under human rights statutes in Canada are about disability (CHRC, 2015).

It is imperative that women with disabilities have access to financial resources so they can provide for themselves and their families. The Disability Tax Credit (DTC) and Registered Disability Savings Plans (RDSP) were designed to provide increased financial resources. Unfortunately, fewer than 40% of women claim the DTC which further precludes them from accessing the RDSP (Dunn & Zwicker, 2018). In 2018, the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology reviewed the DTC and RDSP and recommended steps to improve access with special attention to women, other vulnerable groups and the intersectionality that exists between them. The Disability Advisory Committee [DAC] (2019) released 42 recommendations to improve access to the DTC and other programs; all which could have a positive impact on women's income, ability to meet medical needs, and overall living conditions. These included simplifying eligibility criteria and bringing equality to the DTC application, increasing access to the RDSPs and other disability benefits, and raising awareness and collecting data on DTC use.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women (BPW Canada) urges the Government of Canada and Minister of Health, Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Minister of Finance, Minister of Labour, Minister of Veterans Affairs, Minister of Indigenous Services, Minister of Women and Gender Equality, Minister of Seniors, Minister of Justice, Minister of Middle Class Prosperity, Minister of National Revenue, and Commissioner of the Canada Revenue Agency to work together to adopt and implement the 42 recommendations as set by the Disability Advisory Committee's Report (2019) *Enabling Access to Disability Tax Measures*.

Implementation:

- BPW clubs across Canada should lobby their respective Members of Parliament requesting that barriers to accessing the DTC are reduced to improve the social, cultural, economic, and political outcomes for women living with a disability.
- BPW clubs across Canada write letters to the above-mentioned ministers requesting the implementation of the recommendations outlined in the DAC report.
- BPW Canada should draft an open letter to Members of Parliament and circulate this to clubs to facilitate advocacy in this matter.

**BPW CANADA RESOLUTION 2020-06: BPW Calgary
Improving Access to the Disability Tax Credit**

- BPW Canada work in partnership with the Council of Canadians with Disabilities, Coalition for Disability Tax Reform, Technical Advisory Committee on Tax Measures for Persons with Disabilities and the Disability Advisory Committee to advocate for the proposed actions.

BPW CANADA RESOLUTION 2020-07: BPW London Reaffirming 1994 Resolution: Research Grants for Women & Heart Disease

Background

From the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada's 2018 Heart Report: "Today, when it comes to heart disease, women are under-researched, under-diagnosed and under-treated, under-supported and under-aware" (Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada [HSF], 2018).

In 1994, BPW Canada passed a resolution that called for more research grants to allow comprehensive studies on heart disease in women. Twenty-six years later the lack of funding for research on heart disease in women is still an outstanding issue.

Research since 1994 has shown that heart disease 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 attack symptoms in men and women also differ greatly, with symptoms being much more noticeable in men than women. This has led to early signs of impending heart attacks being missed in 78% of women. In addition, the risk of heart disease is highest in women over the age of 55 (HSF, 2018).

In 2010 The Canadian Institutes of Health Research created the Institute for Gender and Health and applicants for funding were to indicate whether sex or gender or both were being considered in the research study and how. A "report that reviewed the 2010/2011 funding cycle, showed that 84% of basic biomedical research did not consider sex or gender, and 44% of clinical research also failed to take sex or gender into account". This lack of knowledge and awareness has resulted in only 26% of primary care givers and cardiologists surveyed believing they were capable of caring properly for their female patients in this area of health care. (Humphries & Pilote, 2017).

Greater research dollars aimed specifically towards heart disease in women will help overcome this lack of knowledge, resulting in more women being properly diagnosed and treated for their heart disease.

"Women are not small men. Not researching the difference is proving fatal for women" (HSF, 2018).

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women (BPW Canada) reaffirms their 1994 resolution: Research Grants for Women & Heart Disease which stated that BPW Canada urged the Federal Government to make available increased research grants for more comprehensive studies on women and heart disease;

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that BPW Canada urges the Government of Canada, specifically the Minister of Health, Minister of Women and Gender Equality and Rural Economic Development, Minister of Refugees and Citizenship, Minister of Indigenous Services, and Minister of Seniors to enforce research requirements on gender and sex identification so that more research results are available specifically related to women dealing with heart disease.

