

# *BPW Canada*

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# **BPW CANADA**

**The Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs  
La Fédération Canadienne des Clubs de Femmes de Carrière**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Since 1930, the Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women's Club (BPW Canada) has worked to elevate the economic and social status of working women in Canada. Our membership is made up of women who are employed or have been employed in the workplace; in the professions, in traditional and non-traditional work and in business ownership including home based enterprises. Our Organization encourages and supports female students and young women to become involved with BPW, as their voices are important in addressing the needs of the working women of the future.

BPW Canada is a member of BPW International, one of the world's most influential organizations - the only organization that focuses primarily on issues affecting working women worldwide. BPW is a non-partisan and non-sectarian network of women who share common objectives for all women.

BPW Canada is pleased to present this submission covering the resolutions passed at the 37<sup>th</sup> Biennial Convention held in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, July 11<sup>th</sup> through July 15<sup>th</sup>, 2000, the Annual Meeting held in Winnipeg, Manitoba, July 21<sup>st</sup>, 2001 and the 38<sup>th</sup> Biennial Convention held in Quebec City, Quebec, July 14<sup>th</sup> through July 18<sup>th</sup>, 2002. The delegates from our clubs across the country that comprise our federation, considered, discussed and approved these resolutions.

BPW Canada was incorporated on June 7<sup>th</sup>, 1930. For over seventy years, BPW Canada members have worked with the government and agencies at all levels to:

- Improve the economic, employment and social conditions of working women.
- Stimulate interest in federal, provincial and municipal affairs.
- Encourage women to participate in the business of government at all levels.
- Assist women and girls to acquire education in preparation for employment.

In the past, BPW Canada has been accorded the privilege of meeting with the Prime Minister and other members of Cabinet to present and discuss its submission. Since we were unable to arrange meetings during 2001, we have revised our original submission to include current resolutions in addition to those submitted for consideration in 2001. We hope we will have the privilege to meet with several members of the Government in 2002 or 2003 at their earliest convenience.

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Jill Worobec, President, BPW Canada

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Barbara Hall, Secretary Treasurer

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Doris Hall, Resolutions Chair

## SUMMARY

Since **Health Care** is the Number One concern of most Canadians, several resolutions related to improvements and/or changes in our Health Care system have been addressed. Topics of concern include providing funding for maintaining Canada's excellent health care system and developing home care programs.

**Osteoporosis** and **Fibromyalgia** are debilitating and crippling diseases affecting many women. BPW Canada and BPW International has formed a partnership with the Osteoporosis Society to help promote universal awareness of possible prevention of this disease. BPW Canada is committed to forming further partnerships with other health related organizations during the next biennium.

The **Irradiation of Food** and its possible effect on the health of Canadians is of great concern to BPW Canada members, women being the primary purchasers of food for the family.

After having taken part in the Decade for Women Conference in 1995 in Beijing, China and the **Olympic Games of 2008** being awarded to Beijing, BPW Members wish to make their concerns known to ensure the equal treatment of female participants during the games.

Under **Social Issues**, BPW Canada members addressed literacy, crime prevention, the encouragement of violence against women and children through songs, exploitation of children in the sex trade and the prevention of offensive and sexually explicit unsolicited electronic communications. An "urgent" resolution was passed urging the Government of Canada to investigate all incidents of retaliation by pharmaceutical companies when these companies are questioned about the effects of their new products.

BPW Canada members expressed concern over issues related to the **Canada Pension Plan**: individuals unable to contribute due to limited earnings, allowing homemakers to make voluntary contributions and implementing a "drop-out" provision similar to the existing "Child Rearing Drop Out Provision" for caregivers.

Resolutions were discussed and passed dealing with **Taxation** of CPP payments for disabled individuals and income splitting for stay-at-home parents. A resolution was passed urging the **Tax Laws** be amended to allow caregivers to contribute to RRSPs based on an imputed appropriate income.

Classified under **Labour Conditions/Benefits**, BPW Canada members passed resolutions relating to the benefits of quality Child Care in or near the work place, unfavourable working conditions within the garment and sportswear industry and child labour in Canada and around the globe.

## HEALTH ISSUES / SPORTS

### *Health Care*

The Government of Canada, in an effort to bring the deficit under control, unilaterally reduced transfer of payments to the provinces under Medicare while at the same time announcing a surplus, often resulting in a reduction of services. Although some funding has been restored, provinces continue to deal with major shortfalls in health care funding.

Surveys have overwhelmingly reported that the people of Canada place Health Care as their number one priority.

***THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that BPW Canada urges the Government of Canada to cease the practice of unilaterally reducing transfer payments to the provinces for healthcare services and immediately restore funding.***

**RESOLUTION 2000-11**

### *National Home Care*

The major changes in Health Care underway in Canada involve the closing of a significant number of hospitals, acute in-patient beds, and the reduction of health care staff. These changes in hospital closings and restructuring have caused a considerable transfer of healthcare responsibilities to patients and/or caregivers (primarily women, including working women) in the homes of patients.

There are different types and lengths of home care required for patients with various health conditions and/or illnesses. Research published by the Canadian Medical Association states that demographic realities make it increasingly likely that persons in their middle years will become caregivers. Articles have appeared in national publications such as the Globe and Mail, Homemaker's and Maclean's magazines and on television programs confirming the urgent need for a national home care program.

In the Globe and Mail of January 27<sup>th</sup>, 2000, it is reported that the Federal Minister of Health, Allan Rock, is urging talks with provincial and territorial governments on a national home care program and other health concerns.

***THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that BPW Canada strongly urges the Government of Canada to develop a national home care program to be legislated and controlled under the Canada Health Act.***

**RESOLUTION 2000-12**

## ***Osteoporosis***

Osteoporosis is a progressive systemic disease resulting in increased bone fragility and susceptibility to fracture. The Federal Government and specifically Health Canada must recognize that Osteoporosis currently imposes an unacceptable social and economic burden in Canada which:

- a. Primarily affects postmenopausal women (40% will experience one or more fractures) with incidence and prevalence increasing with age for men and women.
- b. Results in extremely high levels of long-term physical disability due to complications from hip, spine, wrist and other fractures.
- c. Will quadruple the number hip fractures over the next 40 years (from 21,000 to 88,000) as members of the baby boom generation (born from 1947 to 1965) move into their fifth, sixth and seventh decades.

Osteoporosis ranks high as one of the causes for morbidity (1570 deaths in 1993-1994 - estimated to exceed 7000 by 2041), in health care resource utilization (\$1.3 billion in 1993), and as a disabling disease in the population. It has a high economic cost yet a low proportion of public monies are devoted to research for all categories of the disease.

Additional research is required in the areas of cost effective strategies for primary prevention, outcomes and costs associated with Osteoporosis. Population studies indicate that Osteoporosis affects one in four Canadian women and one in eight men over 50 and is a frequent cause of long-term physical disability.

No single cause for Osteoporosis has been identified, although certain risk factors for Osteoporosis play a role in the development of the disease and predispose individuals to loss of bone and increased risk of fracture. The prevalence of Osteoporosis, as with many chronic conditions, correlates strongly with socio-economic status and with such determinants of health as lack of formal education and low-income. Reductions in bone mass are more easily prevented than treated. Women with multiple risk factors and low bone density have an especially high risk of hip fracture. In Canada the estimated direct and indirect costs (1993 data) created by illnesses and disability and premature death including Osteoporosis was estimated at \$156.9 billion.

Many older Canadians disabled by Osteoporosis rely on the Canadian Pension Plan (CPP) as their sole source of income. Despite the gravity of their condition these elderly people are obliged to pay for their medications, often costing hundreds of dollars per month, not always covered by provincial reimbursement programs. Thus the inequity of the situation results in some of the poorest of Canadians foregoing their medication due to cost.

***THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that BPW Canada urges the Government of Canada, in general, and, in particular Health Canada to:***

- 1. Acknowledge that Osteoporosis is a national health priority - on par with breast cancer, diabetes and other chronic conditions.***
- 2. Establish a special parliamentary committee to address the needs of Canadians with Osteoporosis.***
- 3. Develop a clinical perspective, evidence-based medicine for Osteoporosis care as a foundation for standardized treatment guidelines and outcome measures.***

***FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that BPW Canada urges the Government of Canada, in general, and in particular Health Canada, in co-operation with provincial ministries of health, to develop and implement a co-coordinated national/regional strategy to:***

- 1. Optimize peak bone mass during the first 20 years of life;***
- 2. Improve knowledge and awareness about Osteoporosis among Canadians about risk factors for Osteoporosis and the importance of bone health; and***
- 3. Standardize treatment guidelines and outcome measures so that Canadians with Osteoporosis receive comparable and appropriate care regardless of economic status and geographical location; and***
- 4. Assist Canadians with Osteoporosis in performing daily living activities and in living independently in the community, thus promoting self-reliance and improving quality of life; and***
- 5. Designate significant funding commensurate with the scope of the burden imposed by Osteoporosis for basic science, applied and clinical research, and improved delivery of care.***

***FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that BPW Canada and the BPW Provincial Organizations urge their Provincial Ministries of Health, in co-operation with Health Canada, to develop and implement a co-coordinated national/regional strategy to address the prevention, early diagnosis, treatment and management of Osteoporosis as identified above.***

**RESOLUTION 2000-21**

## ***Fibromyalgia – CPP, Education, Research***

Fibromyalgia Syndrome affects almost 3% of the general population. The ratio of women to men with the disease is 4 to 1, the majority of Fibromyalgia victims being of an employable age.

