



September 18, 2025

The Right Honourable Mark Carney
Prime Minister of Canada
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6

Dear Prime Minister Carney:

The Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women (BPW Canada) respectfully submits the enclosed 2025 Brief for your consideration and action. The items herein represent the resolutions brought forward by our members from across the country, which were debated and accepted at our National Convention held on August 23, 2025.

BPW Canada is a non-sectarian, non-partisan organization that promotes and practices inclusion, diversity, equity and access. Our history includes over 90 years of advocacy for the inclusion of equal rights for women in legislation and policy. 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.

On behalf of BPW Canada, I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the federal government's recent efforts to improve working conditions for women. This year, the government has invested in initiatives to enhance women's economic participation, including targeted support for women in STEM fields and Indigenous women and youth, as well as programs that help women with disabilities overcome employment barriers. Efforts to advance workplace gender equality through awareness, policy change, and intersectional approaches, alongside funding to strengthen the capacity of women's organizations, further demonstrate a commitment to creating inclusive, equitable, and supportive work environments across Canada.

We respectfully request that you and the relevant Ministers review the enclosed resolutions and be available to meet with our delegation at a time that suits 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 commend your efforts to advance gender equality and look forward to meeting with you in the near future.

Yours truly,

Shan McEwing
President 2024-2026
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**Submission
to**

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE MARK CARNEY

PRIME MINISTER OF CANADA

BY



The Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women

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

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Women**

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

“Women Working for Working Women”

September 2025



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Introduction

The Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women (BPW Canada) respectfully submits the following brief to the Government of Canada.

Founded in 1930, BPW Canada is a non-partisan, equality-seeking organization committed to advancing the economic, political, social, and employment conditions of women. As a charter member of BPW International, which has held Consultative Status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) since 1947, BPW Canada represents the voice of working women across the country. It contributes to global advocacy for women's rights.

For over ninety years, BPW Canada has worked in collaboration with governments at all levels to advance equity, inclusion, and justice. The resolutions contained in this brief were developed through a democratic, grassroots process across our national membership, debated, and adopted at the BPW Canada 2025 Annual General Meeting.

These resolutions address pressing challenges facing Canadian women, families, and communities while highlighting opportunities for Canada to demonstrate leadership by advancing policies that promote fairness, safety, equity, and prosperity. Developed by our grassroots clubs, each resolution underwent a formal process of research, debate, and voting at the local club level before being formally debated and adopted at the BPW Canada Annual General Meeting on August 23, 2025.

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1. Single Senior Women and Federal Tax Equity

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women (BPW Canada) urges the Government of Canada and relevant ministries to promote greater tax fairness for single seniors. The primary goal is to ensure equitable tax relief for single seniors by:

1. Introducing a tax provision to compensate single seniors for the considerable reduction in taxes payable by couples who use pension income splitting in order to make pension income splitting work for all seniors;
2. Increasing the income clawback thresholds for Old Age Security and the age amount non-refundable tax credit for single seniors;
3. Implementing a new single senior non-refundable tax credit equivalent to half of the personal amount for the applicable taxation year;
4. Increasing the pension income credit amount from \$2,000 to \$3,000 for single seniors;
5. Amending the tax treatment of registered plan proceeds on the death of a single senior to allow a tax-deferred rollover to any beneficiary (regardless of the relationship with the deceased) with a maximum ten-year payout. If the beneficiary dies within the ten-year period, the remaining amount would be fully taxable.

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women (BPW Canada) urges the Government of Canada to reassess existing taxation legislation to eliminate systemic inequities between single and married seniors and ensure fair, inclusive, and financially supportive policies for all seniors.

Rationale:

The Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women (BPW Canada) advocates for improving the economic conditions of women across the country. Senior couples in Canada benefit from pension income splitting, which can reduce income taxes and mitigate clawbacks on Old Age Security and non-refundable age amounts. In contrast, single women are unable to transfer RRSP or RRIF assets upon death to beneficiaries of their choice without potentially incurring up to 50% taxation and repaying portions of OAS benefits. This inequity underscores the need for the Government of Canada and relevant ministries to examine and implement measures that ensure single senior women are treated equitably relative to senior couples.

Single senior women face disproportionate economic vulnerability: they live longer than men and are over four times as likely to experience poverty compared to their coupled peers (Auditor General, 2024). Furthermore, research indicates that a single senior may pay up to 9.6 times more in taxes than a senior couple (SSTF, 2024). Addressing these disparities aligns with Canada's commitments as a signatory to the Agreed Conclusions of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) sessions and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), reinforcing the country's obligation to promote gender equity and economic justice for all seniors.

