

12 steps to closing the gender pay gap

PG 3

The gender wage gap is about more than wages

PG 5

How Premier Wynne is widening the gender pay gap

PG 5

# CHAMPIONING EQUALITY

## DID YOU KNOW?

- Ontario has a roughly 30% gender pay gap.
- Canada ranks fifth worst amongst developed nations with regards to the gender pay gap.
- Despite legislation and good intentions, we are a long way off from equal pay.
- The Ontario Equal Pay Coalition has prepared a detailed action plan to close the gender pay gap to 0% by 2025.



PEPPER MEDIA

## On April 19, 2016, the Ontario government officially recognizes Equal Pay Day.

Each year, in Ontario and around the globe, Equal Pay Day highlights the gender pay gap that causes real economic hardship for women. It is a call to action to end this systemic sex discrimination.

Ontario marks Equal Pay Day in mid-April. Why? Because with a roughly 30% gender pay gap, Ontario women on average need to work an extra three and a half months into the new year to earn what men on average earned by the end of the previous year.

There are many ways to measure the gender pay gap – average annual earnings (29.4% gap), full-time/full-year earnings (24.3%) or hourly wages (14%). (Statistics Canada, CIS). A focus on average annual earnings shows how much less money women have to support themselves and their families. But no matter how it is measured, women face a persistent pay gap that penalizes them because they are women. That penalty is even larger for women who face systemic discrimination because they are Indigenous, racialized, have disabilities, are immigrants or temporary migrants, are LGBTQ or are elderly.

While the gap has narrowed somewhat since the 1970s, Statistics Canada data shows that a substantial gender pay gap exists in every major occupational category and industry, in the private and public sector. Every age cohort has a gender pay gap and it increases with age. Women earn less than men at every level of education completed and the gap grows as women invest in more education.

A 30% gender pay gap in 2016 shows that current measures to close the gap are not working. This ongoing inequality is a human rights crisis that harms women, their families and communities across Ontario.

*The gender pay gap isn't simply bad business practice – it is a breach of fundamental human rights law.*

Equal Pay Day recognizes that the gender pay gap won't go away on its own. Active intervention is needed by governments and businesses to transform the practices that drive women's economic inequality and poverty.

Understanding what creates and sustains the gender pay gap is the first step towards eliminating it.

Women's work continues to be undervalued and underpaid relative to men's work, when they are doing substantially similar work, work of similar value, or even the identical jobs. The more female-dominated the work, the more it is undervalued.

This gap is exacerbated by widespread sex discrimination in accessing jobs that leave women clustered into a narrower range of jobs than men. Women are disproportionately segregated into the lowest paid sectors and the lowest paid jobs in those sectors.

The pay gap also reflects the fact that women can access fewer hours of paid work than men and their paid hours fluctuate and are unpredictable, as women predominate in precarious temporary, casual and agency work.

Women continue to bear a disproportionate responsibility and economic cost for providing unpaid care to children, elderly relatives and family members with disabilities.

Nearly 70% of all part-time workers are women. But women, much more so than men, are working part-time involuntarily, primarily due to the lack of affordable childcare.

Sexual harassment, sexual violence and pregnancy discrimination also continue to disrupt women's employment, leading them to miss work, suffer reprisals and even be driven from their jobs. And, women without protection for paid sick days continue to lose work hours, or even their jobs, when they need to care for sick children and family members.

Just as many dynamics create and sustain the gender pay gap, many systemic strategies are needed to close the gap.

"Business as usual" is no solution; it in fact drives many of these discriminatory practices. Equal Pay Day calls for a critical examination of how businesses and governments rely upon women's underpaid precarious work to deliver profits and to deliver lower cost public services.

In 2015, Ontario appointed a steering committee to help develop its promised strategy to close the pay gap once and for all. That strategy must deliver real, robust systemic protection for women's human right to equality on the job and in the labour market. Ontario's Equal Pay Coalition has prepared a detailed analysis of the gender pay gap and an

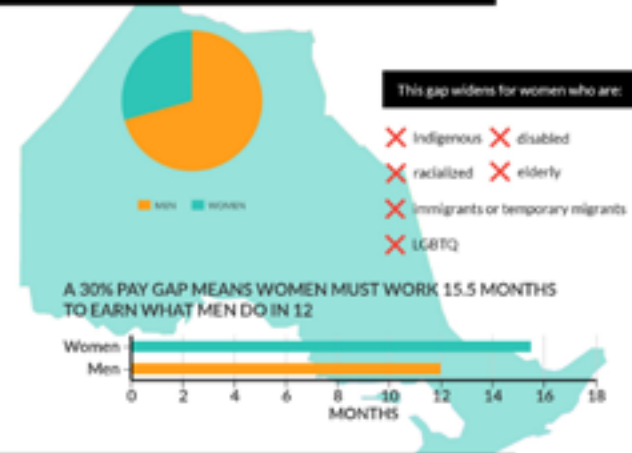
action plan to close the gender pay gap to 0% by 2025 ([www.equalpaycoalition.org](http://www.equalpaycoalition.org)).