Despite the condition frequency and clear diagnostic criteria, statistics suggest that the Syndrome is often misdiagnosed and correct treatment and diagnosis is delayed between six and ten years. Many women are accused of malingering, referred to psychiatrists, subjected to needless surgery, i.e. hysterectomies, subjected to treatments and medications that often make their symptoms worse, i.e. physiotherapy, strengthening programs. They are refused disability benefits from their insurance plans, Canada Pension Plan and other compensatory plans. If they appeal and are finally accepted, they can expect to wait for over a year to receive any benefits.

CPP Disability will only accept objective medical data such as x-rays and laboratory results. Prior to 1990, the diagnosis of Fibromyalgia was very subjective. There was no way to quantify the degree of pain a patient experienced. In 1990, the American College of Rheumatology established criteria for the classification of Fibromyalgia to provide an objective medical diagnostic tool to measure the degree of pain.

Canadian Pension Plan (CPP) will deny a Fibromyalgia application on the basis of Fibromyalgia only, but on appeal, may grant the application due to a CPP approved debilitating disease secondary to Fibromyalgia. The Criteria for Classification of Fibromyalgia by the American College of Rheumatology provides an objective tool to measure the degree of pain the Fibromyalgia patient suffers, while traditional objective medical data does not.

***THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that BPW Canada urges the Minister of Human Resources Development Canada to change the criteria used by CPP Disability when reviewing applications of persons with Fibromyalgia such that the criteria for classification of Fibromyalgia established by the "American College of Rheumatology" be the standard diagnostic tool.***

***FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that BPW Canada urges the Health Canada's Subcommittee on Fibromyalgia, that Health Canada and Human Resources Development Canada accept the diagnosis of Fibromyalgia by a rheumatologist as a valid disease state.***

***FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that BPW Canada urges Human Resources Development Canada to mandate that CPP show just cause for denying a Fibromyalgia application in this diagnosis alone.***

**RESOLUTION 2000-15**

***THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT BPW Canada urges the Government of Canada and the Canadian Medical Association to ensure Canadian physicians receive updated and timely information on the diagnostic criteria for Fibromyalgia.***

***FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT BPW Canada urges the Government of Canada to ensure all members of boards or panels ruling on disability benefits, such as Canada Pension Plan, receive education on the validity and correct diagnostic criteria of Fibromyalgia.***

***FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT BPW Canada urges the Government of Canada to ensure research grant monies be expended to study the cause(s) and best treatment of Fibromyalgia.***

**RESOLUTION 2002-05**



## ***Irradiation of Food***

Being the primary caregivers and purchasers of food for personal and family use, women are concerned for the health and safety of women, their families and the environment. We need to address the subject of food irradiation. In Canada, the amount of irradiation allowed for herbs and spices (slightly less for potatoes, onions, and wheat), and the higher portions for fruits, vegetables, fish and meat allowed in the U.S.A. and other countries, is the equivalent of 330 million chest X-rays, an amount that would completely eradicate a human body. In 2001, during a closed three-day meeting of World Health Organization, it was decided the maximum radiation dose for food could be eliminated without posing any hazards.

Canada imports foods from other countries, mainly U.S.A., in bulk form for repackaging and re-labelling before distribution. No labels are required by U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to signify that this food had been irradiated before being canned and sold to Canada. At the border, Canadian Food Inspection Agencies do not assess this unlabeled food to ensure it meets Canadian regulations. According to Statistics Canada, in 2001, Canada imported fruits, vegetables, meat and other products from a worldwide market, including five billion dollars paid to U.S.A. for fruits and vegetables, 220 million for potatoes and 112.4 million for onions.

In short-term testing sponsored by the U.S. FDA, 441 toxicity studies were reviewed and all 441 studies were found to be flawed and could not be used. These toxicity studies exposed the fact that the irradiation of food caused chromosome damage, increased kidney and heart disease, as well as numerous cancerous tumours. Other short-term tests carried out at the University of Illinois on 25 animals were stopped because all the animals died from burst hearts. Their short-term tests of irradiated beef fed to lab rats resulted in the rats dieing of haemorrhaging within 34 days. It was decided not to greatly publicize the results lest the public not want to eat irradiated food.

