

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

By



**The Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women
*La Federation Canadienne des Femmes de Carrieres 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.”

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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's Clubs (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 80 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.

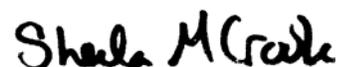
Currently, local BPW Clubs across Canada offer a range of opportunities and activities for members based on the four pillars of our Membership Model: Awareness, Advocacy and Action on women's issues; Leadership skills and career advancement; Supportive networking; and Personal development.

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) was held in Ottawa, Ontario July 22 to 23, 2011. 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 AGM 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.



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RESOLUTION #1

Prevention of Violence Against Women

THEREFORE IT BE RESOLVED THAT BPW Canada urges the Government of Canada to embark on an educational and publicity campaign geared to children and similar to the one in Newfoundland entitled "I Will Show Him How to Respect Women."

RATIONALE

Violence against women is:

- A persistent and ongoing problem in Canada and around the world. It affects women's social and economic equality, physical and mental health, well-being and economic security. Spousal assault is measured according to the *Criminal Code* and includes physical or sexual assault and threats of violence.
- An obstacle to the achievement of the objectives of equality, development and peace.
- Understood to encompass, but not be limited to:
 - physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family, including battering, sexual abuse of female children in the household, dowry-related violence, marital rape, female genital mutilation and other traditional practices harmful to women, non-spousal violence and violence related to exploitation; physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring within the general community, including rape, sexual abuse, sexual harassment and intimidation at work, in educational institutions and elsewhere; trafficking in women and forced prostitution; and physical, sexual and psychological violence perpetrated or condoned by the country.
- A violation, impairment and nullification of the enjoyment by women of their human rights and fundamental freedoms.
- Detrimental to children, who are exposed to the violence in the home and suffer from emotional trauma, have poor educational outcomes and unstable living conditions, and are at increased risk of using violence to solve problems (Berman et al. 2004).

Statistics:

- 51% of Canadian women have experienced at least one incident of physical or sexual violence since the age of 16.1
- Every minute of every day, a Canadian woman or child is being sexually assaulted; one to two women are murdered by a current or former partner each week in Canada.
- Spousal violence makes up the single largest category of convictions involving violent offences in non-specialized adult courts in Canada over the five-year period 1997/98 to 2001/02. Over 90% of offenders are male.
- Physical and sexual abuse costs Canada over \$4 billion each year (factoring into account social services, criminal justice, lost employment days and health care interventions).
- Violence against women occurs across all ethnic, racial, religious, age, social and economic groups. Some women are more vulnerable, however, and are more likely to experience violence, including women with disabilities, geographically-isolated women, young women and Aboriginal women.
- Between April 1, 2005 and March 31, 2006, nearly 106,000 women and children were admitted to shelters, most often to escape abuse.
- **REFERENCES**
- Government of Newfoundland, www.respectwomen.ca
- Statistics Canada - <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85-570-x/85-570-x2006001-eng.htm>
- Canadian Women's Foundations - http://www.cdnwomen.org/EN/section05/3_5_1_1-violence_facts.html
- Criminal Code of Canada: Part 5, sections 150.1 to 162.0; Sections 151 (Sexual interference), 152 (Invitation to sexual touching) and 153 (Sexual Exploitation)

RESOLUTION #2

Equal Participation of Women in Politics

THEREFORE IT BE RESOLVED THAT 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.

RATIONALE

Equal Voice/*À voix égales* was established with the mission to promote the election of more women to all levels of government and ultimately, change the face of Canadian politics.

During each of the last two federal elections, Equal Voice has issued a challenge to party leaders to recruit, nominate and elect more women to Parliament. Nearly 28% of all federal candidates for the fall 2008 election were women, a historic high for Canada, and 69 women MPs were elected (22.4% of the total). Equal Voice called this "another record, finally breaking through the 21 per cent ceiling pertaining since 1993." At this rate of progress, with a voluntary approach, we will be into a new century before women are represented equally in the federal House of Commons.

Since the United Nation's 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing recommended a series of steps to increase the number of women holding public office, several countries have enacted legislation to address this issue, although with mixed results. One of the "success stories" has been Costa Rica.

According to a study by Rice University professor Mark Jones, the first quota legislation in 1994 basically relied on Costa Rica's political parties to voluntarily increase the participation of women in elections. A second set of laws in 1998 mandated that women occupy at least 40% of each party's candidate list, and in the 2002 election the law required that women be in at least 40% of the electable positions. As a result, in 2002, the percentage of women municipal legislators in Costa Rica was unmatched by any other democratically elected national legislature in the world.

While it is recognized that women are less likely than men to run for parliament for a number of reasons (family responsibilities, lower incomes, etc), research shows that the role of political parties in promoting and supporting women to run for nominations has been repeatedly identified as the most important factor in increasing the representation of women in parliament.

