



ONTARIO EQUAL PAY COALITION

IT'S TIME TO CLOSE THE GENDER PAY GAP

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Equal Pay Coalition calls demand change to strengthen Ontario's new Pay Transparency Act

On Tuesday March 6, 2018, the Ontario government introduced a new Pay Transparency Act to help close the gender pay gap.

All employers in the province have had a legal obligation to deliver discrimination-free pay since the 1960s. But employers continue to flout the law. The Pay Equity Office reports that 54% of employers have gender pay gaps contrary to the *Pay Equity Act*. and the government reports that the pay gap has not closed in thirty years.

Pay Transparency tells employers time's up on discrimination. It requires employers to disclose their wages to prove they are complying with their existing legal obligations under Ontario's *Human Rights Code* and the *Pay Equity Act*. Lack of pay transparency feeds the pay gap.

"Pay transparency is an important enforcement tool", says **Fay Faraday, Equal Pay Coalition co-chair**. "But this bill must be strengthened if it is to make meaningful change. This first reading let's most employers off the hook."

The new Act's transparency obligations will first apply to the Ontario Public Service. Then, following consultation, will apply to employers with more than 500 employees, and later still to those with more than 250 employees. The Act does contain important anti-reprisal protections and new posting provisions requiring employers to advertise the salary range for a position and prohibit asking about prior salaries.

The Equal Pay Coalition calls for significant amendments to strengthen the Act and bring it in line with employers' existing legal obligations not to discriminate: The Act must be amended to:

- apply to all private and public sector employers with more than 10 employees to match the Pay Equity Act;
- apply to all government procurement so government contracts comply with equality rights;
- include mandatory timelines to file annual transparency reports with the Ministry of Labour;
- require employers to deliver annual transparency reports to corporate shareholders;
- clearly set out what information must be in the transparency reports, including compensation structure and wage grids by gender, job classification, and job status (full-time, part-time, casual, seasonal and temporary agency); and
- include a clear purpose clause in the legislation.

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info@equalpaycoalition.org

www.equalpaycoalition.org

474 Bathurst Street, Suite 300, Toronto, ON M5T 2S6

The gender pay gap drives women's poverty, particularly for Indigenous and racialized women. Indigenous women face a 57% gender pay gap. Racialized and immigrant women face a gap of 37% to 39%. Women who are recent immigrants earn, on average, 57% as much as a white man. Women with disabilities face a 46% pay gap. Overall, the gender pay gap is 31%.

"Pay transparency laws work", says **Jan Borowy, Equal Pay Coalition co-chair**. "The government had many international models to build on, but they choose to aim lower than the weakest existing model which is in the UK."

Even in the UK, initial transparency reports reveal that 74% of employers pay men significantly more than women.

Equal Pay Day in Ontario will be marked on Tuesday 10 April 2018.

Ontario has no time to waste. Amend the law so that we have something worth celebrating on Equal Pay Day.

For more information, please contact:

Fay Faraday co-Chair, Equal Pay Coalition: 416-389-4399 or Jan Borowy, co-chair, Equal Pay Coalition, 416-985-2069.