House of Commons
Chambre des communes
Canada

House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance – Pre-budget Consultations 2013

This brief is submitted by:

(•) **an organization** **Organization name:** Canadian Federation of University Women

or

( ) **an individual** **Name:** _____

Topic: Children, youth and families

*Recommendation 1: Please provide a short summary of your recommendation.

In collaboration with provincial, territorial and municipal governments, establish a national universal early learning and child care program that is affordable, accessible and regulated.

Expected cost or savings: From the pull-down menus, please indicate the expected cost or savings of your recommendation to the federal government and the period of time to which the expected cost or savings is related.

$1 billion or more

1 year

Federal funding: Please provide a precise indication of how the federal government could fund your recommendation. For example, indicate what federal spending should be reallocated, what federal tax measure(s) should be introduced, eliminated or changed, etc.

Reallocate the approximate $2.5 billion spent annually on the Universal Child Care Benefit into a universal child care program. Additional funds for the program would be nullified by the economic stimulus generated (e.g. increasing disposable family income and creating jobs); estimated at an increase of $2.30 in GDP for every dollar spent.

Intended beneficiaries: Please indicate the groups of individuals, the sector(s) and/or the regions that would benefit by implementation of your recommendation.

A national early learning and child care program would particularly benefit women and families, especially lone-parent and low-income households by stimulating labour market participation, increasing disposable family incomes, and creating jobs in an industry that predominately employs women. Access to regulated early learning and child care will also benefit children in Canada, by addressing their development and learning needs.

General impacts: Depending on the nature of your recommendation, please indicate how the standard of living of Canadians would be improved, jobs would be created, people would be trained, etc.

It would also benefit society as a whole, by generating economic growth, increasing labour market participation, creating jobs, and contributing to increased fertility rates to off-set an aging, low growth population. In countries where it is difficult for women to combine employment with having children, women's employment and fertility rates both tend to suffer; improving access to child care is essential, particularly since Canada lags behind other OECD countries in child care spending.

Topic: Military and public safety and security

Recommendation 2: Please provide a short summary of your recommendation.

In collaboration with provincial and territorial governments, Aboriginal representatives, and civil society, develop and implement a comprehensive, coordinated, and adequately resourced national action plan to address violence against women and girls. The action plan should seek to prevent and respond to all forms of gender-based violence, with a particular emphasis on those who are most affected by violence, such as aboriginal women, women with disabilities, and women and girls under the age of 24.

Expected cost or savings: From the pull-down menus, please indicate the expected cost or savings of your recommendation to the federal government and the period of time to which the expected cost or savings is related.

$1 million-4.9 million

1 year

Federal funding: Please provide a precise indication of how the federal government could fund your recommendation. For example, indicate what federal spending should be reallocated, what federal tax measure(s) should be introduced, eliminated or changed, etc.

According to Justice Canada, the health care, criminal justice, social services, and economic costs associated with intimate partner violence are estimated at $1.9 billion annually. In addition, the costs associated with sexual assault have been calculated at least $500 million per year. A national action plan that seeks to prevent these forms of violence will result in reducing these costs.

Intended beneficiaries: Please indicate the groups of individuals, the sector(s) and/or the regions that would benefit by implementation of your recommendation.

Coordinated efforts to prevent violence against women and girls and provide comprehensive assistance to victims (e.g. sexual, reproductive, and mental health care services) would directly benefit those who experience, or live with the risk of experiencing violence. The World Health Organization estimates that 1 in 4 women will experience violence in their lifetime. In the last 5 years for instance, 1.9 million women and girls reported an incidence of sexual assault or intimate partner violence. Over half a million children witness spousal assaults; they would also benefit.

General impacts: Depending on the nature of your recommendation, please indicate how the standard of living of Canadians would be improved, jobs would be created, people would be trained, etc.

A comprehensive, coordinated, national action plan that seeks to reduce levels of violence, would significantly ameliorate the pain and suffering of women and girls who are at risk of violence, while also reducing the direct economic costs (i.e. health care, lost productivity, lost education, and police and criminal justice services).