It's 2016. It's time for Ontario governments and businesses to act to deliver economic equality for women in the province.

*By Mary Cornish and Fay Faraday, Ontario Equal Pay Coalition*

## THE GENDER PAY GAP IN ONTARIO

Women in Ontario make roughly 30% less than men\*



The gender pay gap isn't simply bad business practice – it is a breach of fundamental human rights law.

\*Based on the most recent Statistics Canada Canadian Income Survey (2012)

**CLOSE THE GENDER PAY GAP. BECAUSE IT'S 2016.**



# CLOSE THE GENDER PAY GAP. BECAUSE IT'S 2016.



- **Mark Equal Pay Day with**
  - ✓ Mary Cornish, Chair, Equal Pay Coalition
  - ✓ Fred Hahn, President, CUPE Ontario
  - ✓ Sharon DeSousa, Vice President, OFL at 12:30pm, April 19, 2016 at the corner of University and College.
- **Wear red** because discriminatory pay gaps keep women "in the red".
- **Look for our Equal Pay Day street teams** in downtown Toronto, pick up a pin and show your support for pay equity.
- **Post your support** on social media: #EPD2016.

**0% gender pay gap by 2025**



ONTARIO  
EQUAL PAY  
COALITION

It's time  
for a FAIR  
Ontario

[www.equalpaycoalition.org](http://www.equalpaycoalition.org)



# GENDER AND RACIAL PAY GAPS STIFLE LOCAL AND REGIONAL ECONOMIES

Though they make up nearly half of the workforce in the U.S. and Canada, women — and women of colour in particular — continue to be marginalized in labor markets. Women make significantly less than men of similar experience and education, are vastly overrepresented in low-wage work, and are underrepresented in management — these are not just civil rights issues, they are fundamental failures within the labor market that are holding back economic growth for cities, regions, and entire nations.

When my mother, a young journalist, moved us from her home town of Montreal to New Jersey in the early 1950s, soon after I was born, she was looking for relatively better opportunities to advance in her profession as a woman, and the grass at least appeared to be greener in the States at the time. It did not necessarily turn out to be the case, and both countries still have a long way to go, but there are also promising changes in attitudes and concrete policy steps being taken on both sides of the border, as the imperative for justice intersects in new ways with strong economic incentives for inclusion and fairness.

Urban and regional economies -- in both the public and private sector — have a stake in seeing gender and racial pay gaps decline. As a group, women in the U.S. and Canada are more educated than their male peers and they are the fastest growing demographic of entrepreneurs, with women of colour leading the growth in small-business ownership in the U.S. This, in part, is why many local leaders are doubling down on efforts to address inequities in the workplace, seeking to capitalize on the often underappreciated talent and potential that women in the workforce bring to the table.

For example, under the leadership of former Mayor Thomas Menino, Boston sought to become the “premier city for working women”, and current Mayor Marty Walsh recently pledged to become the first U.S. city to eliminate the gender pay gap entirely. Boston is home to the largest proportion of young women between age 20 and 34 — and the highest percentage of college educated women — of any major U.S. city, making the economic opportunity of its young women top priority for local leaders. To close the remaining 18-cent pay gap in the city, Mayor Walsh is leading the charge to educate businesses on the economic importance of closing the gender pay gap. One particular business-focused effort, 100% Talent, is a first-of-its-kind initiative that has enlisted 100 companies to voluntarily pledge to help close the gender gap by sharing payroll data (including metrics on gender and race), implementing recommended practices to reduce pay inequities, and participating in biennial reviews to discuss their progress. The Mayor has also spearheaded a \$1.5 million project called Work Smart in Boston, which will provide 90,000 women with salary and benefits negotiation training over the next 5 years.

On the opposite coast, in a city home to the largest gender pay gap among major U.S. cities -- local government in Seattle, Washington is taking inspiration from Boston's example. After a 2013 analysis found that women in the

Seattle metropolitan area were earning 73 percent of what men make, with women of colour earning anywhere from 49 to 60 percent, then-Mayor McGinn's office convened the City of Seattle's Gender Equity in Pay Task Force, which has led the city to pass a resolution in 2014 calling on several cities departments, including the Personnel Department, Seattle Office of Civil Rights, and the Mayor's Office, to promote progressive policies in hiring, pay, and benefits that specifically target both gender and racial inequities. Within the private sector, the city's Chamber of Commerce and the Women's Funding Alliance launched their own 100% Talent in 2015 whereby businesses will be obligated to identify internal gender equity issues, share lessons learned with other employers, and implement at least three of the 33 best practices identified by the initiative, including flexible scheduling, greater wage transparency, and increased diversity in hiring practices.

