

Study: Economic leadership and prosperity of Canadian women ^[1]

Author: various

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AVAILABILITY

Minutes, Webcasts (audio) and Evidence from all recent meetings ^[2] [Within each meeting's evidence it is possible to search by committee member, witness or discussed topics by using the "Explore by" tool in the upper right hand corner.]

Highlights are below.

The House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women has undertaken a study of the "economic leadership and prosperity of Canadian women". Several witnesses have pointed to the importance of child care to women's labour force participation. Below are some of the highlights from the study so far. The study is ongoing; CRRU will provide updates as more evidence and the final report become available.

Evidence from meetings that discussed child care:

- May 14, 2014 ^[3] (Witnesses from Statistics Canada; Public Service Alliance of Canada)

Without available and affordable child care women take time off work. This has the potential to slow opportunities for advancement, including for senior leadership positions. Women who withdraw from the workplace are also financially penalized in salary increases, seniority benefits, and their pensions. Expensive child care costs can take up a large part of a woman's earnings.... Many child care services operate along regular business hours, creating an additional barrier. As a recent PSAC human rights complaint shows, irregular child care is all but non-existent in Canada. That makes it difficult for women with children to devote themselves to leadership. Women who can't work irregular hours due to child care restrictions are much less likely to occupy management and higher paying positions. Ultimately, the lack of available child care and the lack of affordable child care hold women back. - **Robyn Benson (National President, Executive Office, Public Service Alliance of Canada):**

- May 12, 2014 ^[4] (Witnesses from: Centre for Women in Politics and Public Leadership of Carleton University; Equal Pay Coalition; War Lake First Nation; and Faculty of Law of Queen's University)

Highlights:

"Our youngest children also need supports. Head start and child care programs are often lacking or non-existent in First Nations communities. Given that 20% of First Nations women are single parents, having access to child care allows them to access opportunities outside the home. These are the programs that the federal government can fund." - **Chief Betsy Kennedy (War Lake First Nation)**

"Since 2006, Canada has cut its various sources of revenues by approximately 2.2% of GDP per year....Unfortunately, this has made it difficult for Canada to sustain the programs that are absolutely necessary to achieving gender equality in an economically significant way. One of those ways is that it has brought to a virtual halt any efforts to implement a national child care program." - **Prof. Kathleen A. Lahey (Professor, Faculty of Law, Queen's University)**

- May 7, 2014 ^[5] (Witnesses from: Luvo Inc. and Suncor Energy Inc.)

Highlight: **Niki Ashton, NDP:** "How important is access to affordable child care to the economic prosperity and security of women in Canada?"

Christine Day, CEO Luvo Inc.: "I think it's one of the biggest topics. Not only is it access to quality care for families and particularly for single mothers to have a career or go back to school, I think the investment by the government in quality child care options or encouraging those in the private sector is absolutely critical.

- May 5th, 2014 ^[6] (Witnesses from: Startup Canada; Canada Without Poverty)

Highlight: "These two programs, subsidized day care and affordable social housing, helped me immensely to achieve my goals of a better education. Without the child care of \$35 a month, I could not have afforded to attend university. It also gave my working family members a much-needed break after years of filling the gap of child care.... Based on my experiences, I would like to make the following two recommendations: one, a national child care strategy that would make child care affordable and accessible to traditional and non-traditional family units, regardless of where they live; and two, a national housing strategy that enables women to have safe, adequate, and affordable housing." - **Brenda Thompson, Board Member, Canada Without Poverty**

- April 30th, 2014 ^[7] (Witnesses from: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives; Catalyst Canada Inc.; Alberta Federation of Labour)

Highlight: "What can we do to address the time deficit faced by women in Canada? While some of the answers are easier than others, I'm going to start with one of the most obvious: safe and affordable child care. Economists from across sectors have demonstrated the benefits of affordable child care, benefits reaped by children, benefits to women's economic security, and benefits to the overall economic health of a community. Women in sectors as diverse as health care and mining report that the lack of access to affordable child care is a significant barrier to doing the work they want to do and achieving their professional goals." - **Kate McInturff, Senior Researcher, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives [presentation in PDF ^[8]]**

- April 9th, 2014 ^[9] (Witnesses from: Department of Industry; Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency; Business Development Bank of Canada; HCMWorks Inc; Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada).

"When I had my children it was incredibly difficult, and that's one of the reasons that I started a business. That's one of the reasons that I needed to start a business. If my children were sick, not going to an office wasn't too tolerated in business, and I knew I was being disadvantaged as a result. My kids were probably three and four and running around on the floor, and I was working on my laptop at the time. I was living in Quebec and there was really no available day care, even though there was a subsidy of \$5.00 a day, or something to that effect. There was nothing available at the time. So I struggled with it from the moment they were born until they were in grade 1." - **Julia Fournier, President and CEO, HCMWorks Inc.**

Region: Canada ^[10]

Tags: staff ^[11]

gender ^[12]

mother's labour force participation ^[13]

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