When more women candidates run for office, more women are elected to office. Parties that have a greater proportion of women candidates tend to have a higher proportion of women in their caucuses. As examples, 34% of NDP candidates were women in the 2008 election; women represented 32.4% of NDP candidates elected. In contrast, 20% of Conservative Party candidates in 2008 were women; women represented 16% of CP candidates elected. This researcher concludes that the major hurdle for women in Canada appears to be at the party level rather than at the polls. *"The vast majority of countries that have reached a 30% critical mass of women in their lower house of parliament have done so through the use of measures such as proportional representation electoral systems...or the use of electoral quotas."*

REFERENCES

-Cool, Julie. *Women in Parliament: Background Paper*. Library of Parliament, publication No. 05-62-E, Ottawa, Revised 14 July 2010.

-Equal Voice/*À voix égales* www.equalvoice.ca/index.cfm

-Jones, Mark P. "Quota Legislation and the Election of Women: Learning from the Cost Rican Experience." In *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 66, No. 4, November 2004, pp. 1203-1223.

-*The REAL Costa Rica: Women in Politics*.

www.therealcostarica.com/government_costa_rica/women_politics_costa_rica.html

RESOLUTION #3

Carcinogenic Chemicals in Personal Care Cosmetic and Household Cleaning Products

THEREFORE IT BE RESOLVED THAT BPW Canada urges the Government of Canada to evaluate chemicals (both original and by-products) found in personal care, cosmetic and housecleaning products using a hazard-based assessment model similar to the European Union instead of the current risk-based assessment;

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT BPW Canada urges the Government of Canada to develop national labeling standards that clearly state the percentage of daily allowable safe levels of contact and/or usage of each chemical ingredient contained within personal care, cosmetic and housecleaning products;

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT BPW Canada urges the Government of Canada to place these same safety standards on all imported personal care, cosmetic and housecleaning products.

RATIONALE

The Breast Cancer Fund recently released "State of the Evidence: The Connection between Breast Cancer and the Environment, sixth edition. This report links women's exposure to toxic chemicals from a variety of daily routine activities in their environment to the increased incidence of breast cancer. Women are an especially vulnerable group to toxic chemical exposure from personal care products, cosmetics and housecleaning products, as the primary users of these products.

In fact, the Breast Cancer Action Montreal group has developed a "Toxic Twenty List" to highlight the most hazardous chemicals in cosmetics and personal care products to caution women of increasing their risk of developing breast cancer. The List includes: benzalkonium chloride; butylated hydroxytoluene (BHT)/ butylated hydroxyanisole (BHA); coal tar; cocamide DEA/lauramide DEA, TEA, MEA; DMDM hydantoin; FD&C colours, formaldehyde & formaldehyde releasing preservatives; fragrance; heavy metals; oxybenzone; parabens; P-phenylenediamine; phthalates; polyethylene glycol (PEG); propylene glycol; selenium sulfide; sodium lauryl sulfate & sodium laureth sulfate; synthetic musks; talc; and triclosan.

Health Canada has banned or restricted the use of over 500 chemical ingredients for use in cosmetic products as listed on their Consumer Product Safety website, entitled: "Cosmetic Ingredient Hotlist- June 2010". For example: "Triclosan- Permitted at concentrations equal to or less than 0.03% in mouthwashes; Permitted at concentrations equal to or less than 0.3% in other cosmetic products;...". Although this site identifies chemicals to watch out for, a number of personal care and cosmetic products contain toxic by-products (like formaldehyde and 1,4 dioxane) that result from the manufacturing process and are not required to be listed on the package.

The United States has banned only 8 chemical ingredients for use in cosmetics; whereas the European Union has banned or restricted over 2000 chemicals from cosmetic products.

The huge discrepancy in the number of chemicals banned from one country to another is due to their evaluation processes. Canada uses a risk-based assessment whereby chemicals are evaluated by the level of risk to Canadians through possible exposure. The European Union uses a hazard-based assessment which means that if there is a known hazard associated with a chemical it is more likely to be banned or restricted. If Canada is aware of a known chemical with health risks, like BPA for example, the risk-based approach allows it to be used in consumer products if the risk to exposure is considered low enough – even if there is evidence of possible threats to health.

The major concern with Canada's approach to allowing known toxic chemicals is that although it appears safe when evaluating each product in isolation, the fact is that consumers (especially women) use numerous products each and every day. In fact, the Canadian Cancer Society sites that women's lifetime risk of breast cancer is 1 in 9, 1 in 28 will die. This means 23,200 will be diagnosed in 2010 (450/week) and 5,300 will die (100/week). American women use an average of 12 personal care products each day, resulting in 126 unique chemical exposures per day. Canadian

women are believed to use similar amounts. Toothpaste, shampoo, conditioner, body wash, hand soap, moisturizers, sunscreen, mascara, lip balm, mouthwash, blush- the list grows very quickly.

