

**Submission  
to  
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE STEPHEN HARPER  
PRIME MINISTER OF CANADA**

**By**



**The Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women  
*La Fédération canadienne des femmes de carrières commerciales et  
professionnelles***

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

***“Women working for working women.”***

**October 2013**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

In 1930, BPW Canada was a founding member of the International Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs, which has grown to include clubs in more than 100 countries around the world. BPW International, the recognized voice of gainfully employed women in all professions and occupations, promotes equal opportunities and status for women. As a non-governmental organization (NGO), BPW International has Category I Consultative Status at the United Nations.

The Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women (BPW Canada) is an equality-seeking group working towards improving economic, political, social and employment conditions for women. We are "**Women working for Working Women**". Our membership includes women from a variety of professions and occupations, including women entrepreneurs, in clubs across Canada. BPW Canada develops the professional and leadership potential of women through education, awareness, advocacy and mentoring within a supportive network.

For 83 years, we have been advocating for just and equal status of women in all levels of society and have played a significant role in achieving advancement for women. For more information on our achievements, please visit our website at [www.bpwcanada.com](http://www.bpwcanada.com).

Currently, local BPW Clubs across Canada offer a range of opportunities and activities for members based on the four pillars of our Membership Model: Awareness, Advocacy and Action on women's issues; Leadership skills and career advancement; Supportive networking; and Personal development.

The Annual General Meeting was held on July 27, 2013. Our Conventions and Annual General Meetings are where our policy is decided. Resolutions contained in this document were initiated at the club level, researched and formulated, and brought to the Convention where they were discussed and debated. Once accepted, resolutions become part of the official policy of BPW Canada.

The issues raised by BPW Canada are issues of concern to our society as a whole. We look forward to the opportunity to meet with our federal government representatives to present our resolutions and our concerns in more detail.

Cara Cote, President, BPW Canada

Tammy Richmond, Secretary, BPW Canada

Teresa Habs, Resolutions Chair, BPW Canada

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## **RESOLUTION #1**

### ***RE-AFFIRMATION – NATIONAL CHILDCARE PROGRAM***

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that BPW Canada reaffirms its support of a national child care program that is high quality, universal, publicly funded and non profit to bridge the gap between parental leave and formal education and urges the Government of Canada to implement such a program.

### ***RATIONALE***

There has been a generational shift of women working outside of the home. Statistics Canada states that in 1976, there was 27.6% of working mother with children under the age of 3, as compared to 64.4% in 2009. In 1976, employment rate for women with children under the age of 6 was 31.5%, compared to 78.5% in 2009, more than a doubling of mothers with young children in the labour force. Unfortunately, government policy has not kept up with the rapid employment changes of families.

The introduction of parental benefits through the Employment Insurance program covers 76.2% of new mothers, which means almost 24% receive no parental benefits; as well 35% of women who are 25-44 work part time in order to care for their children. This can further erode the family income. For mothers, this means economic inequality is the reality despite record numbers of women in the work force due to lack of affordable, high quality child care.

Statistics show that with the exception of Quebec, approximately 40% of children between 0-5 are cared by parents and 25% are cared for in a child care facility, leaving a gap of 35% to be cared in a variety of other ways (relatives, friends, unregulated child care facilities). Many parents have trouble finding a spot in child care facilities, with the cost to parents being extremely high. The \$100 monthly taxable government support for children under six does little to offset the high cost of daycare.

Quebec, which has the most comprehensive child care program for children ages 0-12, provides universal care for \$7 a day, resulting in a rise in the female participation rate in the work force from the lowest to the highest in Canada. This has resulted in moving children above the national average on standardized test scores, an increase in fertility rates and a 50% reduction in poverty.

BPW Canada has a long history of advocating for a high quality national child care program, as it is intertwined with supporting women in the workplace. BPW Canada put forward a position paper on national child care in Canada in 2005 supporting the Liberal government at the time with recommendations in implementing such a program. Unfortunately, the Conservative government cancelled this initiative. BPW Canada supported an emergency resolution in July, 2006 (2006/01) calling for a reinstatement of a national child care program. To date, Canada is still without a comprehensive policy on National Child Care that addresses child care issues working mothers face with children.

### **SOURCES**

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[www.statscan.gc.ca](http://www.statscan.gc.ca)

[www.childcarecanada.org](http://www.childcarecanada.org)

[www.bpwcanada.com](http://www.bpwcanada.com) National Child Care in Canada Position Paper

## **RESOLUTION #2**

## ***“25 in 5” INCREASING REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN ON BOARDS***

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the BPW Canada urges the Government of Canada, Minister of Finance, Minister of State for the Status of Women and Minister of Industry, to implement a strategy of an increase in the ratio of women in the composition of both corporate and public boards to 25% in 5 years encouraging companies to voluntarily choose to adopt this target for board diversity.

**FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED** that the BPW Canada urges the Government of Canada, Minister of Finance, Minister of State for the Status of Women and Minister of Industry, to include a reporting mechanism under a “comply or explain” strategy for those boards which do not meet this voluntary target for board diversity. Those who do not comply must explain why to shareholders, customers and the Canadian public

### ***RATIONALE***

The **Conference Board of Canada** 2002 report “**Women on Boards, Not Just the Right Thing...**” outlines the business case for Canadian boards to increase the number of women directors, by linking improved corporate governance and better financial performance over the long term to board diversity.

The 2011 **Catalyst Census: Financial Post 500 Women Board of Directors** stated that only 14.5% of board seats in Canada were held by women vs.9.8% in 2001.

By 2012 **The Globe and Mail** reported the following statistics in the S&P/TSX composite index: Companies with no women on the board 41%; companies with 25% - 33% women directors 9%; companies with at least 33% women directors 3%. “Glacial progress” was the apt description used in the report.

A 2012 **Credit Suisse** report posed the question “Does Gender Diversity Improve Performance?” Answer: a 26% stock return outperformance by companies between 2005-2011 with at least one woman as a director on its board.

In Canada, the ratio of women to men graduating with MBA's has increased swiftly since 2000 to 33%. Sadly, the ratio of women on Canadian boards today is closer to the 1975 rate of women MBA graduates of 11%.

Senator Celine Hervieux-Payette cited these figures when introducing her private member's bill in 2011: Canadian women make up 47% of the labor force but only 14.5% of board seats among Canada's Financial Post 500 companies.

European governments have introduced mandatory or voluntary requirements for companies to increase the number of women on boards.

A “comply or explain” strategy promoting an increase in the ratio of women in the composition of both corporate and public boards to 25% in 5 years should be adopted. This allows companies the flexibility to voluntarily choose to adopt this target for board diversity and be seen as responding to the social change inherent in the strategy. Those boards that do not comply must explain why to shareholders, customers and the Canadian public

In March 2012, Minister of State for the Status of Women in Canada, Rona Ambrose announced the creation of an advisory council to promote women as corporate directors. It is time for our government to lead on board diversity to ensure our country's economic success in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### **SOURCES**

Women on Boards, Not Just the Right Thing...But the Bright Thing [www.conferenceboard.ca/](http://www.conferenceboard.ca/)

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Coalition for a Balanced Representation of Women and Men on Canadian Boards of Directors Senator Celine Hervieux-Payette [www.eurekablog.ca/?page\\_id=9](http://www.eurekablog.ca/?page_id=9)

Minister Rona Ambrose at the Edmonton Women's Symposium September 2012

[www.swc-cfc.gc.ca/med/spe-dis/2012/0915-eng.html](http://www.swc-cfc.gc.ca/med/spe-dis/2012/0915-eng.html)

Comply or Explain" Gains Traction for Getting Women on Boards

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## **RESOLUTION #3**

### ***ASSISTANCE TO CO-OPERATIVE HOUSING IN CANADA***

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT** BPW Canada urges the Government of Canada to develop a long-term and sustainable funded plan based on a cost-shared model for provincially delivered rent supplement programs so that low-income households in co-operative and non-profit housing are protected when federal operating agreements end.

**FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT** BPW Canada urges the Government of Canada to assure that existing federal funding for housing assistance is maintained at a sustainable level.

**FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT** BPW Canada reaffirms **Resolution 1990-10: Shelter for Women in Need** as follows:

**“THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT** BPW Canada urges the Government of Canada to make ongoing financial commitments to the provincial governments in order to:

Promote the construction and/or acquisition of safe and affordable housing for women in need.”

## ***RATIONALE***

According to an international housing study, housing in Canada is moderately unaffordable. The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation’s strategic plan calls for a 16% cut in federally subsidized housing by 2016 yet waiting lists for affordable housing are growing everywhere; e.g., Ontario’s waiting list was 141,635 in 2010 and is growing monthly.

Members of Canadian housing co-operatives own co-ops collectively and have no equity in the assets. Many are low-income individuals or families led by single mothers who will be impacted most.

From 1973 to 1992 the Federal government helped finance thousands of units with affordable rents for people with low and moderate incomes. Government support came in the form of preferential government mortgages, operating subsidies and assistance to low-income households.

Agreements between the government and the co-operatives to provide these will end by 2020.

When the agreements end, this will put continued residence into question for many low-income households, especially those led by single mothers. Initial mortgages will have been paid off, but the co-ops may need refinancing for repairs. Subsidies to low-income members will also cease and their rents will rise, meaning that they may not be able to afford their rents.

