

Coalition wants pay equity sooner rather than later [CA-NB]^[1]

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Source: NB Telegraph-Journal

Format: Article

Publication Date: 4 Feb 2004

AVAILABILITY

See text below.

EXCERPTS

Forty-four unions, women's groups and other organizations in New Brunswick joined Tuesday in calling for a law to make pay equity mandatory in the province.

Last December, Training and Employment Development Minister Margaret-Ann Blaney unveiled the recommendations of the Wage Gap Roundtable, a group put together by the province to come up with ideas for closing the gap in pay between men and women.

At the same time, the minister announced she would put together a five-year "action plan" that would include encouraging private companies to voluntarily put pay equity policies in place. The government, Ms. Blaney said, would look at legislation making pay equity mandatory if the wage gap hadn't closed measurably by the end of the five years.

Later in December, however, one of the members of the roundtable, the Coalition for Pay Equity, refused to sign its recommendations, saying New Brunswick needs mandatory pay equity legislation now.

On Tuesday, the coalition, which includes the New Brunswick Federation of Labour, issued three recommendations of its own: that the province draft a pay-equity law "very shortly," that it commit to adopt it as soon as it is drafted and that it launch as soon as possible an ad campaign to inform the public about wage discrimination.

Ontario and Quebec are now the only provinces in Canada to have legislation making pay equity mandatory in the private, as well as public, sector. All other provinces have only public-sector pay equity laws.

Such legislation in New Brunswick covers only Part 1 public servants - that is, only employees of departments, not workers in health care, education or Crown corporations.

Not to be confused with wage parity - the paying of equal wages for men and women doing the same job - pay equity means equal pay for men and women who do work that can be considered of equal value. For example, pay-equity advocates argue, delivery drivers and day care workers have roughly equivalent job qualifications, but delivery drivers, who tend to be male, usually get paid more than day-care workers, who are usually female.

- reprinted from NBTelegraph-Journal

Region: New Brunswick^[2]

Tags: staff^[3]

gender^[4]

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