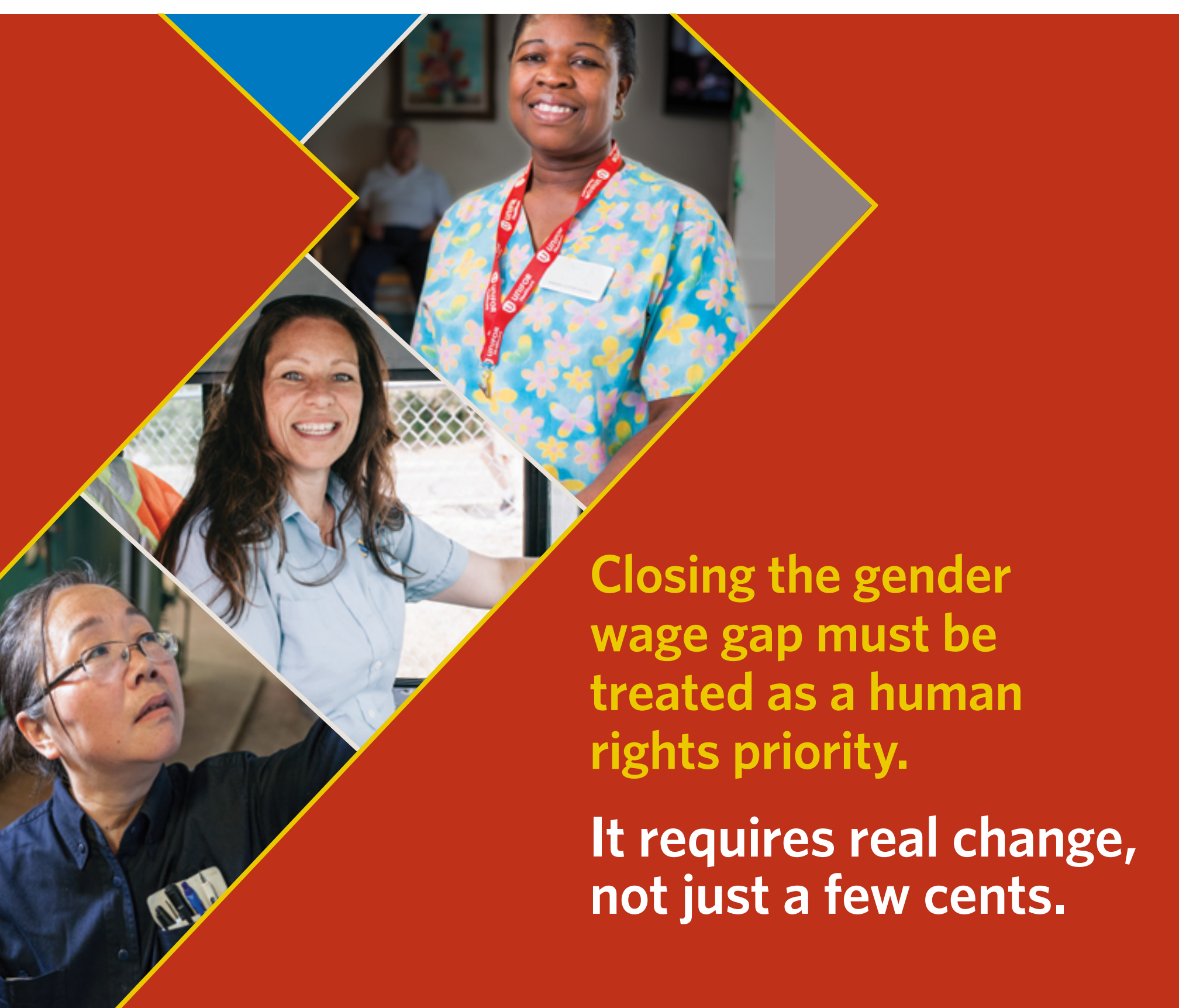
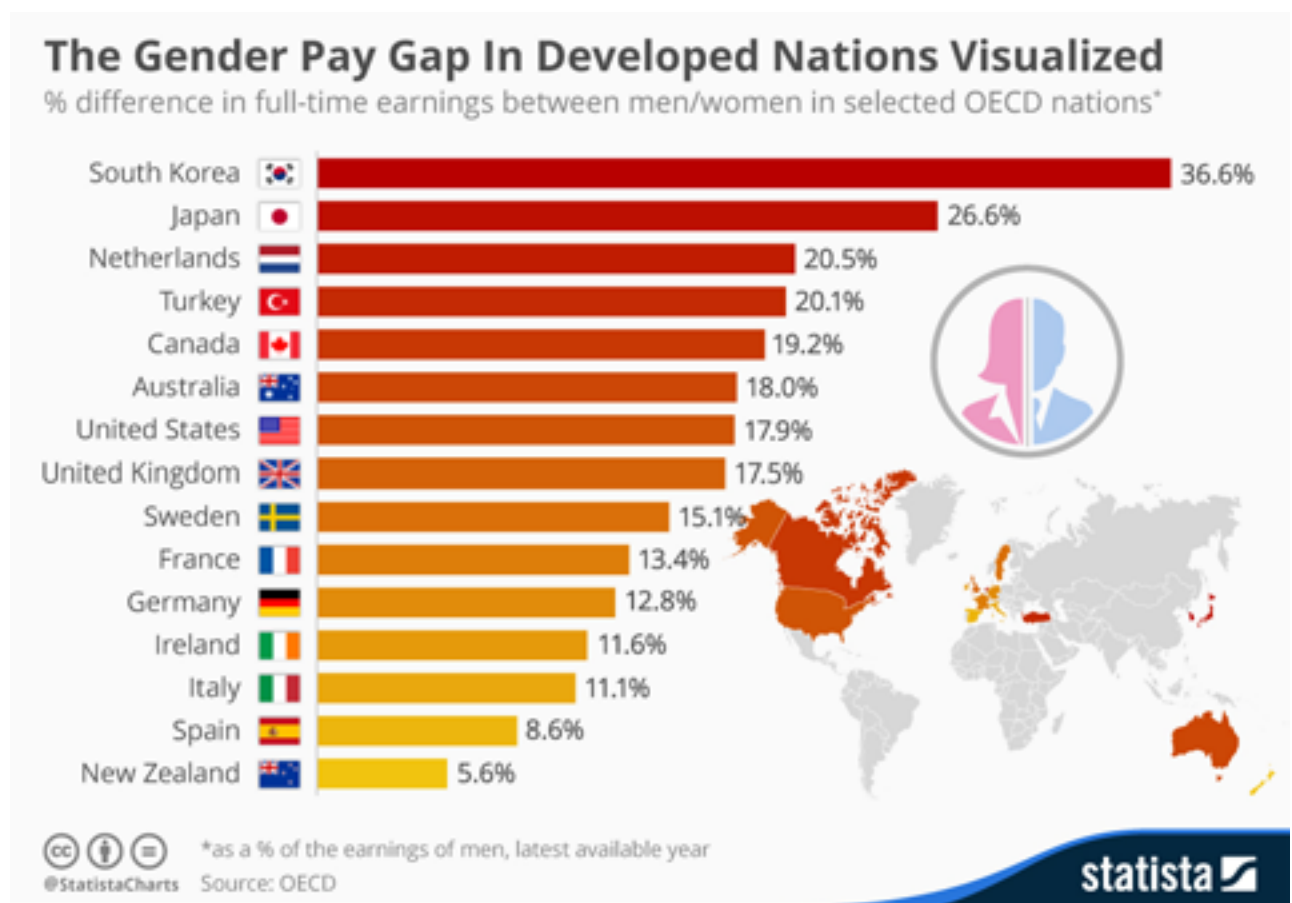
Though these efforts are still in their early stages, these leaders are proving that they understand the crucial opportunity facing cities and regions today: the places that will thrive the most in the 21st century economy will be those that embrace inclusion and capitalize on the talent, creativity, and potential of all residents — especially those who have too often been left behind. This dedication to inclusion is at the heart of All-In Cities — an initiative to promote inclusion and equitable growth in cities launched this year by my organization, PolicyLink.

