

Women's Committee Report
April 2018



This year on Tuesday, April 10, 2018, Unifor marks Equal Pay Day. This date is designated each year as the time when women will finally earn the same wage that men did in 2017!

Women in Canada make roughly 30 per cent less than men. But this gap is larger for women who face systemic discrimination because they are Aboriginal, workers of colour, LGBTQ, elderly or have disabilities. In fact, the gap between what men and women earn is so significant that women must work more than three months to earn what men earned the previous year.

This widespread gender wage discrimination is unacceptable.

What's needed is active intervention by governments, business and all employers to change practices that drive women's economic inequality and poverty. To make this happen we all need to take action.

By working together, taking action and sending a united message we can close the gender wage gap. **Join Unifor to take action to close the gender wage gap with these four steps and let's make some noise!**

1. **Wear red on Tuesday April 10** because the gender pay gap leaves women, "in the red" and help us send a united visual message with your selfie or group photo.
2. **Share your "red" solidarity photos** on social media and email your images to communications@unifor.org!
3. [Share these Unifor graphics](#) to show how to close the gap on women's wages. On social media please include the hashtag #EqualPayDay
4. Contact your provincial and federal representatives to ask that they take meaningful actions to finally end the gender wage gap. Demand pay transparency and action on universal child care by submitting this letter to your MLAs or MPs.

Dear Member of Parliament:

Women make less than men on almost any measure – average hourly wage, earnings over the year and even comparing the average full-time workers by gender. We know that for racialized workers, workers with disability, immigrant or indigenous workers the gap is even wider.

Two concrete actions that you can take are supporting pay transparency legislation and a universal child care program.

All employers have a legal obligation to deliver discrimination-free pay however some employers continue to flout the law. Pay transparency requires employers to disclose their wages to prove they are complying with their existing legal obligations human rights legislation. Women are often underpaid for

work of the same value. This is compounded where the work is predominantly done by women of colour, aboriginal women or women who are recent immigrants.

Countries that have introduced pay transparency legislation have experienced a smaller gender wage gap.

Access to affordable child care is another contributor to the gender wage gap. When child care is inaccessible and unaffordable, it is women who fill the gap. This leads to a lifelong impact on their economic security.

A universal child care program would support all parents to access the workplace. It would have a particular impact on women. Good quality child care is good for parents, good for children and good for the economy.

I'm asking you to let me know what steps you will be taking to help close the gender wage gap. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Valerie Saliba

This is the work that needs to be done. But we should recognize the marches that have taken place since my last report. On January 20th we marched on the Alberta Legislature to show solidarity for:

- Our Sisters in the United States fighting Trump's administration
- As well as to reaffirm our commitment to work with our Indigenous Sisters who are working on advancing their rights in our province
- Continuing the momentum on ending violence against women.

March 3rd the International Women's Day march was held. Bad weather conditions did not stop the Sisters from marching to bring awareness to the issues we still struggle with. Unfortunately, I was not able to attend as I was taking the Labour Community Advocate (LCA) Course that day.

The LCA course as designed to educate its attendees on how to identify members in trouble before they get to the discipline process at work. Once identified, we are trained how to approach the member and to ask the right questions to provide resources to help the member. Level I covered Community services with the Tough Times Handbook being given to the LCAs; and classes on Financial Counselling, substance abuse & misuse, stress, mental health, workplace violence and family violence. If you cannot bargain a Women's Advocate into your next CBA or do not have enough women to require one, I recommend that this course be taken by one of your members at your facility. It is the Union alternative to the EFAPs offered by most companies and strives to get help to the member **before** the company goes down the discipline path. I look forward to starting Level II this week and hope that when I am done I will be able to service all genders that struggle with issues that lead to discipline at work.

Feel free to contact me with events in your community or issues of concern.

Respectfully Submitted,

Valerie Saliba

Chair of the Women's Committee

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