While the main excuse for irradiating food is to increase shelf-life and kill disease causing bacteria, it has been found through scientific tests by Cornell University, other clinical tests and scientifically monitored studies, that the process kills all the food's DNA, Vitamins, and Minerals, leaving nothing but bulk and numerous environmental effects and obvious health hazards. The University of Michigan Medical School and the National Academy of Sciences' U.S. Research Council performed studies on irradiated food and found that gamma rays used in irradiation, change the molecular structure of an atom, knocking electrons out of atomic orbit, creating free radicals that in turn form new chemicals such as formaldehyde and benzene, both known to cause chromosomal abnormalities associated with leukemia, cancers, Downs Syndrome and many other diseases. According to noted authorities, food that has been irradiated is not radioactive, but radiomimetic which means when eaten, the individual is indirectly exposed to radiation.

***THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT BPW Canada urges the Federal Government to encourage an immediate cessation of all irradiated foods in Canada and that strict inspection, tests, and proper controls be installed to rule out all irradiated foods in Canada and insure all imported foods are properly labelled to help contribute to the good health of women and their families and help provide a safe global environment in which to live.***

**RESOLUTION 2002-04**

## ***Olympic Summer Games 2008***

The Committee for the Olympic Games has awarded the Summer Games for 2008 to Beijing China.

When the United Nations held the Decade for Women Conference in Beijing in 1995, some of the living conditions for women were deplorable as many BPW Canada members can confirm from personal experience. We would like to ensure that women participants receive equal rights and accommodations as their male counterparts regardless of past traditions.

***THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that BPW Canada requests the Government of Canada to urge the Committee for the Olympic Games to ensure that living conditions for female participants at the Summer Games be equal to those of the male participants.***

**RESOLUTION 2001-U1**

## **SOCIAL ISSUES**

### ***Status of Women of Canada***

BPW Canada was one of the organizations that pressed for the Royal Commission on the Status of Women. The organization known as the Status of Women was formed as a direct result of the recommendations of this commission.

This Organization, which has served the women of Canada in an exemplary manner, is now under attack by the extreme right wing women's organization known as REAL Women of Canada.

***THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that BPW Canada urges the Government of Canada to ensure that the funding and support for the Status of Women of Canada be maintained.***

**RESOLUTION 2000-06**

### ***Core Funding***

Many women in Canada have banded together to fight for women's rights. Several of the resulting organizations, based in small towns and villages do not have the membership base that allows them to charge sufficient membership dues to sustain their mandates. Without adequate funding, many of these organizations that contribute greatly to further women's rights are struggling for survival.

These women are a disadvantaged segment of the population of Canada often due to the abolishment of core funding by the present government.

***THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that BPW Canada urges the Government of Canada to restore core funding to women's organizations.***

**RESOLUTION 2000-05**

## ***Literacy - Everyone's Concern - Pay Now or Later?***

Studies have been completed proving that one-third of all Canadians do not have the literacy skills required to meet the demands of their daily activities. These skills are linked directly to employment and income. Unfortunately, the majority of these illiterate individuals are women and children living below the poverty level.

Children's literacy levels are strongly linked to the educational levels of their parents, especially their mothers. These Literacy skills or lack thereof are passed from one generation to another. Better-educated mothers tend to have healthier babies and children who are better prepared for school and inclined to stay in school. One of the best methods to support children's learning is to ensure parents, especially mothers, improve their own literacy skills.

Low literacy levels produce low productivity in the workforce, low self-esteem, and unemployment or underemployment often resulting in poverty. Prevention and/or early intervention programs are essential to provide stimulation in the early years of a child's development. Funding programs to raise the literacy levels of women will in turn affect their children and future generations, benefiting all areas of society; business, social and health costs and employment levels. Several agencies and organizations have expressed a willingness to partner in operating preventative programs to help increase literacy levels providing sufficient funding is available to operate these programs. Although both the Federal and Provincial Governments provide funding to support literacy programs, the funding remains limited.

***THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that BPW Canada urges the Government of Canada to increase the funding allocated to Family Literacy Programs, which will allow for proactive, rather than reactive programming.***

***FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that BPW Canada urges the Federal Minister of Education to encourage the Provincial Ministers of Education to develop and fund more programs in this area.***

***FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that BPW Canada urges local clubs and Provincial Organizations to encourage the Provincial Ministers of Education to develop and fund more Family Literacy Programs.***

**RESOLUTION 2000-02**

## ***Crime Prevention Through Social Development***

Most women charged with prostitution-related offences, shoplifting, or fraud tend to be young, poor, under educated, unskilled, addicted to alcohol and/or drugs, with a disproportional number being Native. Many of these women have been victims of physical and sexual abuse and are emotionally or financially dependent on abusive male partners.

The annual cost of incarcerating an adult is estimate to be between \$40,000 and \$80,000 with even higher costs in the case of a woman or a young offender.

The criminal justice system is largely concerned with controlling rather than preventing crime. However, we need to begin addressing the underlying factors that lead people towards criminality, to begin investing in healthy children and strong communities rather than continuing to rely upon and inject funds into the criminal justice system.

***THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that BPW Canada urges the Government of Canada to:***

- 1. Provide and maintain funding for current community social programs.***
- 2. Provide information to any government department concerning community programs similar to the Headstart program in Moncton, New Brunswick.***

***FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that BPW Canada urges the Government of Canada to:***

- 1. Commit itself to support research and evaluation over an extended period of time; e.g. 30 years, to determine the costs, benefits and effectiveness of efforts to prevent crime through social development, and to publish the result of the research and evaluation projects.***
- 2. Support the recommendation of the Twelfth Report of the Standing Committee on justice and the Solicitor General (the Homer Report) that the Government of Canada increase funding for crime prevention.***

**RESOLUTION 2000-03**

## ***Encouraging Violence Against Women and Children Through Song - Criminal Code/Immigration Act Amendments***

Recently, an increased number of singers are depicting violence against women in their songs; for example the rapper "Eminem". On his first CD, Eminem rapped about killing his ex-wife as their tiny daughter looked on. In his latest CD and the song "Kill You", he raps "Slut, you think I won't choke no whore, till the vocal cords don't work in her throat no more?" Eminem has been criticized by prominent political personnel in the U.S and by gay groups for his homophobic lyrics and by music groups accusing him of making money by exploiting the world's misery.

After receiving a copy of a letter to Toronto police calling for the use of hate-propaganda laws against Eminem from promoting hatred and violence against women, Ontario Attorney-General James Flaherty asked Ottawa to keep the singer out of Canada. Police could not lay charges based on offensive lyrics attacking either women or men as there are only four basic hate categories for hate crime investigation: race, ethnic origin, religion and sexual orientation - gender not falling under the legal criteria <sup>(1)</sup>.

There has been much debate concerning the effects these songs have on young men's portrayal of women and their tendency in such cases to be more violent towards women. These types of songs tend to perpetuate negative stereotypes and glorify violence against women and children. BPW Canada members believe the graphic illustrations portrayed in these songs continue to put women's safety in jeopardy.

***THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that BPW Canada urges the Government of Canada to amend Section 318(4) of the Criminal Code to include gender as an identifiable group paralleling Section 3(1) of the Human Rights Act.***  
<sup>(2)</sup>

***FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that BPW Canada urges the Government of Canada to amend Section 19 of the Immigration Act to include the following class of inadmissible persons:***

***"Persons about whom there are reasonable grounds to believe will communicate statements in any public place which incite others to hate crimes against any identifiable group as will be defined in Section 318 of the Criminal Code."***<sup>(3)</sup>

**RESOLUTION 2001-03**

<sup>(1)</sup> Canadian Human Rights Act (<http://canada.justice.gc.ca/en/laws/H-2/25606.html>):

**Prohibited Grounds of Discrimination:**

Section 3. (1) For all purposes of this Act, the prohibited grounds of discrimination are race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, family status, disability and conviction for which a pardon has been granted.

(2) **Criminal Code** (<http://canada.justice.gc.ca/en/laws/C-46/35685.html>):

**Advocating Genocide:**

Section 318. (4) In this section, "identifiable group" means any section of the public distinguished by colour, race religion or ethnic group".

(3) **Immigration Act** (<http://canada.justice.gc.ca/en/laws/I-2/text.html>):

**Inadmissible Classes:**

Section 19. (1)(d) persons who there are reasonable grounds to believe will

(i) commit one or more offenses that may be punishable under any Act of Parliament by way of indictment, other than offences designated as contraventions under the Contraventions Act, or

(ii) engage in activity that is part of a pattern of criminal activity planned and organized by a number of persons acting in concert in furtherance of the commission of any offence that may be punishable under any Act of Parliament by way of indictment;

Section 19. (1)(e) persons who there are reasonable grounds to believe

(i) will engage in acts of espionage or subversion against democratic government, institutions or processes, as they are understood in Canada,

(ii) will, while in Canada, engage in or instigate the subversion by force of any government,

(iii) will engage in terrorism, or

(iv) are members of an organization that there are reasonable grounds to believe will

(A) engage in acts of espionage or subversion against democratic government, institutions or processes, as they are understood in Canada,

(B) engage in or instigate the subversion by force of any government, or

(C) engage in terrorism;

## ***The Exploitation of Young Females in the Sex Trade Industry***

Large numbers of girls and young women are being brought across our borders from Mexico, Thailand, India, the Philippines and other underdeveloped countries for the purpose of the sex trade industry. The sex trade industry includes work in escort services, adult entertainment venues, street prostitution, and body rub parlors.

The average age for entry into the prostitution trade in North America is 13-1/2 years of age, with some girls entering the trade as early as eight years old. Once indoctrinated into this trade at an early age, these girls and young women find it virtually impossible to leave as they are without resources, are economically dependent, and have been physically damaged. Coercion, veiled and overt threats of violence are often used to marginalize and control these girls and young women so that they cannot willingly leave the trade.

