

November 30, 2020

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau  
Prime Minister of Canada  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada  
K1A 0A6



Dear Prime Minister Trudeau:

The Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women (BPW Canada) respectfully submits the enclosed 2020 Brief for your consideration and action. The items herein represent the concerns brought forward by our members from across the country. Resolutions were debated and accepted at the virtual convention held October 17 and 18, 2020.

As a non-partisan organization, we have worked for 90 years to urge governments to continue the inclusion of equal rights for women in legislation. It is through this process of voicing the issues outlined in this Brief and engaging in open dialogue with your government that we can together build a strong and thriving Canada.

This year we are very concerned about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on working women. The dual commitments to family care and to working, have resulted in many women partially or fully leaving the workplace. This enforced inequality further increases the economic gap between the genders. Those women remaining in the workplace face significant health risks due to the majority of front line workers in health and long term care being women. Your government has indicated its awareness of the situation. It is only when leaders from government, business and civil society work together that we will truly advance the status of women in our country.

We respectfully request that you and the appropriate Ministers review the enclosed resolutions and be available to meet with our delegation at a time in keeping with your schedules. A member of BPW Canada will follow up with this correspondence with a personal contact to confirm the preferred meeting times and dates.

We have forwarded this Brief to the Leaders of the Opposition and the Ministers addressed in our resolutions so that they may be apprised of our positions on the topics herein.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'K. Gorgerat', is written in dark ink.

Karin Gorgerat  
President 2020-2022  
BPW Canada

Copy to:

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**Submission  
to  
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE JUSTIN TRUDEAU**

**PRIME MINISTER OF CANADA**

**BY**



**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**

**[bpwcanada@bpwcanada.com](mailto:bpwcanada@bpwcanada.com)**

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

**November 2020**

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## Introduction

The Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women (BPW Canada) is an equality-seeking group working towards improving the 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. BPW Canada develops the professional and leadership potential of women through education, awareness, advocacy and mentoring within the supportive network of BPW.

In 1930, BPW Canada was a founding member of the International Federation of Business and Professional Women’s Clubs. BPW International has Consultative Status at the United Nations Economic and Social Council and is the recognized voice of working women in over 100 countries worldwide.

For 90 years we have advocated for women’s rights at all levels and have played a significant role in achieving advancements for a just and equal society. BPW Canada is a signatory to Women’s Empowerment Principles (WEPs) and we are committed to empowering women to realize the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). 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 to enhance their: Awareness, Advocacy & Action on women’s issues; Leadership Skills & Career Advancement; Supportive Networking; and Personal Development.

The BPW Canada Convention was held virtually on October 17-18, 2020. At our Conventions and Annual General Meetings we decide our policy. Resolutions contained in this document were initiated at the club level, researched and formulated, and brought to the 2020 Convention where they were discussed and debated. Once accepted, these resolutions become part of the official position of BPW Canada and are herein presented for your consideration..

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: Call to Action on the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women**

**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 and Rural Development; the Minister of Families, Children, and Social Development; the Minister of Indigenous Services; and the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs, 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 and Rural Development; the Minister of Families, Children, and Social Development; the Minister of Indigenous Services; and the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs, to adopt the eight action steps outlined by the Native Women's Association of Canada to kickstart an Action Plan immediately.

### **Rationale**

The National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls thoroughly investigated the persistent human and Indigenous rights violations and abuses behind Canada's rates of violence against Indigenous women, girls, and Two-Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning (2SLGBTQQIA) peoples. The investigation spanned nearly three years and involved 2,380 interviews with survivors of violence, family members of victims and survivors, and experts.

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.

Recent data shows that 18% of Indigenous women and 25% of Two Spirits people experienced violence between March and May 2020. The deadline to issue the National Action Plan by June 3, 2020 has passed and it is time that the Government commits to a new date to deal with this critical issue immediately.