Add to this regular toxic soup the fact that women, as primary managers of cleaning the home, are exposed to many of the same and additional toxic chemicals through air fresheners, laundry and dish soap, polishes and cleansers. When looking at this broader picture, the safe allowable limits considered for an individual product has now escalated the level of exposure to harmful chemicals beyond acceptable levels.

The Cancer Society states, "Most of the products that you buy, such as household cleaners and electronics, don't have labels to tell you what's in them. They should. Canadians have a right to know: what is in the products they use (through ingredient disclosure) and if a product contains a cancer-causing substance (by a warning symbol)." They also recommend Canadians watch the State of California's Proposition 65 List of known cancer-causing and reproductive toxicity chemicals. This list is 22 pages long and is required by legislation to be updated on a yearly basis. To view, see www.oehha.ca.gov/prop65.html

It is therefore imperative that the Government of Canada address this safety issue by evaluating chemicals (both original and by-products) found in personal care, cosmetic and housecleaning products using a hazard-based assessment; develop national labelling standards that clearly state the percentage of daily allowable safe levels of contact and/or usage of each of these chemical ingredients; and apply these safety standards to all similar products that are imported into our country.

REFERENCES

The Breast Cancer Fund- "State of the Evidence: The Connection between Breast Cancer and the Environment, sixth edition. www.breastcancerfund.org

- Breast Cancer Action Montreal- "Toxic Twenty List". www.femmetoxic.com

- Health Canada- Consumer Product Safety- "Cosmetic Ingredient Hotlist- June 2010". www.hc-sc.gc.ca/cps-spc/person/cosmet/info-ind-prof/_hot-list-critique/hotlist-liste...

- Melanson, Janice. Breast Cancer Action Montreal, Prevent Cancer Now- "The Story of Cosmetics- What's Canada's Story?" www.preventcancer.ca/the-story-of-cosmetics--what's-Canada's-story

- Canadian Cancer Society- Breast Cancer Statistics. www.cancer.ca/Canada-wide?About%20cancer/Cancer%20statistics/Stats%20at%20a%20glance?Breast%20cancer.aspx?sc_lang=E

- Canadian Cancer Society- Prevention-Consumer Product Labelling. www.cancer.ca/Canada-wide/Prevention/Environment%20and%20you/Product%20labelling.aspx?sc_lang=en

- Office of the Environmental Health Hazard Assessment- State of California- Proposition List of Chemicals; "Chemicals Known to the State to Cause Cancer or Reproductive Toxicity", January 7, 2011. www.oehha.ca.gov/prop65.html

RESOLUTION #4

Creation of a National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking

THEREFORE IT BE RESOLVED THAT BPW Canada endorses “Connecting the Dots: A Proposal for a National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking”, containing recommendations to address human trafficking, and **FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT** BPW Canada urges the Government of Canada, through all relevant departments, to implement Recommendations I-XIV of “Connecting the Dots”; namely:

Recommendations I-XIV from “Connecting the Dots”:

Recommendation I – Review and amend immigration regulations and policy to provide effective counter human trafficking point of entry services.

Recommendation II – Develop and implement a tailored strategy within the National Action Plan to address trafficking of First Nations women and children.

Recommendation III – Use diplomatic protocols to promote regional and international partnerships and policies to combat human trafficking and child sexual exploitation.

Recommendation IV – Develop policies and regulations to combat forced labour and child labour abroad.

Recommendation V – Limit and monitor the international travel of convicted Canadian child sex offenders.

Recommendation VI – Creation and implementation of an extensive public awareness campaign.

Recommendation VII – Provide adequate funding for NGOs to deliver care, counseling, shelter and assistance to victims.

Recommendation VIII – Develop and implement federal policy to assist international victims of human trafficking to return to their country of origin.

Recommendation IX – Develop a National Referral Mechanism to provide rapid connection to points of service.

Recommendation X – Create an independent National Rapporteur for Human Trafficking.

Recommendation XI – Review and amend Canada’s solicitation legislation.

Recommendation XII – Commit to additional resources for the training and education of judges, prosecutors and law enforcement on human trafficking legislation.

Recommendation XIII – Review and implement legislation as necessary to ensure that all forms of human trafficking are denounced under Canadian law.

Recommendation XIV – Facilitate the creation of regional human trafficking taskforces.

RATIONALE

BPW Canada has a history of opposing human trafficking dating back to the last century. Timea Nagy, Executive Director of Walk with Me, spoke to the members at the 2010 Convention and has since spoken to various Clubs on the work she has been doing to assist victims of trafficking. We, as a BPW organization in Brampton, are helping to fund her work.