Like the recommendations made by the 100% Talent initiatives above, All-In Cities seeks to support policymakers and businesses within metropolitan areas to foster comprehensive economic and racial inclusion. For gender and racial inequality in the workplace, this means looking beyond the pay gap to the very structure of the labor market — asking not only, how can we lift stifled wages for women, but how can we build work environments that are conducive to the needs of the ever-growing segment of female workers and their families.

In addition to reevaluating wage, hiring, and scheduling practices as mentioned above, this means policymakers and businesses should foster female entrepreneurship and leadership within organizations. They should promote women's education and recruitment within high-paying fields — such as math, science, and technology — where they are historically underrepresented. Employers should offer paid family leave and sick leave, so that working mothers do not have to choose between a paycheck and taking care of a sick child.

Overcoming an issue as stubborn as the pay gap will require widespread cultural shifts — in classrooms, in boardrooms, in local councils and halls of parliament — but the rewards we will reap in justice and prosperity are well worth the effort. Advocates for equality from an earlier time, like my mother, would have appreciated how much the ground has shifted.

*Victor Rubin, Vice President for Research at PolicyLink*



**Closing the gender wage gap must be treated as a human rights priority.**

**It requires real change, not just a few cents.**

Time for the government to act!  
[unifor.org/closethegap](http://unifor.org/closethegap)





# STRADDLING THE GENDER PAY GAP

**Despite legislation and good intentions, we are a long way off from equal pay.**

It's 2016 and Canadian women make 27 per cent less than men. That means that for every dollar a man earns, a Canadian woman earns 73 cents. Still, that's an improvement. In 1951, when Ontario passed the Female Employee's Fair Remuneration Act, the gap was 49.5 per cent. In 1987, when Canada passed the Pay Equity Act, the gap was 36 per cent.

