

Ottawa rally pushes Ontario to finally close gender wage gap ^[1]

Author: Abdelwahab, Alex

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Although Ontario has promised to close the gender wage gap, activists say the province isn't doing enough to follow through.

"The wage gap right now in Ontario, on average, is 30 per cent," said Carolyn Ferns, policy co-ordinator at the Ontario Coalition for Better Childcare, during a rally Tuesday to mark Equal Pay Day. "The government has committed to closing it and we hope they're serious about that and they're going to take action to do it."

Activists say Equal Pay Day, which fell on April 11 in Ontario, symbolizes how far into the next year the average woman must work to make what the average man did the year before.

About 30 people attended the rally outside Attorney General Yasir Naqvi's office.

"That's the average," Ferns said. "We know that the wage gap is larger for women of colour, for immigrant women, for Indigenous women and for women with disabilities. So they're equal pay days come sometimes in July."

The province launched public consultations on the issue in 2015. The Gender Wage Gap Strategy Steering Committee delivered its final report on the issue with 20 recommendations in June 2016. Ferns said she wants to see a plan to implement the recommendations in the spring budget, expected later this month.

"We know that childcare is a key issue to close the gender wage gap. It was the number one issue that the government's own steering committee heard around the province," Ferns said.

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