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2. Criminalization of Coercive Control in Intimate Partner Relationships

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women (BPW Canada) urges the Government of Canada and relevant ministries to:

1. Formally reintroduce and support the passage of former Bill C-332, or equivalent legislation, into federal law;
2. Lead, fund and develop a coordinated, national approach by working in partnership with provincial and territorial governments to prioritize addressing coercive control within broader gender-based violence strategies;
3. Launch and fund a national public awareness campaign on coercive control, in partnership with provinces, territories, and community organizations, to inform the public of its warning signs, impact, and legal implications; Ensure that the development and implementation of coercive control legislation and related services are survivor-informed, trauma-informed and developed in collaboration with frontline organizations and those with lived experiences.
4. Ensure that the development and implementation of coercive control legislation and related services are survivor-informed, trauma-informed and developed in collaboration with frontline organizations and those with lived experiences.

Rationale:

Intimate partner violence remains a significant societal issue in Canada, with one woman being violently killed by an intimate partner every six days. Coercive control—manifested through manipulation, isolation, threats, and financial domination—is a precursor to physical violence in 95% of partner abuse cases and leaves many victims vulnerable and unsupported within the justice system. While former Bill C-332 proposed amendments to the Criminal Code to criminalize coercive control, Canada currently lacks explicit legal measures to address this form of abuse. This gap contrasts with international best practices, such as those implemented in the United Kingdom, and leaves victims without sufficient legal protection.

Gender-based violence is recognized as a national crisis, with rates of such violence rising since the COVID-19 pandemic. Implementing coercive control legislation would save lives by providing legal protection against psychological and emotional abuse, enabling earlier intervention, and helping to prevent the escalation of harmful behaviours that may lead to physical violence or death. Criminalizing coercive control is therefore a critical step toward ensuring the safety, dignity, and rights of survivors across Canada.

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3. Standing with Afghan Women and Girls

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women (BPW Canada) urges the Government of Canada and relevant ministries to:

1. Implement targeted sanctions against individuals and entities supporting gender-based persecution in Afghanistan, including Taliban affiliates and their enablers;
2. Work closely with the International Court of Justice (ICJ), International Criminal Court (ICC), and other state parties to advance the current legal proceedings and to bring additional countries into these efforts;
3. Increase and direct humanitarian aid to Canadian and international organizations that serve Afghan women and girls, both in-country and in refugee settings;
4. Expand and accelerate refugee pathways for Afghan women at risk, while simplifying the asylum process;
5. Fund remote education and employment programs that circumvent Taliban restrictions.
6. Advocate for the rights of Afghan women at international forums and collaborate with international allies to develop coordinated efforts to pressure the Taliban to restore women's rights and hold them accountable for violations;
7. Raise awareness about the challenges faced by Afghan women and girls through social media campaigns, public events, and advocacy initiatives;
8. Provide logistical and intelligence support through the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) to Afghan resistant groups who advocate for women's rights and democratic freedoms, to help counter Taliban oppression and protect at-risk populations;
9. Amplify the voices of Afghan women by collaborating with them in Canadian and International advocacy efforts, ensuring their perspectives inform decision-making processes.

Rationale

Afghan women and girls continue to face severe and systemic violations of their rights under the Taliban regime, including restrictions on education, employment, and freedom of movement. The international community, including Canada, has a moral and legal obligation to protect human rights, as outlined in CEDAW, the Rome Statute, and other treaties to which Canada is a signatory. Canadian civil society and the Government of Canada can take meaningful action to support Afghan women and girls through advocacy, humanitarian aid, and refugee resettlement programs.

Empowering Afghan women and girls through access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities is essential not only for their individual well-being but also for the long-term stability of Afghanistan. The Taliban's persistent lack of accountability for human rights violations targeting women and girls sets a dangerous precedent, emboldening other authoritarian regimes and extremist groups to act with impunity. This undermines global efforts to uphold women's rights, the rule of law, and democratic principles, making coordinated international action, including by Canada, both necessary and urgent (Human Rights Watch, 2023; UN, 2023).