## **Resolution #1: Call to Action on the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women**

### **References**

The Commission of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. (2019, June 3). *Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls*. Retrieved from <https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/final-report/>

CPAC (2019, June 4). MMIWG Releases Final Report, *Issues Calls for Justice to Redress “Genocide”*. Retrieved from <https://www.cpac.ca/en/cpac-in-focus/mmiwg/>

The Commission of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (2019, June 3). *Executive Summary of the Final Report*. Retrieved from [https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Executive\\_Summary.pdf](https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Executive_Summary.pdf)

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NWAC (2020, May 27). *NWAC Appalled By Federal Government’s National ‘lack-of-action Plan’ To Address Violence Against Indigenous Women, Girls And Gender-diverse People*. Retrieved from <https://www.nwac.ca/nwac-appalled-by-federal-governments-national-lack-of-action-plan-to-address-violence-against-indigenous-women-girls-and-gender-diverse-people/>



## **Resolution #2: Ending Coerced and Forced Sterilization of Indigenous Women**

**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, the Minister of Indigenous Services, the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs, and the Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Rural Development, 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 the Minister of Health, the Minister of Indigenous Services Canada, the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs, and the Minister of Women and Gender Equality and Rural Development, 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 and Attorney General, 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.

### **Rationale**

Coerced and forced sterilization is in contravention of Canadian Human Rights legislation as it denies women of their basic human right to have children. The widespread practice of coerced and forced sterilization of Indigenous women has been occurring across Canada since the 1930s. There is minimal awareness of the issue of coerced and forced sterilization of Indigenous women among health care providers, the general public and Indigenous women. The 2017 report written by Dr. Judith Bartlett and Dr. Yvonne Boyer – *External Review: Tubal Ligation in the Saskatoon Health Region: The Lived Experience of Aboriginal Women* – highlighted that the issue persists in Canada. 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*. There is no national health policy to stop the heinous act of coerced and forced sterilization of Indigenous women and this needs to be changed to protect these women. In December 2018, the United Nations Committee Against Torture officially recognized that sterilizing Indigenous women without consent is a form of torture, and called on Canada to take action.





## Resolution #2: Ending Coerced and Forced Sterilization of Indigenous Women

### References

Bartlett, J. and Boyer, Y. (2017) *External Review: Tubal Ligation in the Saskatoon Health Region: The Lived Experience of Aboriginal Women*.

United Nations Committee Against Torture.(2018): *Concluding observations on the seventh periodic report of Canada*

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International Justice Resource Centre. *Forced Sterilization of Indigenous Women in Canada*. Retrieved July 2020 [ijrcenter.org/forced-sterilization-of-indigenous-women-in-canada/](http://ijrcenter.org/forced-sterilization-of-indigenous-women-in-canada/)

Kirkup, K. (2018, November). Indigenous women coerced into sterilization across Canada. *The Canadian Press*.

Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak – Women of the Métis Nation (2019, March 25). *Forced Sterilization of Indigenous Women, Report of the Expert Meeting*.

Boyer, Y. (2020 February 03). Opinion: Ending the Forced Sterilization of Indigenous Women. *Windspeaker*: <https://windspeaker.com/news/opinion/opinion-ending-forced-sterilization-indigenous-women>



## **Resolution #3: 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 and Rural Development, 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.

### **Rationale**

In sexual assault cases before the courts in 2014 and onward, judges' recorded statements have indicated reliance on debunked stereotypes. *Subsection 15(1) of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms (1982)* provides that every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination, including on the basis of sex. Equality entails the promotion of a society in which all are secure in the knowledge that they are recognized by law as human beings equally deserving of concern, respect, and consideration.

*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. *Clause 4 of Bill C-5* 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.

Continuing education on the interpretation and application of sexual assault law promotes the equality rights of sexual assault complainants, the majority of whom are women and girls. Continuing vigilance is required to avoid deferment of and to ensure legislation on training for judges on violence against women, for those mandated to implement legislation regarding violence against women, is enacted and implemented.

### **Update**

We are aware and very pleased that *Bill C-5* was re-introduced by the Government of Canada as *Bill C-3* and recently received unanimous consent. We are also aware that previously this bill did not pass in the Senate. We will be forwarding our Brief including this Resolution to Senators to strongly encourage their support so victims of assault have more confidence in the justice system.