In the last ten years, pay equity has been mostly stagnant. The Status of Women has stated "when it comes to the salary gap between the sexes, women have hit a brick wall." And compared to the international community, we are lagging behind. The United Nations has put Canada on notice for its "persistent inequalities between women and men." Last year, the World Economic Forum gender-gap ranking put Canada at 30. In 2006, we were ranked at 14.

Why has progression stalled? How has the problem remained unsolved for over two generations? The roots for pay inequity run deep. And with a multitude of contributing factors, unraveling and addressing the issue is complicated.

Studies show the notorious second shift plays a part. According to Stats Canada, women spend an average of six hours a day doing childcare and housecleaning while men spend less than three hours.

"Women do a large share of unpaid work. This constrains their time for paid work hours so we see women taking part-time or shift work with flexible hours. These typically have lower wages," said Kate McInturff, Ph.D. Senior Researcher, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.

In 2013, 70 per cent of part-time, minimum-wage workers were women—a proportion that has not changed in 30 years.

Another problem is the clustering of women into fields with chronic low pay. Typically health, education, management, public administration and social sciences all offer lower salaries than architecture, engineering, technology, mathematics, computer, and IT industries. Women make up only 9.2 per cent of those higher paying sectors.

"It's hard to determine if these fields are underpaid because we undervalue the profession or if the low wages are because women are doing the work," said McInturff.

Education doesn't account for the problem either. The average construction worker with a high school diploma (a male-dominated field) earns \$44 thousand annually while an early education worker earns \$20 thousand after completing a two-year degree. And consider this direct comparison: a 2013 report on MBA graduates from top business schools around the world shed light on a global

pattern: female MBAs automatically receive \$4 thousand less than their male counterparts despite having the same degree, skill sets, and experience. In Canada the news was even more shocking. Our female MBAs earn \$8,167 less, start out at lower job levels with fewer opportunities for mentoring, and receive fewer high-profile international postings.

*"There's no way to fully explain the wage gap without discrimination," says Stephania Varalli, Co-CEO of Women of Influence, an organization dedicated to women's career advancement.*

"It may not be overt, at least not to the degree it once was, but discrimination is still a serious issue thanks to unconscious bias—all of those preconceived notions that lead us to subtly advantage or disadvantage others, without us being aware of it."

While not a silver bullet, unconscious bias training is being touted as one of the best solutions to the gender pay gap. It involves getting managers to recognize their blind spots when it comes to the workplace, pay, and evaluations.

Pay transparency is another solution being brought to the table. Opening up the books to see the black and white figures tends to bring change quickly. When McMaster University completed its two-year pay study, each female faculty members received a cheque for \$3,515—the difference in pay.

The government is also working to tackle the problem. Early in 2015, Ontario took the issue head on with the creation of the Gender Wage Gap Strategy Steering Committee. Its first task is to determine underlying causes and hear how the gap affects women, their family and community. In the last half of 2015 and early 2016, its efforts were devoted to holding public town halls across the province. People could also share their experiences through an online survey, email or social media. The Gender Wage Gap findings will be released in a report sometime this year. Then begins the work of collaborating with both the private and public sectors to develop effective strategies to close or at least narrow the gender wage gap.

"There is still a great deal of progress to be made, but I see encouraging signs," says Varalli. "We're having the right conversations. Organizations are taking steps. If we can build on this momentum, we can make change happen."

*By Shelagh McNally*

## CLOSING THE PAY GAP IN 12 STEPS – Because it should be closed by 2025

### STEP 1 Treat closing the gap as a human rights priority

Government and business must recognize that women's right to equal pay and employment opportunities is a fundamental human rights issue. It is not a social "perk" that can be addressed or ignored depending on the political and/or economic climate of the day.

### STEP 2 Raise awareness through annual Equal Pay Days and education

Awareness about the gender pay gap needs to be raised through the formal recognition of Equal Pay Day by various levels of government and the business community. Equal Pay Days are already recognized in the US, EU, and Australia.

### STEP 3 Develop the "Close the gender pay gap by 2025 Plan"

Solving the pay gap requires leadership and planning. We call on Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne, NDP Official Opposition leader Andrea Horwath and Progressive Conservative Leader Patrick Brown to work with the Coalition, employers, trade unions and other equality seeking stakeholders to develop and implement a province-wide plan to close Ontario's gender pay gap by 2025.