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4. Challenges Faced by Professional Immigrant Women Integrating into Canada's Workforce

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women (BPW Canada) urges the Government of Canada, along with the appropriate ministries and regulatory bodies, to address the systemic barriers facing professional immigrants and to promote their full economic integration by strengthening Canada's Credential Recognition Framework and bridging programs, through the following measures:

1. Develop and implement a standardized, transparent national framework for the timely and equitable recognition of international credentials, in collaboration with provincial and territorial governments, professional regulatory bodies, and employers;
2. Expand and invest in bridging programs and sector-specific training, ensuring these initiatives are accessible, affordable, and tailored to high-demand professions, enabling skilled immigrants to return to work in their fields of expertise;
3. Provide funding and encourage provinces and territories to establish structured mentorship and professional networking programs, connecting internationally trained professionals with established practitioners, employers, and industry associations to support career advancement and social capital development.

Rationale

Professional immigrant women in Canada face systemic barriers in employment, including the non-recognition of foreign credentials, professional deskilling, limited access to professional networks, and underrepresentation in leadership roles (Hudon, 2022; TRIEC, 2022). Despite high levels of education, recent immigrant women experience higher unemployment rates (15.2% vs. 8.0% for Canadian-born women), lower wages—over 20% less than those of their Canadian-born counterparts—and lower full-time employment rates (59% vs. 80%) (Statistics Canada, 2022; Hudon, 2022).

They are overrepresented in lower-wage sectors disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 and occupy only 14% of executive positions compared to 25% for women overall. These disparities reflect systemic gender inequities in Canada's labour market and underscore the need for targeted, intersectional solutions to ensure immigrant women can fully contribute to Canada's economy, leadership, and society.

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5. Strengthening the Recognition of Foreign Credentials with Employment Equity Measures

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women (BPW Canada) urges the Government of Canada and relevant ministries to amend the Employment Equity Act to include the following measures to enhance the recognition of foreign credentials for professional immigrants:

1. Expedited Credential Assessment Programs: Establish partnerships between federally regulated employers and regulatory bodies to create streamlined processes for credential recognition;
2. Encourage the provinces to introduce mentorship programs, bridging initiatives, and workplace integration support for immigrants in professional fields;
3. Incentivize employers to recruit and retain professional immigrants in roles aligned with their qualifications.
4. Provide funding and encourage employers in federally regulated sectors to implement specialized employment equity programs that focus on recruiting, retaining, and promoting immigrants to specialized positions;
5. Require employers to collect disaggregated data on the employment of immigrants and publicly report their progress in meeting equity goals.

Rationale

Despite the Employment Equity Act's intent to promote workplace equality, professional immigrant women in Canada continue to face significant barriers in accessing employment that aligns with their skills and qualifications (Statistics Canada, 2022). Non-recognition of foreign credentials contributes to underemployment and professional deskilling, even among those with advanced degrees and extensive experience (Hudon, 2022). Recent immigrant women experience higher unemployment rates (15.2% vs. 8.0% for Canadian-born women), earn over 20% less than their Canadian-born counterparts, and are less likely to secure full-time employment despite having comparable educational backgrounds (Hudon, 2022; Statistics Canada, 2022). They are disproportionately represented in lower-wage sectors, particularly in industries heavily impacted by COVID-19, and occupy only 14% of executive positions despite their workforce participation (Statistics Canada, 2021; TRIEC, 2022). These disparities highlight the need for targeted, intersectional policies to ensure immigrant women have equitable access to meaningful employment, fair wages, and leadership opportunities.

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6. Recommitment to Increasing Women's Representation in Leadership Roles

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women (BPW Canada) urges the Government of Canada and relevant ministries to:

1. Take immediate and bold actions to accelerate the implementation of international agreements such as the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) for Action, ensuring women's full participation and leadership in all levels of decision-making across both public and private sectors;
2. Reaffirm its commitment to gender-balanced and supporting women in leadership decision-making roles, prioritizing gender parity as a key pillar of Canada's democratic, social, and economic agenda for the future;
3. Prioritize women's rights, with particular focus on Indigenous women, racialized women and 2SLGBTIQ+ individuals who are disproportionately impacted by systemic inequities;
4. Foster coordinated efforts across governments and organizations to address intersectionality and systemic barriers, to ensure that women from all backgrounds are empowered and able to contribute to effective policies for an equitable society;
5. Recommend coordinated, cross-sectoral strategies that embed intersectionality and dismantle structural barriers to women's advancement;
6. Commit to targeted investments in leadership pathways for Indigenous women, racialized women and 2SLGBTIQ+ individuals most impacted by systemic inequities.