## Resolution #3: Support for Judicial Accountability through Sexual Assault Law Training

### References

United Nations. (2010). *Handbook for Legislation on Violence Against Women*. United Nations, Economic and Social Affairs, Division for the Advancement of Women (ISBN 978-92-1-1302905), sec 3.2.3 <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/vaw/handbook/Handbook%20for%20legislation%20on%20violence%20against%20women.pdf>,

UN Women (2010, October 30). *Training for Judges*. UN Women. Virtual Knowledge Centre to End Violence against Women and Girls. <https://www.endvawnow.org/en/articles/146-training-for-judges.html>

Government of Canada (2020, February 07). *Bill C-5: An Act to amend the Judges Act and the Criminal Code*. <https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/csj-sjc/pl/charte-charte/c5.html>

Mark S. Bonham Centre for Sexual Diversity Studies. (2020). *Brenda Cossman on Harvey Weinstein verdict*. <http://sds.utoronto.ca/news/brenda-cossman-on-harvey-weinstein-verdict/>

Doolittle, R. (2017, February 03). Unfounded Why Police Dismiss 1 in 5 Sexual Assault Claims as Baseless. *The Globe and Mail*.



## **Resolution #4: Improving Access to Justice for Survivors of Sexual Assault**

**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 Attorney General, to adopt the changes, including to the *Criminal Code R.S.C., 1985, c. C-46*, detailed in the 2018 Intergovernmental 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, specifically the Minister of Justice and Attorney General, 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.

### **Rationale**

Sexual assault is a gendered crime, with the majority of victims being women and girls. 83% of sexual assaults in Canada are not reported to the police. Fewer than half of all sexual assault cases that go to trial result in a guilty verdict. 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. Female survivors experience barriers in reporting sexual assault crimes which contributes to low of reporting rates. 2/3 of sexual assault survivors surveyed did not have confidence in the criminal justice system. Women and girls who face systemic and intersectional discrimination also experience additional and harmful barriers to accessing justice. A culture of victim blaming and shaming, stereotyping, and unfounded beliefs around false reporting of sexual violence exists within Canadian society. The Intergovernmental Coordinating Committee of Senior Officials Working Group (CCSOWG) on Access to Justice for Adult Victims of Sexual Assault made 17 recommendations to improve access to justice. 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.



## Resolution #4: Improving Access to Justice for Survivors of Sexual Assault

### References

Department of Justice Canada. (2019). *JustFacts: Sexual Assault*. Ottawa: Statistics and Research Division

<https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/jr/jf-pf/2019/apr01.html>

Prochuk, A. (2018). *We Are Here: Women's Experiences of the Barriers to Reporting Sexual Assault*. West Coast LEAF. <http://www.westcoastleaf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/West-Coast-Leaf-dismantling-web-final.pdf>

Canada. Canadian Intergovernmental Conference Secretariat. Coordinating Committee of Senior Officials Working Group on Access to Justice for Adult Victims of Sexual Assault (CCSOWG). (2018). *Reporting, Investigating and Prosecuting Sexual Assaults Committed Against Adults – Challenges and Promising Practices in Enhancing Access to Justice for Victims*. St. John's, NL.

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Status of Women Canada (SWC) (2019). *2018-2019 It's Time: Canada's Strategy to Prevent and Address Gender-Based Violence*. <https://cfc-swc.gc.ca/violence/strategy-strategie/report-rapport2019-en.html>

EGALE. (2020). *National Action Plan for LGBTQI2S Rights in Canada* <https://egale.ca/awareness/nationalactionplan/>



## **Resolution #5: Improving Access to the Disability Tax Credit**

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women (BPW Canada) urges the Government of Canada and specifically, the Minister of Health, the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Labour, the Minister of Veterans Affairs, the Minister of Indigenous Services, the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs, the Minister of Women and Gender Equality and Rural Development, the Minister of Seniors, the Minister of Justice and Attorney General, the Minister of Middle Class Prosperity, the Minister of National Revenue, and the 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*.