The federal government has done very little. Bill C-57 (An Act to Amend the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act) was given first reading in the House of Commons and would give immigration officers power to deny Canadian foreign work permits to workers who are being sent to Canada to work in humiliating and degrading situations or are trafficked into Canada. This, however, addresses only a small part of the problem.

In 2010, Joy Smith, the Manitoba MP for Kildonan-St. Paul, released a detailed report on action against human trafficking. Entitled "Connecting the Dots", this lays out thirteen detailed recommendations for action. This resolution addresses these recommendations.

REFERENCES

Bill C-56: an Act to Amend the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act.

<http://www2.parl.gc.ca/HousePublications/Publication.aspx?DocId=4794996&Language=e&Mode=1>

Connecting the Dots: a Proposal for a National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking.

http://www.joysmith.ca/main.asp?fxoid=FXMenu,7&cat_ID=27&sub_ID=104&sub2_ID=26

End Modern Slavery - Canadian Advocacy

Website: <http://www.endmoderndayslavery.ca/>

Niren, Michael. Protecting "vulnerable" Canadian Foreign

Workers. <http://www.visaplace.com/blog-immigration-law/canadian-work-permits/new-act-introduced-to-protect-canadian-foreign-workers-by-denying-work-permits/>

RESOLUTION # 5

Health Effects of Combining Alcohol with High Energy Drinks for Women

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT BPW Canada urges the Government of Canada to take the appropriate measures to have Health Canada ban the use of pre-mixed high-energy caffeine drinks for use as a mix with alcohol in lounges and bars in Canada. **FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT** BPW Canada urges the Government of Canada to direct Health Canada to develop and distribute education packages to educators, and other health care professionals as well as the general public on the dangers of consuming pre-mixed and energy drinks with alcohol specifying the dangers of bearing a child with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder.

RATIONALE

In 2007, BPW Canada developed a position paper on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder entitled "*A Call for a Coordinated Comprehensive FASD Strategy*," and presented it to Members of Parliament, and their respective provincial governments. BPW was particularly concerned that women of child bearing age involved in post-secondary education (18-24) and those in the workforce (35-44) were most likely to engage in high-risk alcohol use and therefore were at the highest risk of bearing a child with FASD.

In 2009, BPW Canada approved a resolution requesting Health Canada to monitor the Labeling of high-energy caffeine drinks under the National Health Products Act. At that time only "*Red Bull*" was approved under National Health Products regulations. To date Red Bull remains the only (NHP) regulated high-energy drink and as such is required to display the caffeine content, recommendations for use, cautions and contra-indicators. One of which is to avoid its use with alcohol. High-Energy drinks are also contraindicated for women of child bearing age. Caffeine has a half-life of 3 to 5 hours and readily crosses the blood brain barrier and placenta.

Gender differences between men and a woman of the intake and metabolism of alcohol is quite profound. Consequently, the recommended daily amount for women is no more than one drink per day for women and no more than 3-4 drinks on any given occasion. Women have less body water than men and less of the enzyme responsible for the breakdown of alcohol. Alcohol therefore, enters the blood-stream directly in higher concentrations which results in higher intoxication levels. As women age the enzyme is further depleted putting women at higher risk for damage to their liver and pancreas.

The combination of mixing high-energy drinks with alcohol is particularly harmful for women. Binge drinking (4-5 drinks) is particularly high with women between the ages (18-24) and (35-44). Intoxication is enhanced as energy drinks decrease perceived alcohol intoxication without decreasing objective intoxication. When alcohol and high energy drinks are mixed individuals are more than 3 times as likely to leave a drinking establishment intoxicated and 4 times more likely to drive a motor vehicle.

The CBC National on The Journal in 2009 aired a documentary entitled, "*The Hard Truths About Alcohol*" reported Caffeine-laced energy drinks added to an already dangerous mix making women at increased risk of sexual victimization. The ABC documentary on 20/20 entitled "*Women and Alcohol*", demonstrated the gender differences between men and women with alcohol consumption levels and the potential physiological risks including a 4 times higher risk of breast cancer.

REFERENCES

Wilsnack, Sharon Phd., Wilsnack, Richard, (Phd. (2001) "*Differences in Male and Female Consumption of Alcohol*" American Journal of Public Health.

CBC Learning, "*The Hard Truths About Alcohol*" (2009) CBC The National.

20/20 Documentary "Women and Alcohol" (2003) ABC Television.

Press Release (Nov. 3, 2008) "*Caffeine Linked to Low Birth Weight*", by Universities of Leicester and Leeds, England.

Langedock, Colin "*Pharmacological Effects of High Energy Drinks*" (2010), Addiction Foundation of Manitoba

Kirkey, Sharon (2008), "*Alarm Grows over "Energy Drinks"*" Canada.Com, Canwest News Service.