### STEP 4 Enforce and Expand Pay Equity Promoting Laws

Pay equity laws and policies are found in a variety of laws, regulations and policies such as the Pay Equity Act, Employment Standards Act, the Labour Relations Act and Human Rights Code obligations. The government must work to address the access to justice and enforcement issues that plague the current legislative regime. Equal pay for equal work for part-time and precarious workers needs to be introduced. In addition, pay transparency legislation should be passed that requires employers to report and post the pay structures, the occupation and the nature of the employment relationship in each workplace.

### STEP 5 Implement employment equity law and policies

Access to better paying jobs is a critical step in closing the gender pay gap and, in particular, for racialized women, aboriginal women and women with disabilities. It is time to reintroduce Ontario's repealed Employment Equity Act, which required employers to redress workplace discrimination in recruitment, employment conditions and retention for these particular groups.

*Continued on page 5*

LAILA IS AN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATOR.

I EARN \$21,748 PER YEAR

- 97% OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS (ECES) ARE WOMEN
- 70% OF ECES HAVE A POST-SECONDARY CERTIFICATE, DIPLOMA OR DEGREE

MAX IS A CABLE TELEVISION SERVICE TECHNICIAN.

I EARN \$47,570 PER YEAR

- 96% OF CABLE TELEVISION SERVICE TECHNICIANS ARE MEN
- 65% OF THESE TECHNICIANS HAVE A POST-SECONDARY CERTIFICATE, DIPLOMA OR DEGREE

\* ALL FIGURES FROM STATISTICS CANADA'S 2011 NATIONAL HOUSEHOLD SURVEY.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT  
[WWW.EQUALPAYCOALITION.ORG](http://WWW.EQUALPAYCOALITION.ORG)



# MIND THE *wage* GAP!

In Ontario, the average woman earns **\$15,400** a year less than the average man. Premier Kathleen Wynne says she wants to narrow the gap. But for years, she's been cutting real wages for half a million public sector women. She's making the wage gap wider.

**It's never okay to discriminate.  
Please tell the Premier.**



[opseu.org/genderwagegap](http://opseu.org/genderwagegap)

Wage gap calculation based on average annual earnings for a woman in Ontario of \$33,600 and average annual earnings for a man of \$49,000. Source: Statistics Canada CANSIM table 202-0102, latest available data.



## THE GENDER WAGE GAP IS ABOUT MORE THAN WAGES

Thirty years have passed since I first entered the workforce as a young educator – the first woman in my family with a college diploma – believing that my generation would be the one to tear down the barriers to women's equality. It was this profound belief in fairness that motivated me to get involved with the women's movement and the labour movement, and it guided me as a mother who wanted all of my children – one girl and two boys – to enter the workforce as equals.

I wasn't a lone idealist.

In June of 1987, when I was in the midst of starting my family, Ontario became the second jurisdiction in Canada to pass historic pay equity legislation that confirmed a public and government commitment to “redress systemic gender discrimination” in workplace wages and benefits.

We were certain that change was on the way.

Today, my children are all grown up and they are in a workforce that is just as divided as it was when they were born. In Ontario, the average wage for women is 70 percent of what a man earns for the same work. If you are a woman of colour, it falls to 64 percent. If you are an Aboriginal woman it is only 46 percent. If you are a woman with a disability it is extremely difficult to even get a job, and those who do are often among the most precarious and poorly paid.

How can we still be so far behind?

The answer is more complicated than simply fixing and enforcing the pay equity legislation that has failed to deliver the progress it promised. What these past 30 years have taught us is that we have to go much further in raising the bar for all workers. After all, when the overwhelming majority of Ontarians are falling behind and most of the good jobs we lost during the recession have been replaced with precarious ones, it is women who are the most likely to fall back down to the bottom.

That is why the best approach to closing the gendered wage gap is to tackle inequality from the bottom up.

To start, Ontario must increase the minimum wage to \$15 an hour. A movement is spreading across North America to demand “\$15 and Fairness” and it is based on the basic notion that every job should be a pathway out of poverty. Raising the minimum wage to \$15 and tying that rate to the cost of inflation would peg wages permanently at 10 percent above the poverty line and lift nearly a million women out of poverty.

However, the most significant action that Ontario can make to improve the wages and working conditions for women is to make it easier to join a union.

While labour unions were historically concentrated in male-dominated sectors, like manufacturing and resource extraction, unions see their biggest growth each year in female-dominated workplaces. That is because women know a good thing when they see it.

Unionized women have been better able to negotiate good wages, benefits, and working conditions. The net result is an average pay boost for unionized women of \$7.83 an hour more than non-unionized women. This was certainly my experience, as an educational assistant supporting elementary and high school students with special needs, when I got my first union job in a school board after years of precarious work in private childcare centers.

However, current labour laws in Ontario make it hard to join a union and these laws have not been revamped in 25 years, which has worked strongly against the goals of pay equity legislation.