Research has shown that females involved in the sex trade industry are at greater risk of being subjected to violence, substance abuse with long-term adverse effects to their health and safety. Out of 63 known prostitutes found murdered in Canada between 1991-1995, 60 were females. The importance, exploitation and indoctrination of girls and young women constitute child and sexual abuse. Current laws prohibiting the sexual procurement of children in Canada and in other countries in the world are not being enforced.

***THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that BPW Canada urges the Government of Canada:***

***a. To re-examine and evaluate the use, impact and enforcement of the various provisions of the Criminal Code dealing with the sex trade industry and make such amendments as are necessary to address the problem of importation, exploitation and indoctrination of girls and young women in the sex trade.***

***b. To enact the 1990 Federal Standing Committee of Justice's recommendations that funds be committed to provide start-up and core funding to community-based agencies to develop and administer integrated, recovery and rehabilitative programs to enable females to leave the sex trade industry.***

***c. To provide educational programs to national Associations of Chiefs of Police and members of the judiciary about child sexual exploitation so that the appropriate sanctions can be meted out to assist in the eradication of trafficking in females.***

**RESOLUTION 2000-20**



## ***Electronic Communications***

The age of electronic communications is invading the homes, the workplace and the lives of the people of Canada.

Many Canadians, especially women, find the assault by these unsolicited communications, many of which are sexually exploitative and offensive in nature to be an invasion of privacy.

***THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that BPW Canada urges the Government of Canada to enact legislation to prohibit the use of electronic communications for delivery, distribution, publication, and solicitation of sexually exploitative material which violates and degrades women.***

**RESOLUTION 2000-04**

## ***Pharmaceutical Companies***

Dr. Nancy Olivieri, a Medical Doctor, a Scientist and a Professor of Medicine at the University of Toronto, is Head of the Hemoglobinopathy Program. She is the author of over 150 peer-reviewed papers, book chapters and reviews. Dr. Olivieri was responsible for the largest program of patients with thalassemia in North America. She has a long research career with focus on thalassemia, sickle cell anaemia, iron overload and transfusion medicine.

Dr. Olivieri went against a drug company and the medical establishment when she discovered a drug used to treat children had potentially serious and harmful side effects. She published the results in the New England Journal of Medicine without consent of the drug company and was sued and, without the support of the University of Toronto, she has continued her legal battles with the drug company.

BPW Canada commends Dr. Nancy for her dedication to her patients, commitment to her research, the maintenance of her outstanding medical ethics and her courage in the face of overwhelming forces attempting to silence her.

To prevent similar incidents from happening between Pharmaceutical companies and researchers who question the effects of products on the health of patients, further action is required by the Government of Canada.

***THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that BPW Canada urges the Government of Canada to investigate all incidents where Pharmaceutical companies may be promoting products, usually new drugs, and where a researcher questions the effect of the product on the health of the patient, and the pharmaceutical company retaliates by using its clout to silence anyone questioning its products by threatening that person with legal action and by withdrawing its support of the hospital, health care establishment or research facility.***

***FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that BPW Canada recommends that, if the investigation proves that undue influence was used, that the pharmaceutical company be fined.***

**RESOLUTION 2002-U3**

## **PENSIONS / TAXATION**

### ***Canada Pension Plan (CPP) Contributions***

Many Canadians, because of family obligations, geographical locations, educational background, age or because of the nature of work available to them (seasonal, casual, or part-time) are marginally employed. Their level of income makes it impossible for them to prepare financially for their old age through RSPs, GICs, etc. Most of these people are women (both old and young).

Every employer is required to deduct CPP contributions at source and to match funds on remittances to Revenue Canada. The marginally employed person's CPP contributions are automatically returned to them if their income is less than \$3,500. However, the employer's portion is not returned.

Retaining all CPP contributions deducted at source would enable every Canadian to be part of the National Pensions Plan as both a contributor and a recipient.

***THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that BPW Canada urges the Minister responsible for the Canada Pension Plan to mandate that all contributions to the CPP be retained within the plan to be drawn upon by all contributors according to existing CPP regulations.***

**RESOLUTION 2000-07**

## ***Canada Pension Plan (CPP) for Homemakers***

BPW Canada has previously requested the Government of Canada to work towards making it possible for homemakers to contribute to the CPP. However, Canadian homemakers, most of whom are women, are still unable to contribute to CPP even though many wish to do so.

***THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that BPW Canada once again re-affirms its request to the Government of Canada to explore the feasibility of permitting the spouse at home to contribute to CPP or QPP as a self-employed worker.***

**RESOLUTION 2000-08**

## ***Canada Pension Plan (CPP) for Caregivers***

Women are primary caregivers of aged, disabled or ill family members, often at the expense of their earning potential. Women, working full time, earn substantially less than men who are working full time. Consequently, women have lower pension income and less opportunity to save for retirement. Women have a considerably longer life expectancy than men and therefore require a pension income for longer than men. A disproportionate number of retired women live in poverty and rely heavily on the public pension system.

There is currently a “Child Rearing Drop Out Provision” for parents who have taken time out of the workforce to look after their child (up to 7 years). This provision is used when calculating CPP retirement benefits which decreases the years required to contribute, the net effect being an increase in the CPP retirement benefit paid out each month to the recipient.

BPW Canada would like to see a similar “Drop Out Provision” for Caregivers.

***THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that BPW Canada urges the Government of Canada to:***

- 1. Retain the public pension plan.***
- 2. Implement a CPP “drop-out” provision for contributors who take time out of the workforce to care for aged, disabled or ill family members. This would be similar to the existing “Child Rearing Drop Out Provision” provided for parents of children (up to age 7).***

**RESOLUTION 2002-08**

## ***Fair Income Tax Treatment for the Disabled***

CPP Disability Pension provides financial income benefits for the disabled.

When employee benefits have expired for low-income applicants who were members of group employee benefits and personal disability plans, often the only remaining source of income is CPP Disability.

As these benefits are 100% taxable, the recipient must pay taxes on this limited income.

***THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that BPW Canada urges Canada Customs and Revenue Agency to exempt CPP Disability Pension from taxation when it is the recipient's only source of income.***

**RESOLUTION 2000-16**

## Taxation and the Family

Stay-at-home parenting of small children should be encouraged as children benefit from the presence of caregivers who are consistent and who love the children. The value to society of a child who feels secure, self-confident and happy is immeasurable---lowered risk of delinquency and higher levels of productivity being some of the benefits.

The present system of taxation discriminates against families who choose to have only one parent employed, placing a financial burden on the family and encouraging both parents to seek employment. For example; for two families of equal income, the income of the family with one working parent is taxed on one tax return at a much higher rate than the family where both parents are working and are taxed separately.

Using the 2000 Income Tax Form, for the non-working spouse, the income could be included on a new line, Number 151. The working spouse could then deduct this amount on a new line, Number 152 (maximum \$30,004). The combined family net income would remain the same, not increasing the eligibility for tax credits. In addition, the combined allowable RSP deductions for both spouses should not exceed the maximum, requiring a change to the RSP worksheet.

This recommendation for income splitting is intended to be temporary and is not be construed as a precursor to the filing of joint tax returns for all taxpayers. However, we believe this change would encourage lower and middle-income families with small children to consider making the financial sacrifice necessary when one parent takes time out from the workforce.

***THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that BPW Canada urges the Government of Canada, in particular Canada Customs and Revenue Agency, to change the Income Tax Act affecting couples with children under the age of six years who have only one parent employed or self-employed to allow the working spouse to split his/her earned income with the non-working spouse and thus be taxed at a lower rate.***

**RESOLUTION 2001-02**

## **RSP Contribution Room for Care Givers**

Women often take time out from their working lives for care giving to children and other family members. It is generally agreed and recognized that homemakers' work is of value to the society as a whole and is not currently financially compensated. Statistics Canada reports that more women than men take time out of their careers to be primary caregivers of children and parents. This reduces women's lifetime working income, thereby reducing their allowable RRSP contribution room.

Women make up a proportionately high percentage of those living in poverty in their senior years due in part to their inability to save for retirement through RRSPs. They generally receive far less in both CPP benefits and private pension plan benefits upon retirement due to their status during their working years.

Women have a longer retirement to finance and therefore cannot afford to forfeit accumulating RRSP room while care giving family members.

Women still earn on average less than men. Statistics Canada reports that in 1999 women earned 64.1% of what men earned. Less earnings translates into less RRSP room as RRSP contribution room is calculated as 18% of previous year's earnings.

Women make up 45% of the Canadian paid labour force, yet only 32% of them work in jobs that provide pensions. They make up almost two thirds of the part-time workforce, which provides no benefits at all. Therefore, RRSPs are essential to their future financial well-being.

The combination of lower working wages, longer lifetime expectancy, lower pension incomes, and time taken off from the workforce for care giving, makes it crucial that tax laws be amended to allow people to accumulate RRSP contribution room while they are care giving family members based on average national childcare costs.

***THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that BPW Canada urges the Government of Canada to permit non-earning caregivers to contribute to RRSPs.***

***FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that BPW Canada urges the Government of Canada to amend tax laws to impute an appropriate income to the caregiver on which RRSP contribution room can be calculated.***

**RESOLUTION 2002-07**

# LABOUR RELATIONS

## *Workplace Child Care*

The Government of Canada has recognized the importance of quality Child Care. Many children are being cared for in less than ideal circumstances because their working parents cannot afford quality Child Care.

Quality Child Care is not always conveniently located. BPW Canada has as one of its purposes "to work toward the improvement of economic, employment and social conditions for women". Quality Child Care works to improve economic, employment and social conditions for parents by making it easier for them to work productively. Employers who provide workplace Child Care find that they benefit as well.

***THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that BPW Canada urges the Government of Canada to be responsible to institute tax incentives for employers for employers who establish on-site workplace Child Care.***

**RESOLUTION 2000-17**

## *Garment and Sportswear Industry*

The history of exploitation and abuse of workers in the garment and sportswear industries is not confined to Third World Countries. There is a problem of sweatshops emerging in Canada due to more and more companies competing for contracts from global fashion giants.

The majority of these garment workers are women and young people who put up with indignity to support their families. Often these factory and home workers are pressured to work up to 12 hours per day with no weekends off for extremely low wages.

Workers in Canada are demanding fair working conditions and a living wage. However, companies are trying to find ways to lower costs and increase their profits. They often set up production in countries where wage rates are lower, leaving Canadian workers without jobs.

Steps must be taken to ensure products are produced by workers who receive a living wage and work under favourable conditions. The Government of Canada responded positively to previous campaigns and has appointed Mr. John English to facilitate discussions between representatives of industry and civil society. Negotiations are now taking place for a "Canadian Based Code of Labour Practice" through the initiative called the "Canadian Partnership for Ethical Trading".



These steps are positive. However, we must move forward from this and increase public awareness through access to information on what "Wear is Fair" so that the consumer knows how and under what conditions clothes are made.

Although Labour Relations for the garment sector are a matter of Provincial jurisdiction, provisions are needed to allow workers and interested third parties to make anonymous complaints about violations to the Employment Standards Acts. Provisions are needed for "joint and several liability" so that retailers and manufacturers are legally liable for the violations of their contractors and subcontractors. Homeworkers need a central registry making it mandatory for manufacturers to provide information on their use of homework and rates and benefits paid.

***THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that BPW Canada urges the Government of Canada to make changes to:***

***1. The current Canadian Apparel registration system (number on apparel labels) so that consumers will know the name and address of the workplace where a piece of clothing is made.***

***2. Government of Canada procurement policies favouring the purchases by government institutions of products made under humane working conditions (in compliance with International Labour Organization and United Nations conventions and declarations).***

***FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that BPW Canada urges the Government of Canada, local clubs and organizations to encourage the respective Provincial Ministers to adopt legislation at the Provincial level that would produce these provisions in support of the actions taken by the Government.***

***RESOLUTION 2000-10***

## **Child Labour**

Research by the International Labour Organization (ILO) has revealed that at least 120 million children between the ages of five and 14 work full time; 250 million, including those for whom work is a secondary activity. Child trafficking across borders and children forced to labour in brothels, as beggars, and in sweatshops is on the rise. The commercial exploitation of children is a global issue. They are robbed of their childhood and dignity, considered as mere commodities and cheap labour. Child labour tends to be invisible, illegal and ignored by most of society. Asia employs over 60% of the world's child labour, often in intolerable forms.

Poverty remains the single most important factor pushing children into work and exploitative conditions at an early age. Substantial educational facilities, the direct and hidden costs of education and the low quality of education offered in many developing countries all combine to perpetuate the problem of child labour. Long standing entrenched social and cultural practices and change-resistant attitudes that are too often accepted uncritically are equally important contributory factors in the perpetuation of child labour.

The most vulnerable victims of child labour exploitation are girls and children from ethnic minorities, politically or socially disrupted areas and socially excluded families. Universally compulsory education remains the most effective response to child labour. Girl children are the most vulnerable because of difficulties in providing dowries, cultural taboos to the education of girls, traditional child labour strongholds of domestic service and the slave trade.

***THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that BPW Canada urges the Government of Canada to:***

- 1. Strongly encourage that countries receiving Foreign Aid from Canada must also make available sufficient funding for the education of children under the age of 15.***
- 2. Introduce legislation forbidding the advertising of young children in the sex trade through the tourist trade.***
- 3. Institute a public information campaign to encourage joint efforts by governments, employers, workers' organizations and other concerned partners including NGOs, universities, health institutions, the judiciary, parliamentarians and the media to encourage governments to commit themselves to cooperation with International Labour Organization (ILO) in Canada and its program the International Program in the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC).***
- 4. Ensure that all articles imported and sold in Canada are guaranteed to be produced without child labour.***

**RESOLUTION 2000-19**