Rationale

Canada's ranking in the Global Gender Gap Index has fallen from 19th in 2020 to 36th in 2024, highlighting ongoing gender inequities. Rising nationalism and populism worldwide have intensified risks to human rights, disproportionately affecting racialized women, 2SLGBTQI+ individuals, Indigenous women, and Black women. Increasing women's representation in leadership across public and private sectors is vital, as women leaders contribute to more equitable laws, improved access to essential services, stronger business performance, and better outcomes in peace and development initiatives. Advancing gender-balanced decision-making is essential for achieving gender equality, empowering women and girls, and ensuring that policies and laws effectively address the diverse needs of Canadian society while inspiring future generations.

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7. Amend the Canada Health Policy to Empower Universal Access to Primary Health Care and Funding for New Models of Primary Health Care

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women (BPW Canada) urges the Government of Canada and relevant ministries to:

1. Expand the Canada Health Transfer (CHT) to include dedicated, targeted funding for team-based models of primary care, including but not limited to physicians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, social workers, and other regulated health professionals, in addition to the existing coverage for services provided by physicians and in hospitals;
2. Require that provincial and territorial governments implement and fund geographically based primary care delivery models to operate within the terms of the CHA, utilizing postal code catchment areas, where every resident is guaranteed access to a publicly funded, interdisciplinary team of care providers tailored to local population needs.
3. Follow through on the January 10, 2025 statement from the Ministry of Health on the Canada Health Act to provide a new Canada Health Services Policy as of April 1, 2026, that if a service is considered medically necessary, it should be covered by a patient's provincial or territorial health care plan, whether a physician or a physician-equivalent provides the service.

Rationale

The Canada Health Act currently covers only medically necessary services provided by physicians or in hospitals, failing to reflect evolving primary health care delivery models. Over 5.4 million Canadians lack access to a primary care provider, and universal access to primary health care is not guaranteed, disproportionately affecting women, low-income individuals, and racialized communities. Existing public funding excludes services provided by regulated health professionals, such as nurse practitioners, physician assistants, and social workers, many of whom are women, despite their ability to improve access through team-based care. Recent federal initiatives, including the 2025 expansion of the Canada Health Act and provincial pilot programs for geographically based, interdisciplinary primary care teams, signal important steps toward improving equitable access and addressing systemic gaps in Canada's healthcare system.

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8. Measuring and Counteracting the Gendered Impact of Artificial Intelligence on Women's Employment

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women (BPW Canada) urges the Government of Canada and relevant ministries to:

1. Embed Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) into all federal policies, funding programs, and procurement processes related to AI and workforce transformation, to accurately measure the impact of AI technologies on women's employment;
2. Create a National Gender Equity in AI Task Force to monitor the economic and social impacts of AI on women and develop counteractive measures;
3. Ensure investments in AI training, adoption, and commercialization include retraining, upskilling, and digital literacy programs that specifically support women transitioning from high-risk occupations into sustainable, future-oriented employment;
4. Introduce legislation, based on Bill C-27, Artificial Intelligence and Data Act, and includes mandatory equity audits, gender-disaggregated data reporting, and independent oversight for AI systems used in employment.

Rationale

Women in Canada are significantly overrepresented in administrative and clerical roles, which are among the most vulnerable to displacement by artificial intelligence (AI). The International Labour Organization reports that 9.6% of female-dominated occupations face high risk from AI, compared to 3.5% of male-dominated roles. While Canada has made progress with GBA+ and the Pan-Canadian AI Strategy, federal policies often fail to consistently apply GBA+ to AI tools in hiring and workforce management. Private-sector employers, including those with government contracts, are under no obligation to ensure AI systems are fair or inclusive, and small and medium-sized enterprises often lack guidance to address bias. Without gender-equity safeguards, AI could exacerbate inequality, push women out of the workforce, and weaken the economy. BPW Canada calls on the federal government to embed GBA+ into all AI-related policies, create a National Gender Equity in AI Task Force, invest in retraining and upskilling women, and legislate mandatory equity audits and oversight for AI in employment, in alignment with Canada's commitment to gender equality under Sustainable Development Goal 5.

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Conclusion

BPW Canada urges the Government of Canada to give serious consideration to the recommendations set out in this brief. Each resolution addresses urgent and systemic issues that impact women's lives, economic security, health, and safety, while also strengthening Canadian society as a whole.

We believe that the implementation of these measures will contribute to building a more just, inclusive, and resilient Canada, one in which women of all backgrounds can thrive and fully contribute to our shared future.

BPW Canada stands ready to meet with government representatives to provide further insight into these recommendations and to collaborate in shaping policies that advance gender equality and strengthen Canada's leadership on the global stage.