Topic: Employment, labour markets and unions

Recommendation 3: Please provide a short summary of your recommendation.

Invest in women's job security, employment equity and pay equity:
- Support female dominated sectors and sectors where women are equitably employed;
- Adequately fund the Federal Contractors Program to ensure enforcement;
- Support women's enterprise development;
-Work with provincial and territorial governments, and business, labour, and industry associations to develop a national strategy to promote the recruitment and retention of women in skilled trades and other occupations where women are underrepresented (e.g. sciences, engineering).
-Implement 2004 pay equity taskforce recommendations

Expected cost or savings: From the pull-down menus, please indicate the expected cost or savings of your recommendation to the federal government and the period of time to which the expected cost or savings is related.

unknown

1 year

Federal funding: Please provide a precise indication of how the federal government could fund your recommendation. For example, indicate what federal spending should be reallocated, what federal tax measure(s) should be introduced, eliminated or changed, etc.

The OECD has stated that women's participation in paid work has played a key role in Canada's per capita real income growth over the last decade. Yet employment gaps still exists; fewer women are employed than men, and women are more likely to be employed in part-time, precarious positions. In a recent analysis of developed countries, it was concluded that closing the gap between women's and men's share of employment could increase GDP by between 9% and 16% over the next two decades. Investments in women's job security and employment equity would likely pay for itself in the long term.

Intended beneficiaries: Please indicate the groups of individuals, the sector(s) and/or the regions that would benefit by implementation of your recommendation.

Addressing gender gaps in employment and pay would first and foremost benefit women by improving their incomes and standard of living. Developing and implementing a national strategy to recruit and retain women in male dominated industries, with a focus on addressing barriers such as discrimination and harassment, would significantly improve the wellbeing of women currently working in, or entering those fields in the future. Bringing more women into the skilled trades and corresponding sectors, would also help address current and projected skilled labour shortages.

General impacts: Depending on the nature of your recommendation, please indicate how the standard of living of Canadians would be improved, jobs would be created, people would be trained, etc.

The growth in Canada's GDP from closing the gender gap in employment would benefit all of society.

Please use this page if you wish to provide more explanation about your recommendation(s).

Budgets are not gender neutral; they can either help improve women's equality or exacerbate inequality. Creating budgets that are sensitive and responsive to gender differences not only facilitate progress towards women's equality, they can also help improve government effectiveness, efficiency, accountability, and transparency.

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Platform for Action (PFA) both call for the, "integration of a gender perspective in budgetary decisions on policies and programmes, as well as the adequate financing of specific programmes for securing equality between women and men" (PFA 345). UN Women has also urge governments around the world to implement gender responsive budget initiatives by 2015.

Even though the Government of Canada has created a tool called Gender-Based Analysis+ (GBA+), there is little to no evidence that this tool is used when making public spending decisions or issuing reports/evaluations of its Economic Action Plans.

In 2009, the Auditor General of Canada conducted an audit of GBA in nine departments. The audit found uneven implementation of GBA and little evidence of its influence on decision-making. The danger of failing to consider gender when creating budgets can be seen in a recent analysis conducted by Kathleen Lahey, Professor at Queen's University, where she estimates that men have been the major beneficiaries of the over $168 billion dollars in stimulus funding spent in Canada since 2008 on infrastructure projects, cuts to the GST rate, corporate tax cuts and benefits, personal income tax cuts, and changes to Employment Insurance. This analysis clearly demonstrates the need to revisit the 2008 recommendations from the Status of Women Committee report, Towards Gender Responsive Budgeting: Rising to the Challenge of Achieving Gender Equality. The evidence suggests that the majority of the 27 recommendations contained in the report have not been implemented.

We therefore encourage Finance Committee members to consider how each recommendation presented through these pre-consultation submissions will impact women and men differently.

*Please note that at least one recommendation must be provided