This year, women workers have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to finally bring fairness to the workforce. That is because Ontario is currently reviewing the province's employment laws. This is our chance to bring in sweeping changes that can close the gender wage gap, lift every worker up and help create the Ontario we want.

While this change might be late in coming, it will make me proud to fight for it with my children at my side.

Patty Coates

Secretary-Treasurer of the Ontario Federation of Labour



### STEP 6 Promote access to collective bargaining

Unionized women receive better pay than their non-unionized counterparts since unions negotiated pay equity plans with employers that led to pay adjustments. Unionization is a pathway to close the gender wage gap. The Labour Relations Act needs modernizing including expanding card-based certification. New sectoral certification and bargaining structures should also be implemented.

### STEP 7 Increase the minimum wage

An effective and immediate step for low-wage women is for the Ontario government to bring in emergency legislation to increase the minimum wage to \$15 per hour immediately and maintain annual increases until the minimum wage is at the level of a living wage.

### STEP 8 Provide affordable and accessible child care

The time for a program is now. Many women work part-time because of a lack of affordable child care. In 1988, the Government fully recognized that access to an affordable child care program was a cornerstone to ensure women's equality.

### STEP 9 Mainstream equity compliance into government laws and policies

All social and economic policies should be vetted by government Ministries for their impact on the gender wage gap. This includes litigation decisions and ensuring that scarce public resources are used to provide pay equity for women providing important public services and not used to fight pay claims. Cabinet policy submissions should include a sign off to ensure proposed laws and policies have been reviewed for their contribution to closing the pay gap.

### STEP 10 Mainstream equity compliance into workplaces and businesses

Employers also need to mainstream equity compliances into their workplace practices, including analyzing the impact of recruitment and retention practices as well as pay and promotion structures and conditions of work have on vulnerable groups.

### STEP 11 End Violence and Harassment of Women

The Ontario government's targeted strategy to end Gender-based-violence needs to be expanded to address the fact that a woman who is the victim of assault or harassed out of a job is left with few economic resources.

### STEP 12 Secure Decent Work for Women Across the Economic Spectrum

The precarious labour market means predominantly lower wages, less access to benefits, holiday pay, overtime pay, pensions, severance pay and employment insurance. In today's labour market, there is little balance between the power of employers and the many precariously employed women. It is time for the Ontario government to commit to the Decent Work agenda to address this precarity.

By Jennifer Quito and Jan Borowy, Ontario Equal Pay Coalition

## Wynne is widening the wage gap for women

By Warren (Smokey) Thomas

Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne talks a good talk about fair pay for women. But when it comes to actually doing something about it, she gets an “F.”

Last year, to much fanfare, the Premier promised to narrow the wage gap between men and women in Ontario. It's a tall order: per year, women earn 31 per cent less than men. So no one expects the Premier to make the gap disappear overnight.

On the other hand, I don't think anyone expects her to make it wider, either. Yet that's exactly what she's doing.

That's impossible, you say! The Premier is a feminist! Look at her policies on sexual harassment, or violence against women. Don't they prove she's taking action on the issues that matter?

Sure they do. And those are important initiatives. But they have nothing to do with the gender wage gap.

Wynne's new spending on women is worth millions, even tens of millions a year. But to understand what she's doing to the overall wage gap in Ontario, you can't just look at the millions. You have to look at the **billions**. You have to look at the core policies of the Liberal government. Because the big picture tells a totally different story than the spin from Wynne.

Since the 2008-09 recession, the Liberals have pursued two major policies that affect the gender wage gap.

The first is austerity – real cuts to public services and real wage cuts for public sector workers. The second is infrastructure spending. Since the 2009 budget, the Liberals have cranked up spending on infrastructure. It's now at levels not seen since the 1970s.

There's a strange symmetry here. Since austerity began,

real (after inflation) program spending in Ontario has fallen by at least \$8 billion a year. Infrastructure spending has jumped by at least the same amount compared to the long-term average.

You'd almost think the cuts were paying for the infrastructure.

Well, they are. This is a massive transfer of wealth, in two ways: it moves public dollars from public services to private companies; and it moves those same dollars from women to men.

When it comes to gender, the public sector is not just any sector: it's the most female-dominated sector in the economy. About half a million women work, directly or indirectly, for the province. In areas like health and social services, the workforce is over 80 per cent female.

When you cut the public sector, women's wages take the hit.

But that's not the end of the story. Women's wage cuts are

paying for infrastructure. The industry that builds infrastructure is the construction industry. And in Ontario, the construction workforce is 88 per cent male.

Now, don't get me wrong. I'm all in favour of good wages for men – as President of OPSEU, I represent 50,000 of them. Plus I have five sons, and I want them all to have good jobs. But those good jobs cannot be paid for by cutting women's wages.

To make matters worse, Premier Wynne is cutting wages for women in another way: she has put the brakes on funding pay equity. In OPSEU alone, we have 180 bargaining units where the Liberals have stopped dedicated pay equity payments. There are hundreds more in the same position.