## **SOURCES:**

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## **RESOLUTION #4**

### ***IDENTIFICATION OF BUSINESSES AND INDIVIDUALS WITH A RISK OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION TO COMBAT HUMAN TRAFFICKING***

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT** BPW Canada urges the Government of Canada to specifically increase resources (personnel and specific funding) for the purpose of gathering and disseminating information under the *National Action Plan* (accessible by all stakeholders internationally, nationally, provincially and locally) of the names of businesses or individuals convicted of any sex trade offence against a foreign national or reasonably suspected of sexual exploitation or linkages to the sex trade (the “national database”).

**FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT** BPW Canada urges the Government of Canada to develop specific tools to further the collection of information into a separate Watch list including automatic inclusion of the names of:

- Any individual or business convicted of a human trafficking offence against any foreign national or domestic victim.
- Anyone convicted of a sexual offence against any child, whether a foreign or domestic victim.
- Anyone convicted of sexual assault against a foreign national victim
- Any business (and the individuals directly associated with that business) where a foreign national has been denied a Foreign Worker Permit by HRSDC because there are reasonable grounds to suspect that there is a risk of abuse or exploitation, including sexual exploitation of any workers (including strip clubs, escort services, massage parlours, and other businesses where the workplace presents a risk of sexual exploitation)
- Anyone identified by foreign national victims as being involved or reasonably suspected of being involved in human trafficking whether the victim testifies or not

**FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT** BPW Canada urges the Government of Canada to rapidly institute telephone tip lines of anonymous email tip sites set up for the purpose of assisting victims or anyone interacting with victims or suspected perpetrators of trafficking in communicating names and information of relevance to that Watch List.

## **RATIONALE**

BPW Canada and a number of BPW clubs have addressed the problem of human trafficking in Canada. Human trafficking is so complex that it can only be addressed by a coordinated effort internationally, nationally, provincially and at the local level. The Government of Canada’s *National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking 2012* (“the National Action Plan”) seeks to implement strategies and action items which the Government states are on-going and which reflect increased ability to prosecute human trafficking through amendments to the *Criminal Code* and the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*, and legislation directed at prosecuting kidnapping, forcible confinement, uttering threats, extortion, assault, sexual assault, prostitution related offences, and criminal organization offences.

The National Action Plan recognizes that “organized criminal networks, as well as individuals, perpetrate this crime, operating within Canada’s borders and internationally” and that “women and children are the primary victims – overwhelmingly so for sexual exploitation but also for forced labour and that “international best practices require Canada to focus on four core areas being the prevention of human trafficking, the protection of victims, the prosecution of offenders and working in partnership with others both domestically and internationally.”

Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) is responsible for assessing applications from employers to hire temporary foreign workers and issues a labour market opinion (LMO) on the likely impact these workers would have on the Canadian job market. Effective July 4, 2012 HRSDC has been issuing negative LMOs to sex trade-related businesses

and other businesses where there are reasonable grounds to suspect that there is a risk of abuse or exploitation, including sexual exploitation of any workers. These businesses include, but are not limited to, strip clubs, escort services, massage parlours, and other businesses where the workplace presents a risk of sexual exploitation or degrading work. Effective July 4, 2012 Citizenship and Immigration Canada has no longer been processing work permit applications from temporary foreign workers seeking employment in businesses identified where there are reasonable grounds to suspect a risk of sexual exploitation of any workers.

The denial of the work permits is one means of preventing high-risk employers (businesses and/or individuals) from being allowed to bring foreign nationals into Canada through temporary work permits. It is one of the tools in the on-going fight against trafficking of foreign nationals in Canada.

While it is generally accepted by Canada and the international community that trafficking of foreign nationals into Canada is only one aspect of the widespread problem of human trafficking in Canada. It is also acknowledged that, as with domestic victims, foreign national victims who are trafficked in and through Canada to other countries, must also be protected. Future victimization must be prevented, offenders must be prosecuted and all levels of government, and that the international community, law enforcement and non-government organizations within Canada must work in partnership to achieve these goals so that all stakeholders have access to database identifying businesses and individuals linked to the sex trade.

Working in partnership requires effective communication between all levels of government, law enforcement, NGOs, victims and others. In 2010 BPW London presented a resolution to BPW Canada recommending victim assistance through a 24/7 hotline and a separate toll free number for police officers, NGOs, front-line health workers and anyone who encounters human trafficking victims.

## **SOURCES**

Canada's National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking 2012 (Pages 4, 5, 9 & 23)

Criminal Code of Canada (sections 279.01, 279.011, 279.02, 279.03, and 279.04)

Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (section 118)

Human Resources and Skills Development Canada [http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/workplaceskills/foreign\\_workers/communications/trade.shtml](http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/workplaceskills/foreign_workers/communications/trade.shtml)