### **Rationale**

Disability is more prevalent among women than men. Compared to men with disabilities, women with disabilities face lower levels of employment, lower incomes, and are more likely to live in poverty. The Government of Canada has ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and has put in place domestic legislation such as the Canadian Human Rights Act and the Accessible Canada Act, to protect and promote the rights of people with disabilities, and to remove and prevent barriers to equality.

The Disability Tax Credit (DTC) is an important gateway to accessing many other disability supports to improve the long term financial security, health and living conditions for women with disabilities.

The 2018 Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs report "*Breaking Down Barriers: A Critical analysis of the Disability Tax Credit and the Registered Disability Savings Plan*" recommended that steps be taken to improve access to these benefits in vulnerable groups, such as women. In 2019 the Disability Advisory Committee (DAC) has put forth 42 recommendations to improve access and remove barriers to the Disability Tax Credit, 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 Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP) and other disability benefits, and raising awareness and collecting data on DTC use.



## Resolution #5: Improving Access to the Disability Tax Credit

### References

Burlock, A. (2017). *Women in Canada: A Gender-based Statistical Report: Women with Disabilities*. Ottawa: Statistics Canada.

Buettgen, A., Hardie, S., & Wicklund., E., Jean-François, K.M., Alimi, S. (2018). *Understanding the Intersectional Forms of Discrimination Impacting Persons with Disabilities*. Ottawa: Government of Canada's Social Development Partnerships Program – Disability Component. Canadian Centre on Disability Studies. [www.disabilitystudies.ca/assets/ccds-int-dis--151110-final-report-en-full.pdf](http://www.disabilitystudies.ca/assets/ccds-int-dis--151110-final-report-en-full.pdf)

Canadian Caregiver Coalition (CCC) (2013). *A Canadian Caregiver Strategy* [http://www.carerscanada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Pan-Canadian-Family-Caregiver-2013\\_WEB-PAGES-2.pdf](http://www.carerscanada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Pan-Canadian-Family-Caregiver-2013_WEB-PAGES-2.pdf)

Canadian Human Rights Commission (CHRC) (2015). *The Rights of Persons with Disabilities to Equality and Non-Discrimination Monitoring the Implementation of the UN Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Canada*. [www.chrc-ccdp.gc.ca/eng/content/rights-persons-disabilities-equality-and-non-discrimination](http://www.chrc-ccdp.gc.ca/eng/content/rights-persons-disabilities-equality-and-non-discrimination)

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Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology. (2018). *Breaking Down Barriers. A critical analysis of the Disability Tax Credit and the Registered Disability Savings Plan*. <https://sencanada.ca/en/info-page/parl-42-1/soci-breaking-down-barriers/>

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## **Resolution #6: Reaffirming BPW Canada 1994 Resolution: Research Grants for Women & Heart Disease**

**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 Immigration, 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.

### **Rationale**

At its 1994 Convention, BPW Canada adopted a resolution on Research Grants for Women & Heart Disease which urged the Federal Government to make available increased research grants for more comprehensive studies on women and heart disease.

In the twenty-six years since the BPW Canada requested funding for research grants for women with heart disease, the majority of research dollars have been spent on male subjects or do not identify between sex or gender in the published results. The lack of comprehensive women directed health research limits the generation of knowledge and programs which can have a positive impact on women's cardiovascular health. These gaps were documented in 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". According to the most recent Statistics Canada data more than 25,000 women die each year from heart disease, early heart signs were missed in 78% of women, heart disease is the leading cause of premature death in women and every 20 minutes a woman in Canada dies of heart disease. These are staggering numbers that could be greatly reduced if women were properly diagnosed, and research in this area could make that happen.





## **Resolution #6: Reaffirming BPW Canada 1994 Resolution: Research Grants for Women & Heart Disease**

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## **Resolution #7: Recognizing Heart Disease in Women**

**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, the Minister of Women and Gender Equality and Rural Economic Development, the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, the Minister of Indigenous Services, and the 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.

### **Rationale**

Symptoms for heart disease and heart attacks in women are different than symptoms for men. Statistics prove that mortality rates from heart disease in women are higher than those experienced by men. More research funding for heart disease has been spent on men. Health issues that are unique to women, such as pregnancy, birth control, and menopause result in greater risk of heart disease in women than in men. It has been recognized that some health issues such as diabetes can lead to increased incidents of heart disease in women.

The Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada has issued several reports centred around heart disease in women, such as "*Ms. Understood*" and "*HeartSmart Women: A Guide to Living With and Preventing Heart Disease and Stroke*" and implemented several effective 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. The result will be that more women will be aware of the symptoms, they will be properly diagnosed and treated for their heart disease in the future.



## Resolution #7: Recognizing Heart Disease in Women

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## **Resolution #8: Violence and Harassment Against Female Politicians**

**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 Attorney General, the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, and the Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Rural Development, 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;

**FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED** that BPW Canada urges the Government of Canada, specifically the Minister of Justice and Attorney General, the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, and the Minister of Gender Equality, 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 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.

### **Rationale**

Gender-based violence towards female politicians happens at all levels of government and is the result of deep-rooted prejudice and structural inequality. Sexism, harassment, and violence towards female politicians is widespread throughout the world. Women in high ranking positions are more likely to be targets of incivility. Sexism and gender-based violence may negatively impact women's desire to enter politics and undermine female politicians' dignity and fundamental rights in a place where gender equality and inclusion should be present. Working women from diverse backgrounds, including racialized women, Indigenous women, women who are transgender, and women with disabilities, may face additional barriers to entering electoral politics, meaning that these groups are excluded in decision-making processes. The Vecchio Report (2019) and the Inter-Parliamentary Union Report (2019) provided data about gender-based violence towards female politicians and made recommendations and 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.



## Resolution #8: Violence and Harassment Against Female Politicians

### References

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## **Resolution #9: 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 #4 resolution: *Increasing Women's Participation in Politics* which states, "BPW Canada urges the Government of Canada, specifically the Minister of Status of Women (now Minister of Status of Women and Gender Equality and Rural Development) 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.



## Resolution #9: Women in Politics

### Rationale

Women represent 50% of the population in Canada. Women have different perspectives, insights, political preferences, and priorities than men. In 2019, Canada elected 98 female MPs which is historic but only represents 29% of elected seats. Women's under-representation results in decision and policy making not representing all groups' perspectives and insights. Political equality and policies require more women to be elected. Implementation of the Vecchio Report (2019) recommendations and consideration of its observations will assist in increasing the number of and improving the experiences of female politicians throughout Canada.

Vecchio Report (2019) identified seven barriers to increase women's 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. By putting a non-partisan committee in place to review and implement these recommendations, steps could be made to not only increase representation of women but to retain those that have already stepped up to these important positions.

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## **Resolution #10: COVID-19 and Long-term Care (LTC) Crisis**

**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, the Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Rural Economic Development, the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development, and Disability Inclusion, the Minister of Middle Class Prosperity, the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, and the 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, the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development, and Disability Inclusion, and the 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 in long term care;

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

**AND FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED** that BPW Canada urges the Government of Canada, specifically the Minister of Health and the 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.





## Resolution #10: COVID-19 and Long-term Care (LTC) Crisis

### Rationale

81% of COVID-19 deaths in Canada occur in nursing homes which is higher than other comparable countries. 2/3 of those in long term care (LTC) are women. Wide-spread deficiencies in LTC have been exposed during COVID-19, there are no standards or regulations across Canada, and it is not protected under the Canada Health Act. The workforce staffing and skills do not meet the needs of the complex social and medical needs of residents; particularly with the increase in residents with dementia (2/3 have dementia). The Federal government has committed to a National Strategy for Alzheimer's Disease and Other Dementias Act SC2017, C19 Assented to 2017-06-22. Over 90% of care in LTC is provided by unregulated workers of which 90% are women and immigrants with limited and disparate access to training, continuing education and specialization. There is no standard for compensation including benefits for unregulated staff. The Royal Society of Canada established a working group to produce the report *Restoring Trust: COVID-19 and the Future of Long-Term Care* which identified huge gaps in long term care homes which put our most vulnerable citizens at risk. As health professionals have predicted, there has been a second wave of COVID-19 which continues to impact our most vulnerable citizens, who are at risk again.

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