

Women's economic security: A working women's agenda ^[1]

Unifor Submission to the Standing Committee of the Status of Women

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AVAILABILITY

Full brief PDF ^[2]

Introduction

Thank you for the invitation to participate in the Status of Women Committee's study on the Economic Security of Women in Canada.

Unifor is Canada's largest union in the private sector representing 310,000 workers in all sectors of the economy, including over 100,000 women. Our female members work in a variety of occupations such as air traffic controllers, personal support workers, rail mechanics, food service workers, customer service representatives, electricians, bus drivers, and retail workers to name a few.

The Committee has heard from many sources about women's economic insecurity. We want to focus on a particular set of challenges – the challenges that face working-class women. The two ends of the continuum of women's economic security often get the lion's share of attention – either the extremely vulnerable or the reach for the c-suite. Both deserve attention. But we must ensure that average working women aren't left out of focus.

Unifor believes in social unionism – this means that we advocate for the rights of workers as whole human beings – human beings that are affected by what happens to them outside of the workplace as well as in. When we look at the indicators of women's inequality, these, by and large, are happening to working women. We don't conflate all working women together; Unifor takes an intersectional approach and acknowledges historical, social and political contexts that lead to experiences based on the intersection of all relevant grounds of discrimination.

We support the government's desire to close the gender pay gap, reduce occupational segregation, reduce women's poverty and eliminate sexual harassment and violence. We believe that taking measures to improve women's working lives will significantly address these issues.

Our submission will focus on two main areas: Access to good jobs and equity at work; and supports when exiting the world of work.

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