Tens of thousands of women with modest incomes are being denied money they are owed by law. Many of them will never reach a pay-equity compliant rate of pay before they retire, or die. For a Pre-

mier who claims to care about women's wages, this is a huge failure.

Kathleen Wynne is driving the wage gap wider. The question is, what's driving Wynne?

The answer is, there's another policy in play, and it underpins everything the Premier does. That policy is privatization. Guided by her star adviser, Ed Clark, the Premier isn't really thinking about the gender wage gap at all. She's thinking about moving public dollars to investors and

companies who are willing to pay \$6,000 a pop – or more – to dine with her and her ministers.

The fact that this program hurts women is, well, secondary. They're collateral damage in a much bigger game.

On the gender wage gap, Kathleen Wynne deserves that failing grade.

Warren (Smokey) Thomas is President of the Ontario Public Service Employees Union.

“To understand what Kathleen Wynne is doing to the overall wage gap in Ontario, you can't just look at the millions. You have to look at the **billions**.”



OPSEU  
SEFPO

opseu.org/genderwagegap



# Canada's Trade Unions: A Woman's Best Friend



By **DON MACKINNON**  
President  
Power Workers' Union

The equality of women and men has become a fundamental Canadian value. So much so that it is protected twice in our Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms in our Constitution - once in the equality rights provision (section 15) and then explicitly again in section 28, a provision not subject to the government override power in section 33, which says the rights and freedoms in the Charter "are guaranteed equally to male and female persons".

Women's equality rights are also protected in human rights legislation across the country. Canadians can be justly proud of the aspirational values set out in these laws but, without a remedy, there is no right and without enforcement, these provisions are just words. This is where trade unions come in.

The fundamental equality of rights among all workers, of whatever sex, race, creed or colour, is one of the foundational principles of trade unionism, not because unions are legally bound by human rights law (although they are), but because equality of rights for workers was one of the main reasons for the establishment of trade unions in the first place — long before the explicit protections set out in the Charter or human rights legislation. For women, what this has meant over time is that unions have been at the forefront of enforcing their rights to equality in terms of protection against harassment and discrimination in the workplace and ensuring not only equal pay for equal work, but fair wages for the work women do. Lobbying and political action by unions and other equality seeking groups has effected legislative change for the benefit of all women in these and other areas of the law. Most critically, though, unions play a major and increasingly important role in making sure that these laws are enforced and that the spirit of those laws is reflected in the wages and working conditions negotiated into the legally binding collective agreements of unionized workplaces.

In an age where even the middle class can't afford to hire a lawyer to litigate a discrimination claim and cash strapped governments have reduced or eliminated resources that used to be available to assist victims of human rights violations, it has fallen to unions to ensure that violations are remedied through litigation. Trade

unions have willingly taken on these duties and, indeed, have fought successfully for the right to grieve human rights and other statutory violations through their collective agreements on behalf of all employees governed by those agreements, whether or not they are union members.

For women specifically, what this means is that those women represented by trade unions earn more than those that are not. For example, in 2013, there were 842,000 women union members working in Ontario, which was about 28.8% of all women employees in the province. They earned, on average, \$7.83/hour more than non-union women because their unions negotiated fair wages and work hours. The average wage gap between working men and women was \$93 less per week for women

represented by a trade union than for those who are not. There are differences like this all across the country.

More than this, however, women represented by unions have a relatively quick means of enforcing their rights and remedying violations with the union bearing the legal costs. Unionized women have someone to turn to that can remedy working practices that are unfair to women, such as sexist dress codes and scheduling demands that discriminate against working mothers. Unions make sure that our values as Canadians and the rights of Canadian women embodied in our laws are more than just words and are, indeed, rights that protect and benefit Canadian women. Unions are a woman's best friend, and our society is better for it.

## The Power Workers' Union: The **Voice** Of Ontario's Electricity Sector Workers

The Power Workers' Union (PWU) takes great pride in representing the large majority (over 15,000) of the men and women who work in Ontario's electricity production and delivery sector.

Our members work hard, 24 hours per day, 7 days per week to ensure that electricity customers have the power they need when they need it.

The PWU is the voice of electricity workers in Ontario. Since the initial electrification of homes and businesses in our province, the PWU has continuously worked to set and improve the standards for public and worker electrical safety. We continue to negotiate the best in sustainable wages, benefits and working conditions for the highly-skilled workers in our industry.

We work closely with our employers to help them build and operate vibrant, successful business operations in changing times and we work with government and regulators to foster electricity policy development that works for customers, electricity businesses and employees.

Take a look at the Power Workers' Union – we think you'll like what you see.

To learn more about us, please go to [www.pwu.ca](http://www.pwu.ca)

**FROM THE MEN AND WOMEN WHO HELP KEEP THE LIGHTS ON.**