Implementation:

- Inclusion of this reaffirmation in the brief submitted to all MPs.
- BPW Canada Clubs and their members should write letters to support actions taken by the Heart and Stroke Foundation and others, that address the "5 unders": under-diagnosed, under-treated, under-aware, under-supported, under-represented".
- BPW Canada Clubs and their members should contact their local Members of Parliament to make their representatives aware of this issue.

BPW CANADA RESOLUTION 2020-08: BPW London Recognizing Heart Disease in Women

Background

Although considered an issue for men, heart disease in women is also an issue because every 20 minutes a woman in Canada dies from heart disease, 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 it 11% higher than men. In addition, the risk of heart disease is highest in women over the age of 55 (Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada [HSF], 2018). 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 (HSF, 2018).

Heart attack symptoms in men and women also differ greatly, in large part due to the changes a woman's body undergoes after menopause, such as a rise in cholesterol and higher prevalence of hypertension and diabetes (Kennel WB, 1995). Having different symptoms than men 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.

Pregnancy, menopause and birth control methods can all increase the risk of heart disease, but these experiences are unique to women. Therefore, women are subject to certain risks that men do not experience. The conditions and complications that arise during pregnancy can lead to increased blood pressure and an increased risk of diabetes, which can increase the risk of heart disease. Heart disease increases for women who have experienced menopause, due to factors such as hormone replacement therapy and the decrease in estrogen levels. In some women, estrogen in combination with hormonal birth control can increase the risk of developing blood clots in the leg or lungs. These clots can travel to the circulation system and cause a pulmonary embolism. Birth control pills are not the only type of birth control that can increase the risk of heart disease. The birth control patch delivers more estrogen than the traditional combination pills, making them slightly riskier. Women with diabetes have a greater risk of contracting coronary heart disease than men with diabetes do. Women from ethnic backgrounds are more at risk to heart disease because diabetes is seen more in ethnic groups (HFS, 2018).

The Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada has issued several reports centred around heart disease in women, such as *Miss Understood* and *HeartSmart Women: A Guide to Living With and Preventing Heart Disease and Stroke* and implemented several awareness campaigns, the most recent being *#TimeToSeeRed*.

Investing in awareness campaigns as more research is conducted upon women and results are made known, will help overcome this lack of knowledge in all levels of health care, with the result that more women will be aware of the symptoms, be properly diagnosed and treated for their heart disease in the future.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women (BPW Canada) urges the Government of Canada, specifically the Minister of Health, Minister of Women and Gender Equality and Rural Economic Development, Minister of Refugees and Citizenship, Minister of Indigenous Services, and Minister of Seniors, to implement findings of new research and use current knowledge of the differences in heart attacks between men and women in future heart disease awareness campaigns and support agencies such as The Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada that already have campaigns in place.

Implementation:

- BPW Canada Clubs and their members should write letters to The Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada supporting their campaigns and encouraging the Foundation to continue this and update the campaigns as newer statistics and information becomes available.
- BPW Canada Clubs and their members should contact their local Members of Parliament to make their representatives aware of this issue.

BPW CANADA RESOLUTION 2020-09: BPW Trenton and District Violence and Harassment Against Female Politicians

Background

On October 24, 2019, the news reported the vulgar and misogynistic slur spray-painted on then Canadian Minister of the Environment, Catherine McKenna's office window. This is 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 traditional 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 and can be physical, sexual, or psychological such as sexist remarks, sexual harassment, rape, and possibly murder. This is a form of human rights violation (UN Women 2018).

The Canada Labour Code, DIVISION XV.1 SECTION XV.1 defines sexual harassment as "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 (Government of Canada, 2019, p. 236)." The Labour Code outlines the employees' rights and the employers' responsibilities (Government of Canada, 2019).

The 2016 and 2018 UN's 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.). (Inter-Parliamentary 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).

The Vecchio Report (2019) and the Inter-Parliamentary Union Report (2019) provide data regarding gender-based violence towards female politicians and make recommendations and provide strategies to eliminate violence towards female politicians. Committees and Task Forces of the Government of Canada which address 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 the no additional harm is directed at the accuser. The staff, assistants, and public servants working at the federal level should also be involved in this process. 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.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women (BPW Canada) urges the Government of Canada, specifically the Minister of Justice and the Attorney General, and the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion to use the Vecchio Report (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 by addressing discriminatory barriers such as race, age, marital status, sexual orientation, and disabilities;

BPW CANADA RESOLUTION 2020-09: BPW Trenton and District Violence and Harassment Against Female Politicians

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that BPW Canada urges the Government of Canada, specifically the Minister of Justice and the Attorney General, and the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion to provide recommendations to political parties on how they can improve their recruitment of women candidates, including those from diverse backgrounds who may face discriminatory barriers such as race, age, marital status, sexual orientation, and disabilities;

AND FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that BPW Canada urges the Government of Canada, specifically the Minister of Justice and the Attorney General, and the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion to develop an annual reporting system for all political parties to ensure compliance with these policies that have been created.

