

New job numbers show women are losing ground^[1]

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EXCERPTS

Today's corrected job statistics show women still face great challenges in recovering the labour market momentum they had before the 2008 recession. While the corrected job figures show that, overall, employment increased by a total of 42,000 net new jobs, only 5 per cent of those net gains went to women over 24.

Even more worrying, the only real job gains in the July 2014 jobs report are part-time jobs. A total of 60,000 new part-time jobs were logged in the July report, masking the fact that workers over age 24 actually lost a total of 21,700 full-time jobs.

And 58 per cent of those full-time job losses went to women over age 24. These figures reveal that the pattern that emerged when the recession ended in 2010 has continued. When the recession ended, women began to lose full-time employment, and have increasingly turned to part-time work.

In the meantime, men have been slowly regaining full-time jobs after being unemployed or working part-time as part of a federally subsidized job sharing program. And now both men and youth dominate the part-time job market too. Of the total part-time job gains reported for July, only 25 per cent of those went to prime working age women.

Overall, women's share of all new full-time and part-time July jobs is only 23 per cent. Overall, employers are increasingly hiring prime working age women part-time, while shifting more full-time jobs to men and younger workers.

These data demonstrate that federal non-discrimination and labour market policies are failing women. Canadians urgently need answers to why this is happening, when women's levels of further and advanced education have never been higher, income inequality continues to grow, and households more urgently than ever need women's earnings to make ends meet.

As Caroline Andrew has pointed out in an opinion article in the Ottawa Citizen, Friday, Aug. 15, is the 30th anniversary of Canada's first - and only - leaders' debate on women's issues. And the issues have not changed: Women still face labour market discrimination, unequal terms of entry, lower wages, unequal responsibility for unpaid domestic work, and poverty.

This is the time to find out what those who would lead Canada in search of a better future have to say about women's increasing vulnerability to low-paid part-time work, poverty, overwork, and income instability.

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