Implementation:

- BPW Canada and its members will share this information with their MPs, and local federal political party riding associations and their women's associations.
- BPW Canada and its members will work with organizations such as Equal Voice to encourage women to become politicians.

BPW CANADA RESOLUTION 2020-10: BPW Trenton and District Women in Politics

Background

Women have different perspectives, insights, political preferences, and priorities than men. The BPW Canada resolution, *Equal Participation of Women in Politics – 2011* urged the Government of Canada to enact legislation requiring political parties to ensure that women occupy at least 50% of each party's candidate list and that women be in at least 40% of the electable positions (BPW Canada, 2011). In 2019, Canada elected 98 female MPs which is historic but only represents 29% of elected seats (Government of Canada, 2019). This continued under-representation results in decision and policy making not representing all groups' perspectives and insights. By nominating only a few women, and electing even fewer, the diversity of women's views cannot be accurately represented (Thomas, Bodet, 2013).

Understanding gender equality throughout Canada is critical to achieving better economic, social, and political outcomes. In 2017, BPW Canada's resolution *Increasing Women's Participation in Politics* urged the Government of Canada to form a non-partisan committee to investigate the process encouraging women to seek improve the recruitment of women candidates (BPW Canada, 2017). This was achieved in the 2019 *Elect Her: A Roadmap Improving the Representation of Women in Canadian Politics* Report of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women. Vecchio (2019) identified seven barriers to increased 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 committee stated implementation of their fourteen recommendations would increase and retain female politicians. Some of their recommendations included:

- publicly available data collection of various politically active women's groups...as well as barriers faced by minority women and women in electoral politics,
- developing a public education campaign whereby all federal, provinces, 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).

The committee'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.

BPW CANADA RESOLUTION 2020-10: BPW Trenton and District Women in Politics

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women (BPW Canada) acknowledges the Government of Canada for striking a non-partisan committee to barriers to women entering politics which was outlined in BPW Canada's 2017 resolution: *Increasing Women's Participation in Politics* which states BPW Canada urges the Government of Canada, the Minister of Status of Women (now Minister of Status of Women and Gender Equality) and the Minister of Democratic Institutions (now President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada) to undertake an investigation by a non-partisan committee of experts into the process that political parties undertake to encourage women to obtain party nominations and then provide recommendations to political parties on how they can improve their recruitment of women candidates;

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that BPW Canada reaffirms the BPW Canada's resolution, Equal Participation of Women in Politics – 2011-02, which states BPW Canada urges the Government of Canada to enact legislation requiring political parties to ensure that women occupy at least 50% of each party's candidate list and that women be in at least 40% of the electable positions;

AND FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that BPW Canada urges the Government of Canada to create a non -partisan committee of high level politicians from all parties to review the Vecchio Report (2019): *Elect Her: A Roadmap Improving the Representation of Women in Canadian Politics Report of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women*;

AND FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that BPW Canada urges the Government of Canada to mandate the non-partisan Standing Committee on the Status of Women to create a strategic plan which addresses the Vecchio report's recommendations and observations, specifically:

- developing a public education campaign whereby all federal, provinces, and territories incorporate gender stereotypes and female political participation in their educational curricula, 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 to promote more female representation in the Canadian Legislative Assembly;

AND FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that BPW Canada urges the Government of Canada to update this strategic plan annually and make the updated plan available to the public and report on achievements on the plan.

Implementation:

- BPW Canada and its members will share this information with their MPs, and local federal political party riding associations and their women's associations.
- BPW Canada work with organizations such as Equal Voice to encourage women to become politicians.

BPW CANADA RESOLUTION 2020-12: BPW Calgary and Edmonton COVID-19 and Long-term Care (LTC) Crisis

Background

In April 2020, the Royal Society of Canada (RSC) Task Force on COVID-19 established a number of working groups, one which was dedicated to long-term care (LTC). In June 2020, this Working Group issued a report: *Restoring Trust: COVID-19 and the Future of Long-Term Care. A Policy Briefing by the Working Group on Long-Term Care* in which workforce reform and redesign paired with sustainable funding and governance are identified as the pivotal changes required for now and the future. Nine recommendations for coordinated leadership at federal and provincial/territorial levels are articulated to address the LTC workforce crisis.

The arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic has had many devastating effects on the people of Canada, but with 81% of COVID-19 deaths occurring in long-term care facilities (LTC), our track record compared to other nations (28% in Australia, 31% in US and 66% in Spain) is of grave concern (RSC, 2020). The cracks in our LTC system have been known for many years; however, the pandemic has exposed these deep crevices. In LTC there are no standards or regulations across Canada, nor is LTC protected under the Canada Health Act.

Women are at the forefront of this crisis in many ways: women comprise the majority (2/3) of residents in LTC; workers in LTC are almost all women (90%+); and additional “unpaid” support to residents by family are predominantly women (2/3 to 3/4) (RSC, 2020). Although more study is required, preliminary data is showing that COVID-19 deaths in women surpass men (53% vs 47%); a trend that is contrary to what is happening in the rest of the world (Bowden, 2020).

“Canadians are now entering nursing homes when they are older, more dependent and have more complex medical and social needs” (RSC, 2020, p.19) and staffing levels and the qualifications of staff are not meeting their needs. Currently 2/3 of LTC residents have dementia (RSC, 2020); a number which is only increasing. “It is patently false that anyone can provide health and social care for people with dementia” (RSC, 2020, p. 17). Professional staff, such as nurses, physical therapists, recreational therapists have been reduced in these settings; thus, reducing access to specialized care (RSC, 2020).

Women comprise upward of 90% of the staff providing direct resident care, with over 90% being unregulated workers (RSC, 2020). Of the unregulated workers, 90% are women, 70% are over 40, about 60% speak English as a second language (RSC, 2020). There are no national standards or regulations for them, no continuing education, and they rarely have a voice in care (Chamberlain et al 2018; Estabrooks et al 2015). Many work for minimum wage (RSC, 2020). Because of this they need to work at more than one LTC facility to be able to feed and house their family, causing additional risks to the residents.

Workers providing essential care, cleaning, food, and laundry services must all receive access to equitable pay and benefits. “When the military was deployed into LTC homes, in Quebec and Ontario they were paid “danger” pay on top of their relatively robust salaries” (RSC, 2020, p.26)”. This reflects the true importance and value of this work.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women (BPW Canada) urges the Government of Canada, specifically the Minister of Health, Minister of Finance, Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Rural Economic Development, Minister of Employment, Workforce Development, and Disability Inclusion, Minister of Middle Class Prosperity, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, and Minister of Seniors to take immediate action to fund workforce reform and redesign in Long Term Care (LTC) as outlined in the recommendations of the Royal Society of Canada (RSC) Working Group on Long-Term Care Report: *Restoring Trust: COVID-19 and the Future of Long-Term Care. A Policy Briefing by the Working Group on Long-Term Care*, given the additional risk to this population during an outbreak;

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that BPW Canada urges the Government of Canada, specifically the Minister of Health, Minister of Finance, Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Rural Economic Development, Minister of Employment, Workforce Development, and Disability Inclusion, Minister of Middle Class Prosperity, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship and Minister of Seniors to develop national standards for staffing in long-term care and to tie the provision of federal dollars to meeting these standards;

AND FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that BPW Canada urges the Government of Canada, specifically the Minister of Health, Minister of Finance, Minister of Employment, Workforce Development, and Disability Inclusion, and Minister of Seniors to establish and implement standards for training and resources for infectious disease control and protocols for expanding staff and visitation during outbreaks;

BPW RESOLUTION 2020-12: BPW Calgary and Edmonton COVID-19 and Long-term Care (LTC) Crisis

AND FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that BPW Canada urges the Government of Canada, specifically the Minister of Health and Minister of Seniors to take immediate action to partner with provincial and territorial governments to implement and monitor standards;

AND FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that BPW Canada urges the Government of Canada, specifically the Minister of Health and Minister of Seniors to link the national plan for standardization of workforce in long-term care with the National Strategy for Alzheimer's Disease and Other Dementias Act SC2017, C19 Assented to 2017-06-22.

Implementation: BPW Canada members communicate this message to MPs, local NFPs, the Canadian Federation of University Women, and other advocacy groups with common interests.

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